RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Effective Leadership in Higher Education

Summary of findings

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report aims to summarise the key findings from a research project investigating the styles of and approaches to leadership, and leadership behaviours, which are associated with effectiveness in higher education. The project consisted of two distinct tasks, the first was a systematic search of literature relating to leadership and effectiveness in higher education studies. The second element was a series of semi-structured interviews with academics who were involved in researching leadership in higher education, or leadership more generally. The key research question directing the investigation was: 'What styles of or approaches to leadership are associated with effective leadership in higher education?' In addition to this publication, an extended report has also been written which includes longer sections covering the head of department and institutional level analyses, and more detail about many of the studies reviewed.

METHODOLOGY

A search was conducted for articles in refereed journals for the period 1985-2005, based on data from the UK, USA, and Australia. Studies were included where they examined the links between leadership (defined as when the styles of behaviour investigated were to do with influencing the goal directed behaviour of others) and effectiveness. Articles were included only if they met suitable quality criteria, and if they were based on reporting of original research or secondary analysis of data. The literature was analysed to identify common, or at least comparable, findings between the studies. Lists of behaviours where there was some agreement across different studies about their effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) were compiled.

After the review of the literature, 24 leadership researchers were interviewed about their own experiences. They were asked to consider the forms of leader behaviour that are associated with effectiveness in higher education. The interviewees were selected so that they represented one of three main categories of leadership researcher:

- Leadership researchers whose interest was in school leadership or in the learning and skills sector.

- Those with a management/business school background who were mainly interested in leadership outside of education

- Leadership researchers who had an interest in leadership in higher education.

During each interview, general questions were asked about leadership issues and then a series of questions about higher education leadership were asked which made up the bulk of the interview. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed fully. They were then coded thematically using QSR NVivo 7.

FINDINGS

There is no obvious single way of summarising or capturing the findings covered in this report. In the literature review, the lack of consistent use of some key terms and the way in which each investigation appears to focus on some issues but not others covered by other researchers make this an area where knowledge and understanding of leadership effectiveness is not as cumulative as some might like. However, the findings from both the literature review and the interviews point to the **importance of the following facets of leadership at both departmental and institutional levels:**

- Providing direction

- Creating a structure to support the direction

- Fostering a supportive and collaborative environment

- Establishing trustworthiness as a leader

- Having personal integrity

- Having credibility to act as a role model

- Facilitating participation in decision-making; consultation

- Providing communication about developments

- Representing the department/institution to advance its cause(s) and networking on its behalf

- Respecting existing culture while seeking to instil values through a vision for the department/institution

- Protecting staff autonomy

What seems to lie at the heart of this list is the need for leader to create an environment or context for academics and others to fulfil their potential and interest in their work. The significance of fostering a collegial climate of mutual supportiveness and the maintenance of autonomy do seem to be a particular desiderata in the academic context.

There are also clear implications about how not to lead, the following are all likely to cause damage:

- Failing to consult;

- Not respecting existing values;

- Actions that undermine collegiality;

- Not promoting the interests of those for whom the leader is responsible;

- Being uninvolved in the life of the department/institution;

- Undermining autonomy;

- Allowing the department/institution to drift.

It is striking how close the core recommendations about what to do and what not to do are to Kouzes and Posner's (2003) Leadership Challenge Model. There are also affinities with Locke's (2003) characterisation of the key roles of a top leader, most of which seem to be relevant to heads of department in the higher education context, in spite of the fact that Locke was writing about 'top leaders' rather than middle managers in organisations.

However, it is important not to imply that there are no distinctive features of leadership effectiveness in higher education: For example, in the context of **departmental leadership**, it has been noted in this report that a very significant feature of the expectations of academic staff in particular are:

- the maintenance of autonomy;

- consultation over important decisions;

- the fostering of collegiality (both democratic decision-making and mutual cooperativeness);

- and fighting the department's corner with senior managers and through university structures.

There are elements of these desiderata in leadership models but it is the intensity of these expectations among university employees that is distinctive. Also, the high value placed on

leadership entailing a commitment to the department's cause is very significant and not expressed even indirectly in other models. It reflects that desire of academics in particular for a congenial work context in which to get on with their work. It marks middle leadership in higher education off from middle leadership in many other contexts, in that it means that the head of department is often in a position where he or she is not engaged in executive leadership – implementing policies and directives emanating from the centre – but in defending or protecting his or her staff, quite possibly in opposition to expectations among senior echelons.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Two developments would be especially desirable for those with an interest in the practice of leadership. First, further systematic research that directly examines the connections between leader behaviour and effectiveness in the UK are necessary as most UK research only addresses this issue in an indirect way. Second, such research should be used as a springboard for developing principles of leadership effectiveness that could be employed in training leaders.

The research provides few guides for future action, not just because of the lists of factors identified above, but also because the studies examined are often short on specifics. For example, while it is clear from the literature that leaders who ignore the desirability of consulting academic and non-academic staff take great risks in terms of maintaining the support and commitment of staff, there is less guidance on precisely how the leader – regardless of level – should go about doing so.

Further, there is far too little research on the variety of leadership roles that exist in universities at departmental level (e.g. programme director, director of research), as noted previously in this report. Research on such roles and their leadership elements would provide valuable further insights into such areas as dispersed leadership and shared leadership.

INTRODUCTION

This report aims to summarise the key findings from a research project investigating the styles of and approaches to leadership, and leadership behaviours, which are associated with effectiveness in higher education. The project consisted of two distinct tasks, the first was a systematic search of literature relating to leadership and effectiveness in higher education studies. A list of leadership behaviours which the literature suggests to be effective was devised at both institutional and departmental level. A number of factors relating to leadership more generally which were perceived to have an impact on its effectiveness, either directly or indirectly, were also identified. An examination of 'job satisfaction' and 'stress' within the higher education literature was also carried out, which identified ways in which leaders and managers can affect these variables either positively or negatively. The findings from the literature search are summarised in Part I of this report. The second element of the project was a series of semi-structured interviews with academics who were involved in researching leadership in higher education, or leadership more generally. A summary of their experiences of being leaders, and of being led by others, is presented in Part II.

This publication is a summary of the key findings from both the literature search and the interviews. An extended report has also been written which includes longer sections covering the head of department and institutional level analyses, and more detail about many of the studies reviewed. For more information about the extended report please visit **http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/projects/brymanleic.html**

PART I – THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the project began life as an attempt to review in a systematic way, research relating to leadership in higher education. The key research question directing the search for and review of the research literature was: 'What styles of, or approaches to, leadership are associated with effective leadership in higher education?'. In other words, the emphasis was on the kinds of leadership styles or behaviour that are found to be effective in studies of higher education leadership, and by implication those which are found to be ineffective.

Methodology

It was decided to search for articles in refereed journals for the period 1985-2005 as it was hoped that this literature review would help to inform current circumstances. Many writers make it clear that they view the higher education setting as having changed greatly in the last two decades, and it was felt that relating current circumstances to those of more than 20 years ago would be less useful. The emphasis on peer-reviewed journals was imposed because articles in such journals provide a quality indicator, at least to a certain degree. It was also decided to restrict the international focus to the UK, the US, and Australia – the countries which feature most heavily in the higher education leadership literature. The main reason for this restriction was to keep the literature search manageable and also because the vast majority of articles uncovered would probably be written in English and thus would be accessible to the author.

It was clear at an early stage that a full systematic review of the literature would not be feasible for two reasons. Firstly, it soon became apparent that there is not a great deal of literature which specifically addresses the leadership-effectiveness connection which is the main focus for this project. Quite a lot of research was found which examines what leaders in higher education do, but these studies did not always explore links with performance or effectiveness - in fact, they did so relatively rarely. Secondly and relatedly, most of the studies that do examine the issue of effectiveness were found not to meet most of the quality criteria that are necessary for a genuine systematic review[1]. This applied both to the quantitative and the qualitative studies that were examined.

Online databases were used to search for studies which fulfilled these criteria and the following search terms were used:

leader or manage* or administrat* plus higher education* or university* or academic plus effective**

Although the focus for this study was to be on 'leadership', which many writers seek to distinguish from kindred terms like 'management' and 'administration', it became apparent even through an informal review of articles that these three terms were being used in ways that did not distinguish them in a precise or consistent way. In part, this is probably because of the difficulty in distinguishing activities that are associated with leadership, as distinct from managerial or administrative activities. However for the purposes of this study in considering whether findings did in fact relate to leadership, the key criterion used was **whether the styles or behaviour being discussed were to do with influencing the goal-directed behaviour of others.**

[1] Petticrew, M. and Roberts, H. (2006) chapter 5

The online databases used were: Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC-CSA); Educational Research Abstracts (ERA); British Education Index; and Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). Key articles were also subjected to citation searches so that further related articles might be identified. In addition, reference lists at the end of key articles were searched for related articles. The online searches produced the bulk of the literature references.

Articles were excluded if they were not based on reporting of original research, so all studies included either presented findings deriving from primary research, or derived from secondary analysis of data. Articles deriving from speculations about leadership based on anecdote rather than research were therefore excluded. Further, articles were only included if:

- the aims of the research were clearly stated;

- they made clear the ways in which data was collected (sampling, research instruments used, how data was analysed), did so in a systematic way, and indicated how the methods were related to the aims;

- sufficient data was provided to support interpretations;

- the method of analysis was outlined.

These criteria were devised by the UK National Health Service's National Electronic Library for Health (NELH) for the evaluation of qualitative research, but are equally relevant to quantitative studies too. They are fairly basic criteria for assessing quality and would probably not be sufficient for a full systematic review. However, for this research it was necessary for the criteria used to permit an account of appropriate published research in this area, without being so stringent that too many articles had to be excluded thus making it difficult (if not impossible) to render generalisations.

This report emphasises the peer-reviewed articles that formed the basis of the literature review linking leadership and effectiveness in higher education. At certain points, other research that might help to promote understanding of the research question, and which meets reasonable quality criteria, has also been included. This additional literature refers mainly to books and chapters in books that enhance understanding of key issues. Those items that are included in this report but were not identified through the systematic search described above are clearly distinguished through the use of a vertical line in the margin. Findings

deriving from articles that did not quite fulfil the NELH criteria are also included at some points in the report, and once again are marked by a vertical line.

1. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT LEVEL SUMMARY

Table 1 (overleaf) summarises some of the main findings from the detailed review of literature undertaken at the head of department level. The table shows each of the main forms of leader behaviour that were found to be associated with effectiveness at departmental level. The table also shows the main references that provide support for each type of leader behaviour.

Some caution is necessary in reading this table. For one thing it is based, in part, on the interpretation of the author. The various writers referred to in this table also differ a great deal with regard to their use of various terms, and the sense in which each type of leadership is considered to be effective varies from study to study. Despite some inconsistencies and different foci within the studies listed, each of the leadership-related activities outlined in Table 1 seem to be associated with some measure of effectiveness. It is hoped that this table will provide a useful heuristic in approaching the issue of what makes for effective leadership at this level.

Further analysis of the findings, and a more detailed discussion of each of the studies listed in Table 1, can be found in the Head of Department Level section of the extended project report[2].

Reflections on effectiveness at head of department level
It is interesting to view the findings in Table 1 in relation to studies examining requirements for, and characteristics of, departmental leaders. A study by Wolverton et al. at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas investigated the requirements of departmental chairs as perceived by their deans and by the chairs themselves[3]. Deans felt that chairs needed to have good people skills, especially in relation to communication and dealing with conflict. These skills can be seen as crucial in relation to setting direction, fostering collegiality, acting as a role model, and advancing the department's cause – all behaviours emphasised in Table 1. Deans also emphasised the need for chairs to be honest with their staff and others both in evaluations and in everyday contexts. There is a connection here with another ability in the above list, that of treating academic staff fairly and with integrity. The chairs also identified additional

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2   Please visit http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/projects/brymanleic.html for details about the extended report

3   Wolverton, M. et al. (2005)

TABLE 1

MAIN LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS AT DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL

In the table below, those studies which were not a product of the systematic review are italicised

LEADER BEHAVIOUR	MAIN LITERATURE ITEMS DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADER BEHAVIOUR
Clear sense of direction/ strategic vision	Benoit & Graham (2005); *Bland, Center et al. (2005)*; Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005) Clott & Fjortoft (2000); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; *Harris et al. (2004)*; *Lorange (1988)*; Mitchell (1987); Moses & Roe (1990); Stark et al. (2002); Trocchia & Andrus (2003)
Preparing department arrangements to facilitate the direction set	*Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005)*; Creswell & Brown (1992); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; Knight & Holen (1985); Lindholm (2003); *Lorange (1988)*; Stark et al. (2002)
Being considerate	Ambrose et al. (2005); Brown & Moshavi (2002); Fernandez & Vecchio (1997); Gomes & Knowles (1999); Knight & Holen (1985); Mitchell (1987); Moses & Roe (1990)
Fostering a supportive environment for staff to engage in their research and teaching	Ambrose et al. (2005); Benoit & Graham (2005); Bland, Center et al. (2005); *Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005)*; *Creswell et al. (1990)*; *Harris et al. (2004)*; *Moses & Roe (1990)*; *Ramsden (1998a)*
Treating academic staff fairly and with integrity	Ambrose et al. (2005); *Bareham (2004)*; Gomes & Knowles (1999); *Harris et al. (2004)*; Mitchell (1987); Moses & Roe (1990); Murry & Stauffacher (2001); Trocchia & Andrus (2003)
Allowing the opportunity to participate in key decisions/encouraging open communication	Barge & Musambira (1992); *Bland, Center et al. (2005)*; Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005); Copur (1990); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; *Harris et al. (2004)*; *Lorange (1988)*; Mitchell (1987); *Moses & Roe (1990)*; Murry & Stauffacher (2001); *Ramsden (1998a)*
Communicating well about the direction the department is going	Ambrose et al. (2005); Bland, Center et al. (2005); *Creswell et al. (1990);* Gordon et al. (1991); *Harris et al. (2004)*
Acting as a role model/having credibility	*Bareham (2004);* Benoit & Graham (2005); Bland, Center et al. (2005); *Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005);* Brown & Moshavi (2002); Creswell & Brown (1992); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; Gordon et al. (1991;) *Harris et al. (2004);* Stark et al. (2002)
Creating a positive/collegial work atmosphere in the department	Ambrose et al. (2005); Benoit & Graham (2005); *Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005)*; Clott & Fjortoft (2000); Gomes & Knowles (1999); Johnsrud & Rosser (2002); Lindholm (2003); Mitchell (1987); *Moses & Roe (1990)*; Trocchia & Andrus (2003)
Advancing the department's cause with respect to constituencies internal and external to the university and being proactive in doing so	*Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005)*; Benoit & Graham (2005); Creswell & Brown (1992); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; *Harris et al. (2004)*; Mitchell (1987); *Moses & Roe (1990)*; Murry & Stauffacher (2001); Stark et al. (2002); Trocchia & Andrus (2003)
Providing feedback on performance	Ambrose et al. (2005); Bland, Center et al. (2005); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; *Harris et al. (2004)*; Trocchia & Andrus (2003)
Providing resources for and adjusting workloads to stimulate scholarship and research	Ambrose et al. (2005); Bland, Center et al. (2005); *Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005)*; Creswell & Brown (1992); *Creswell et al. (1990)*; Lindholm (2003); *Moses & Roe (1990)*
Making academic appointments that enhance department's reputation	*Bland, Weber-Main et al. (2005)*; Bolton (1996); Snyder et al. (1991)

factors which they felt were important such as knowing how much support academic staff need; how to motivate them; how to deal with difficult people; and conflict resolution. All of these can be discerned in Table 1.

Many of the skills which departmental chairs reported they were lacking in, and required further training on, were also the same as some of the 'effective leader behaviours' identified in Table 1, highlighting some areas of deficiency. The findings from the Wolverton et al study suggest that when taking up their positions as heads of department, incumbents often do not possess the skills they need to be effective leaders. The study also noted that virtually every chair who responded wished they had known more about the complexity of the position and the sheer variety of roles they would need to balance. This suggests that heads need to be able to respond in complex ways to their role, an issue that has been raised in relation to institutional leadership (see section 2, page 12), but only in a limited way in relation to departmental leadership.

There is evidence indicating that several of the leadership approaches listed in the table above, are more likely to be found among female than male leaders. For example, Voelck's study of managers of university libraries found that female managers were more likely to adopt a democratic, consensus-building approach that entailed building relationships and collective decision-making[4]. This is consistent with a study of UK academics at two universities by Barry et al. which found women leaders to be more supportive and less autocratic than male ones[5]. It is also fairly consistent with research into gender differences in leadership styles in a variety of contexts[6] although comprehensive data in this area are not directly relevant to this review.

In addition to the complex demands of the head of department role, much of the literature suggests that many departmental leaders are also in a strange position of being both temporary leaders and people who have not aspired to managerial or leadership positions. They are often perceived as people in the middle, hemmed in by a pincer movement of senior management and academic staff.

Transformational leadership approaches
Being in such a conflicting role does not readily facilitate the adoption of the transformational leadership approach extolled by many leadership writers, including those concerned with higher education leadership[7] as summarised in Box 1 (overleaf). A number of studies raise questions about the type of leadership carried out by heads of department and question how relevant transformational approaches are for these individuals in practice.

Henkel's research on 11 UK higher education institutions suggests that heads of department are viewed by senior managers as taking an insufficiently long-term and strategic orientation to managing their departments[8]. She found that 'heads of department do accept that they have a strategic role'[9], although noted that this view was more evident in relation to heads who were permanent or quasi-permanent. The list of areas in which elements of strategic thinking among departmental heads could be discerned in this study is interesting:

> "Heads of department had initiated major reviews of their degree programmes and of approaches to teaching and learning, as their departments adjusted to the increase in student numbers and the growing emphasis on preparation of students for the labour market. They were addressing long-term strategies to improve their research performance. They were endeavouring to find workable principles for the deployment of departmental resources, particularly staff, as new demands imposed new priorities, new burdens and new opportunities."[10]

While it is possible to discern strategic elements in this passage, it is less obvious that they are the kinds of strategic foci which are supposedly the ingredients of transformational leadership. Several of those mentioned are likely to be predominantly reactive, involving the need to respond to issues such as the Research Assessment Exercise ('addressing long-term strategies to improve their research performance'); internal and external auditing of programmes ('major reviews of their degree programmes and of approaches to teaching and learning'); and external changes like the 'massification' of higher education. There is much less evidence in the list of heads of department engaging in the kind of visionary thinking that is considered to be stuff of transformational leadership[11]. Australian research by Ramsden found that transformational leadership on the part of heads of department and programme coordinators was associated with student-focused approaches to teaching, which in turn was associated with perceptions of effective teaching from the

4   Voelck, J. (2003)
5   Barry, J. et al. (2001)
6   Eagly, A.H. et al., (2003); Eagly, A.H. and Carli, L.L (2004)
7   Eg Ramsden, P. (1998a)

8   Henkel, M. (2000) AND (2002)
9   Henkel, M. (2002) p37
10   Henkel, M. (2002) p37
11   eg Tichy, N. and Devanna, M.A. (1986)

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM THE WORK OF BERNARD BASS

Bernard Bass's (1985) interpretation of Burns's (1978) distinction between transformational leadership and transactional leadership has undergone several reconceptualisations. Several revisions have been carried out by Bass and his associates, the main departure from Burns was to see the two types of leadership as separate dimensions, instead of opposite ends of a continuum. The most prominent version which was used in the Brown and Moshavi (2002) paper, distinguishes between the following:

Transformational leadership tends to be made up of:

- Idealised influence: Entails leaders sharing risks with followers and being consistent in their dealings with them.
- Inspirational motivation: Providing meaning and challenge to followers; being enthusiastic; arousing commitment to future states.
- Intellectual stimulation: Stimulating innovation and creativity; encouraging new ways of dealing with work.
- Individualised consideration: Close attention paid to followers' needs; potential encouraged; personal differences recognised.

Transactional leadership comprises:

- Contingent reward: Rewarding follower for successfully completing assignments.
- Management-by-exception (active and passive): Either actively monitoring departures from procedure and errors among followers and taking appropriate action or passively waiting for departures from procedure and errors and then taking action.

A separate dimension of non-leadership (such as laissez-faire) is also distinguished.

Based on: Bass, B.M. (1985); Bass, B.M. (1999); Bass, B.M. et al. (2003)

perspective of students[12]. He argued that transformational leadership is particularly conducive to departments in which dialogue about teaching is encouraged. His study is also, interestingly, one of the very few studies encountered in the preparation of this report that examined leadership in relation to student rather than staff outcomes. The literature makes it very apparent that many departmental leaders suffer from conflicts of identity in that they seek to maintain an academic identity, whilst being under pressure from senior managers to take a long-term, strategic (even visionary) approach to running their departments. The fact that most will return to being members of the academic staff of their department, particularly in the pre-1992 chartered universities, probably amplifies this identity issue[13]. The chief point suggested here is that the kind of transformational leadership celebrated by some writers and encouraged by some senior university managers, may be difficult for some heads of department, at least in part because of the temporary status of the role.

Many heads of department also see themselves as ill-equipped for the role in terms of both prior experience

and training[14]. This is certainly not an ideal environment for transformational leadership, (with its emphasis on long-term thinking both in terms of projecting into the future and creating a launch pad for implementing the vision) to be employed. In fact, writers vary in the degree to which they think that transformational leadership is even relevant to departmental leadership[15]. For example, if Hecht is right that being an effective head of department 'is largely a process of self-education' and that it 'requires both enthusiasm and the vision to inspire combined with the hardnosed understanding of practical management'[16], then the actual context within which many UK[17] heads of department work is, at least to some degree, incompatible with these constituents of transformational leadership.

This is not to say that heads of department are ineffective leaders by virtue of the fact that many do not exhibit transformational leadership. Instead, they often seem to ascribe greater importance to other more 'managerial' elements, as an overview of the research by Benoit and Graham[18] and Carroll and Gmelch[19] highlights. Most notably, studies such as these suggest that heads see securing

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12 See also Martin, E. et al. (2003)
13 Henkel, M. (2002)
14 Johnson, R. (2002)
15 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p156-7

16 Hecht, I.W.D. (2004)
17 Hecht was writing about the US
18 Benoit, P. and Graham, S. (2005)
19 Carroll, J.B. and Gmelch, W.H. (1994)

resources for their departments and developing their staff as crucial components of their roles. These two activities are related in that they are both likely to be viewed as contributing to the success of the department, and arguably securing a good flow of resources into the department will also contribute to the development of staff. However, the degree to which these can be classified as leadership roles as such, is debatable for many writers (including Benoit and Graham, and Carroll and Gmelch).

Rather than focusing on transformational leadership, Knight and Trowler, in their study of English and Canadian university departments, suggest that departmental leaders should be seen as 'interactional' leaders, that is leaders who are sensitive to the unique qualities and culture of their departments[20]. This notion reflects the prominent belief that leaders are custodians of organisational culture as much as they are cultural change agents. Knight and Trowler suggest that departmental leaders in particular can be successful by working with and through existing cultural patterns, and by using these patterns as the basis for cultivating trust relationships and helping to get things done. This is an interesting thesis which can help challenge exhortations to engage in transformational leadership, however it is not at all clear how far these inferences about interactional leadership emerged out of these authors' empirical research.

Reluctant managers[21]

To a significant extent many heads of department can also be considered 'reluctant managers', a term used by Scase and Goffee[22] (albeit in a rather different way and context). Many heads of department seem to be reluctant in the sense that they see themselves primarily as academics rather than as managers. For these academic staff, being a leader or having managerial responsibilities is not a priority and many did not think of themselves as prospective managers when they become academics[23].

A number of studies highlight the relatively low status attributed to leadership and management responsibilities among some academics. In the UK, evidence suggests that becoming a head of department is rarely perceived to be a career move, and that in fact it may be viewed as a hinderance[24], although for self-described 'career' heads of department in statutory universities who were appointed following an advertisement, this argument is clearly less

pervasive. Meredith and Wunsch's study at the University of Hawaii, Manoa[25], reported that when heads of department were asked about rewards and incentives for being a department chair, aspects like 'career path to other administrative positions', and 'recognition and status within the university community' were considered relatively unimportant. Instead, they tended to glean rewards from such things as 'having a significant impact on others' and 'interaction with colleagues'. In Australian studies, Marshall et al. reported that leadership and managerial roles were of low value to most academics[26] and Bellamy et al. found that among academics in business and management fields, 'leadership opportunities' were very low on a list of reasons for remaining in academia[27].

Further evidence comes from Lindholm's study of academic staff attitudes at a US research university. Here, a full-time male professor said of the role of department chair: 'That's a job I'd pay not to have'[28]. The study found that where such roles were valued, this was more likely to be in relation to teaching, research and community service rather than because of the flow of information, finances, or human resources management. Why so many academic staff agree to take up the role of head of department, despite this perceived lack of status, and despite the knowledge that the obligation is usually temporary, is likely to be the outcome of several possible factors as the ruminations of one reluctant manager suggest:

> "So why do good people do this? What principled madness leads them to believe that they can hold such power within themselves? Perhaps they are bored with smaller lives, with lives spent writing and teaching. Perhaps they see the failings of their predecessors and believe they could do better. Perhaps they weren't strong enough to refuse, or they were curious to taste the thin air at higher levels in their organisation, or felt it was their turn. Perhaps they have lots of children, and need the money. Perhaps they want to escape from home, from themselves, from the emptiness. Perhaps they want to change the world."[29]

In other words, for many heads of department, acquiring the position does not necessarily represent a career move, or a role to which they have aspired[30].

[20] Knight, P.T. and Trowler, T.R. (2001)
[21] None of the reflections in this section are marked with a horizontal line in the margin, even though they are only partly a product of the systematic review search. This is because the discussion is slightly independent of the issue of leadership effectiveness, despite arguably having implications for it.
[22] Scase, R. and Goffee, R. (1989)
[23] Bryson, C. and Barnes, N. (2000)

[24] Jackson, M.P. (1999)
[25] Meredith, G.M. and Wunsch, M.A. (1991)
[26] Marshall, S.J. et al. (2000)
[27] Bellamy, A. et al. (2003)
[28] Lindholm, J.A. (2003) p141-2
[29] Parker, M. (2004) p54
[30] Dearlove, J. (2002)

However, it is important to appreciate that negative views about taking on the role of head of department are by no means universal, and in some cases change after being appointed. Henkel describes one example of a sociologist who had taken the job of head of department in a statutory university, and who 'now felt he had largely left the pursuit of his discipline behind and saw being a manager as his prime role[31]', this individual went on to think and read a great deal about the subject. A sense of considerable pride in the achievements of heads is also displayed in some studies[32]. Further, there is no reason, or evidence, to suggest that just because many heads of department are reluctant managers they are ineffective leaders.

Leadership or Management

When investigating whether heads of department are effective leaders, at least in the UK context, thought must be given to the question of whether they can be considered leaders in the theoretical sense, at all. This question relies on a distinction between leaders and managers which is difficult to apply in practice, as much of the literature has highlighted. Some of the writers reviewed for this report have further suggested that the changes introduced across the sector, since the early 1990s in particular, have significantly altered the balance of leadership and management activities undertaken by heads of department.

In a rather personal account comparing his own time as a head of department at Heriot-Watt University in the late 1980s and then again in the late 1990s, Paul Hare depicts a change from being an academic leader in the first period to being more of a manager in the second[33]. As such, he portrays a shift from exercising 'influence over the academic priorities, productivity and profile of a department or school', towards being a line manager 'within the established institutional structures and hierarchies'[34] in the late 1990's. Hare also notes that he had a much bigger role in the formulation of his department's strategy in these later years.

Similarly, Bryson's more recent research on UK academics strongly suggests that heads of department are so constrained by developments, external and internal to their departments, that they are limited in the degree to which they can exhibit leadership[35]. One of his informants, the head of a social science department, said:

"Administrative workloads for heads of department, driven by bureaucratic procedures like the Research Assessment Exercise and Teaching Quality Assessment, have become totally unrealistic, out of all proportion to the financial reward. They severely damage the possibility of doing some strategic thinking and providing some academic leadership, and so have become self-defeating."[36]

In a similar way, Henkel identified the conflicting demands of 'responding to a tide of external demands and crises' versus 'the need to engage in a strategic approach' as one of the three main tensions in the head of department's role (the other two were academic versus administrative work and nurturing individuals versus changing departments)[37].

Johnson's research on UK manager-academics, many of whom were heads of department, suggested that these individuals were readily able and inclined to distinguish management and leadership, but that they identified themselves mainly with the latter, particularly with intellectual leadership[38]. It is not clear from the research whether this was an aspirational stance, or a purely factual account of the realities of their lives as manager-academics. Johnson, in fact, argues that this apparent valorisation of leadership over management is not merely a rhetorical device designed to create distance from crude managerialism, but that it expresses a strategy that is 'appropriate, effective and amenable within the higher education environment'[39].

A number of the writers discussed so far depict the current trends in higher education as nudging heads of department towards management rather than leadership, and it is difficult not to infer a sense of resistance through their apparent prioritisation of leadership. A related issue was identified in Prichard and Willmott's investigation of four universities[40]. One of the respondents, a dean, reported that while he had been a head of department, he saw his role as one of 'protecting colleagues and their existing professional practices'. His department had successfully adapted to many of the changes required of it and had managed to do so without disrupting the departmental culture and the work patterns of the staff. The dean described himself as, in this sense, acting as a 'barrier'. In fact, his success in leading this department in this way led to greater recognition in terms of promotion to dean and elevation to national committees. His resistant stance

31   Henkel, M. (2000) p243
32   Parker, M. (2004)
33   Hare, P. and Hare, L. (2002)
34   Hare, P. and Hare, L. (2002) p36
35   Bryson, C. (2004)

36   Bryson, C. (2004) p46
37   Henkel, M. (2000)
38   Johnson, R. (2002)
39   Johnson, R. (2002) p49
40   Prichard, C. and Willmott, H. (1997) p302

seems to have protected his staff and resulted in recognition both within and beyond his university for doing so. In terms of Evans' position on leadership in universities,

leadership ➡ work context ➡ work attitudes[41]

this individual's resistant style of leadership had a direct impact on the work context of his staff which had a positive bearing on their work attitudes.

It is impossible to know from research like that of Prichard and Willmott how pervasive such a 'resistant' or 'protective' stance is, but it does perhaps highlight the positive effects of an approach to leadership at the head of department level, that does not entail a capitulation to managerialist pressures. What is significant about this case in particular is that it was precisely the disinclination to capitulate to such drives that earned respect and recognition within, as well as beyond, his own institution. It is also possible that the expressed preference for leadership over management by heads at the department level is an aspiration that is difficult to realise in practice. This would be consistent with Hare's account of the changes in the role of head of department that he personally encountered which are discussed previously[42].

These findings are also in tune with Bareham's research on UK and Australian heads of business schools[43]. Bareham found that the heads believed it was crucial for them to retain an empathy with the values of their staff, in all dealings. One difficulty for heads of department in this regard is highlighted by evidence that academic staff are increasingly adopting a variety of different academic identities as they respond to the variety of changes that have been brought to bear on higher education in the UK[44] and in Australia[45]. Contrasting and often fluid identities represent a shifting motivational context for heads of department, and this suggests that they themselves need to be flexible in how they relate to the diversity of identities with which they are faced. While Bareham may be right that many heads of department seek to retain an empathy with the values of their academic staff, this shifting identity adds complexity to his findings.

Research carried out by Smith in both a chartered and a statutory university[46], suggests that in the UK context, how heads perceive their own roles might differ in relation to university type. His research indicates that in chartered universities heads of department are more likely to see themselves as academic leaders, but in the post-1992 chartered universities they perceive their roles largely in line-management terms. There was agreement among heads of department in both of these institutions that the most important attributes of a head were interpersonal skills, vision, and communication skills. These attributes correspond to a number of those set out in Table 1. This is an interesting consensus, but studies like this unfortunately cannot tell us how successful heads of department are in exhibiting such skills, or how effective they are in the role.

Implications of the leadership context

There is also another possibility which is not inconsistent with the view of leadership as an aspirational, or even a resistant, stance. In the account given by one of Middlehurst's interviewees.

> "Leadership is the development of a vision which dictates the framework within which one seeks to move. Without vision you can't continue. A leader has to motivate people, making sure that they're all going in the same direction. A leader has to maintain momentum and keep morale high. This involves getting people together, talking to them and listening to their views. A leader also has to see possibilities." [47]

The stance presented here is very much in tune with the new leadership approach which had become part of the management-speak of that period, and to a significant extent still is part of the language of the present day. This stance can similarly be found in a study by Bargh et al. of senior managers in UK universities[48] where remarks about 'having a vision of where the university is going' and 'charting a course' were commonplace[49]. These would also be in tune with the heroic narratives that high-profile corporate leaders frequently employ to explain their accomplishments[50]. It may be that what we witness in these accounts of academic leadership is the use of a filter, whereby heads of department interpret what they do in terms of the management language and rhetoric of the day[51]. This mass mediatisation of leaders and leadership provides a strong story that leaders can draw upon to portray their own leadership[52].

41 Evans, L. (2001)
42 Hare, P. and Hare, L. (2002)
43 Bareham, J.R. (2004)
44 Barry, J. et al. (2006); Trowler, P. (1997)
45 Churchman, D. (2006)
46 Smith, R. (2002)
47 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p138

48 Bargh, C. et al. (2000)
49 Eg Bargh, C. et al. (2000) p59
50 Gronn, P. (2002)
51 It should be acknowledged here that this interpretation of leadership was not actually uncovered in Turnbull and Edwards' 2005 case study of an organisational development intervention
52 Boje, D.M. and Rhodes, C. (2005)

It is not suggested that heads of department and others deceive interviewers when asked about their headships, but simply that the narratives of the day provide discursive resources which they draw upon to explain what they do. It also suggests that to really understand departmental leadership we need to know much more about what heads of department actually do[53], not simply what they describe themselves as doing, and understand more about how their actions are perceived by members of staff.

2. INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL SUMMARY

Table 2 (opposite) summarises the main findings from the literature review in relation to effective leadership at an institutional level. As in Table 1, while there are some inconsistencies and different foci in the studies, it would seem that the leadership-related activities outlined in Table 2 are all associated with measures of effectiveness at institutional level. The list does not include all of the forms of leader behaviour identified by the various investigators reviewed for this report, only those where there was a fairly apparent recurrence across studies.

The same awareness of the limitations of the review is necessary in reading this table, as was noted in relation to Table 1.

Further analysis of the findings, and a more detailed discussion of each of the studies from Table 2, can be found in the Institutional Level section of the extended project report[54].

Perceptions of Institutional Leaders

There is a tendency for some of the literature covered, at the institutional level in particular, to adopt a top-down approach that emphasises what senior leaders do, but pay less attention to how others interpret what they say and do. Evidence indicates that the responses of individuals to leadership behaviours and styles are not only difficult to predict but can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the leader. For example, Tierney's study of a Catholic liberal arts college just after the arrival of a new principal illustrates how many of the new incumbent's actions were misinterpreted by others[55]. In part, problems arose when the individual in question failed to recognise some of the college's previous predilections, such as for oral rather than written forms of communication, so that her use of formal, written communications was perceived as a sign of remoteness and lack of accessibility. Her open door policy

which could have been construed as symbolising accessibility and a willingness to communicate, was further viewed as a failure to communicate. It could be argued that as a leader she should have been more sensitive to the nature of the college, but as Tierney writes: 'throughout the [...study] and on every level of the campus community, we find participants who misconstrued intended meanings'[56].

Neumann provides a further example in a case study of one of the institutions in his Institutional Leadership Project study[57]. Like Tierney's case study, this is also about the arrival of a new leader – the president of Blue Stone College. However, this new president fared well in the early years of his incumbency. One of his most significant early initiatives was to change the widely-held view among college members that the institution was financially strapped. At the same time, he sought to introduce marketable degree programmes to inject further money into the college. Unsurprisingly, staff responded positively to their newly found affluence and to the new president's willingness to discuss these and other actions. His self-confessed aim was one of 'leading by infecting people with vision'[58]. The president's aim was not to 'change everything' but for the institution to acquire a better sense of its identity and to move forward from there. However, in spite of positive responses from many individuals and the success of this vision, many also reacted adversely to the way the media was courted by the college and expressed concerns that the college would lose contact with its roots as a result of expansion. In other words, although the president was seeking to help college members recover their roots, there were concerns that the accent on expansion and improving the financial bottom line would actually result in the opposite taking place. Further, his actions were seen by some as risky and, although it was recognised that a degree of risk-taking was important, this too was viewed as inconsistent with college traditions.

Further insight into misperception of leadership initiatives can be seen in Kezar's case study of a community college in the US[59]. She shows how the president introduced a 'servant leadership' model because he felt that the hierarchical and directive approach that prevailed in the institution did not accord with his own beliefs about decision-making processes. This model was deemed to entail a collaborative, participative approach with open communication. In view of many of the findings discussed elsewhere in this report, it

53   As Thody, A. (1989) did with a senior university manager, and as Sloper, D.W. (1996) and Bargh, C. et al. (2000) did with vice-chancellors
54   Please visit http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/research/projects/brymanleic.html for details about the extended report
55   Tierney, W.G. (1987)

56   Tierney, W.G. (1987) p245
57   Neumann, A. (1995)
58   Quoted in Neumann, A. (1995) p263
59   Kezar, A. (2001)

TABLE 2

MAIN LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

As in the previous table, those studies which were not a product of the systematic review are in italics

LEADER BEHAVIOUR	MAIN LITERATURE ITEMS DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADER BEHAVIOUR
A proactive approach to pursuing the university's mission	Birnbaum (1992a); Cameron (1986); Cameron & Tschirhart (1992); Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991); Gioia & Thomas (1996); Neumann & Bensimon (1990); *Neumann & Neumann (1999)*; Smart et al. (1997); *Ramaley (1996)*; *Rice & Austin (1988)*
An emphasis on a visionary approach that guides and provides focus for what the leader seeks to achieve for the institution	Bargh et al. (2000); Cameron & Tschirhart (1992); Eckel & Kezar (2003a); Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991); Kezar & Eckel (2002a); *Neumann & Neumann (1999)*; *Ramaley (1996)*; *Rice & Austin (1988)*
Being internally focused, ie in being well connected in the institution, being seen and drawing inspiration from its participants	Kezar & Eckel (2002a); Neumann & Bensimon (1990); Tierney (1987)
Being externally focused, ie networking with a variety of constituencies and reinforcing within those constituencies the direction the university is taking - good understanding of higher education	*Boyett (1996)*; Cameron & Tschirhart (1992); Michael et al. (2001); Neumann & Bensimon (1990)
Having personal integrity	Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991); Rantz (2002)
Introducing changes in a way that entails consultation with others	Allen (2003); Bensimon (1993); Birnbaum (1992a,b); Cameron & Smart (1998); Cameron & Tschirhart (1992); Eckel & Kezar (2003a); Ferguson & Cheyne (1995); Fjortoft & Smart (1994); Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991); Gioia & Thomas (1996); Kezar & Eckel (2002a); *Ramsden (1998a)*; *Ramaley (1996)*; *Rice & Austin (1988)*; Smart et al. (1997)
Importance of not sealing leaders off from the university at large	Bensimon (1993); Birnbaum (1992b); Cameron & Tschirhart (1992); Eckel & Kezar (2003a); Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991); Rantz (2002)
Importance of not undermining pre-existing organisational culture	Birnbaum (1992b); Kezar & Eckel (2002a; 2002b); *Rice & Austin (1988)*; Simsek & Louis (1994)
Being flexible in approach to leadership	Bensimon (1989); Birnbaum (1992a,b); Eckel & Kezar (2003); Smart (2003)
Entrepreneurial/risk-taking	Neumann & Bensimon (1990); Smart et al. (1997)
Influencing the organisational culture and values to support change	Bargh et al. (2000); Birnbaum (1992b); Eckel & Kezar (2003a/2003b); *Ramaley (1996)*; *Rice & Austin (1988)*; Simsek & Louis (1994); Smart et al. (1997)
Designing structures to support change	Bensimon (1993); Eckel & Kezar (2003a/2003b); Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991); Kezar & Eckel (2002a); *Ramaley (1996)*

might be anticipated that this initiative would be enthusiastically received. However, Kezar found that several groups felt alienated from the servant leadership model, for example those with an entrepreneurial approach, those who preferred to work individually, and those who were more introverted. In addition, some members of the college believed that leadership had been construed by the president in an excessively singular way as he did not admit alternative perceptions, approaches or forms of participation. Kezar suggests that the president, in this case, failed to recognise that a campus will include a wide variety of types of groups with different beliefs and approaches to college governance and leadership. Defining leadership in a certain way and then impressing it on the academic community was therefore insensitive to the plurality of perspectives that existed (in fact, it could be argued that it was also inconsistent with its own underlying non-heirarchical precepts). Further light is shed on this issue by Finlay who conducted a case study at Strathclyde University[60], one of the 'entrepreneurial universities' originally identified by Clark[61]. In his original study, Clark drew up a number of features of these successful entrepreneurial universities, such as 'a successful integration of managerial values with traditional academic ones' and 'an entrepreneurial culture that permeates all areas and levels'. However his data were gleaned more or less exclusively from interviews with small numbers of senior managers at each university[62]. At Strathclyde, Finlay conducted interviews with staff who were not senior managers to investigate whether similar results would be found using this broader sample. Some of the interviews did reveal a view of Strathclyde as an entrepreneurial university with a strong sense of strategic direction, however the general tenor of the findings suggested a much less unitary view of the organisational culture than reported in Clark's original findings suggested. This finding has some significance for the study of institutional leadership because it implies that the capacity of senior managers to mould their universities and instil a particular vision among staff may not be as great as some suppose, when a wider constituency of individuals is involved.

So across these quite contrasting cases, we can see a similar message: leaders have limited control over how their visionary excursions will be perceived and interpreted by others. It is therefore important to bear in mind when undertaking researching this area, that concentrating on what leaders do and say they do is bound to be limiting and

unlikely to give a full picture of leadership effectiveness. Hatch makes the following comment about the Gioia and Chittipeddi case study listed in Table 2.

> "Although the president was a major player in the initiation of strategic change, his influence depended heavily on the ways in which others symbolised and interpreted his efforts. The outcome of the president's influence ultimately rested with others' interpretations and the effect these interpretations had on cultural assumptions and expectations. In this light, it is worthwhile questioning whether the president was as central to the initiation effort, or the organisational culture, as he first appeared to be."[63]

Hence while leaders may be managers of meaning[64], they are not controllers of meaning, and a great deal can depend upon how their activities are perceived.

3. THE LITERATURE REVIEW: OVERALL FINDINGS

One surprising finding from this review was the discovery of just how little literature directly examines the research question of 'what approaches to leadership in higher education are effective'. Much of the literature addresses this issue in an indirect way, for example by seeking to describe some of the activities or styles of leaders who are judged to be effective. Studies such as this are unable to draw any firm conclusions about effective leadership approaches, as it is by no means impossible that the styles or even many of the practices of effective leaders, are the same as those of ineffective leaders. A key problem is that not enough is known about exactly what makes an individual effective as a leader in the higher education context, and what in turn can make them ineffective.

A possible reason for this lack of research on leadership effectiveness, is that the literature on higher education leadership has become rather self-contained and makes relatively little cross-reference to wider leadership theory and research (in which the factors directly associated with effective leadership are well researched). This is consistent with Tight's view of the field of higher education research as an 'atheoretical' community of practice[65]. If leadership in relation to higher education professionals, such as academics, is genuinely different from the leadership of other groups which have been the traditional domain of leadership theory and research, it might be argued that

60 Finlay, I. (2004)
61 Clark, B.R. (1998)
62 Deem, R. (2001)

63 Hatch, M.J. (1993) p681-2
64 Smircich, L. and Morgan, G. (1982)
65 Tight, M. (2004)

higher education researchers are justified in their lack of attention to this area. However, some clarification about the relationship between leadership theory more generally, and leadership as it relates specifically to higher education would be valuable, and could help place research findings in a relevant theoretical framework. For example some reflections at the end of this report note that there is a similarity between the forms of leader behaviour of heads of department and institutional heads, as depicted in Tables 1 and 2, and some general principles suggested by leadership researchers (See Boxes 2 and 3, pages 28 and 29). What is perhaps needed is the generation of new categories of leader behaviour which relate directly to higher education, instead of those that have provided the language of leadership theory and research for many years.

Transformational leadership approaches

Where ideas from leadership theory and research are drawn upon within higher educational research, there is a tendency to emphasise concepts associated with the new leadership approach such as transformational leadership or vision[66.] This is particularly evident in studies within the time period being examined in this report, and is particularly the case in research that focuses on institutional, rather than departmental, leadership[67] as discussed in section 1, page 5. However, it is also interesting to note that by no means all writers on higher education leadership support the notion that transformational leadership provides the best model for understanding and developing general principles for leaders in the sector. Both in his review of the literature and his perception of the implications of the Institutional Leadership Project research on university presidential leadership[68], Birnbaum argues that most of the time these leaders are necessarily transactional rather than transformational leaders - because a great deal of damage could be inflicted on faculty support if transformation was too regular, or so deep that it disrupted existing cultural patterns within institutions[69]. In suggesting that transactional leadership is more central to presidents than transformational leadership, Birnbaum is placing an accent on the exchange relationship between leader and follower that is at the heart of this type of leadership[70]. Of course, as he argues, the higher education context does not simply require one or the other as Burns tended to infer. It could be argued that Birnbaum uses a particular interpretation of transformational leadership here. As formulated originally by Burns[71] and Bass[72], the term is

only partly about organisational transformation, which is Birnbaum's interpretation; it is also (and arguably more fundamentally) about the transformation of people. For Burns, transformational leadership entails binding 'leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose'[73], which in practice may or may not entail an element of organisational transformation.

Birnbaum's main argument is that despite the tendency to place special value on transformational leadership in much of the literature, it would be wrong to infer that presidents should be exclusively 'transformational' in their approach. He suggests that effective leaders do not exhibit one style of leadership exclusively and in fact, Birnbaum himself prefers using the concepts of instrumental and interpretive leadership, where the former is aligned with stability and the latter with change. For him, instrumental leadership is to do with coordinating activities, making sensible decisions, representing one's institution, and dealing with crises; while interpretive leadership involves changing how the institution is perceived and how it relates to its external environment. His research finds that most presidents begin the job intending to exercise interpretive leadership but find this difficult to sustain – and suggests that the typical president exercises instrumental leadership but little or no interpretive leadership. What is particularly important is his belief that 'exemplary' presidents exercise both types of leadership, instrumental and interpretive, not simply one or the other. The inference that different situations call for a different leadership style, and the belief that approaches such as transformational leadership are likely not to be effective in some situations, are gaining increasing support within the higher education literature.

Distributed / dispersed leadership

While the new leadership approach is still popular, increasing attention has also been given to the idea of distributed or dispersed leadership which emphasises leadership in operation at all levels and regions of an organisation, and its constituent departments. This has been a significant focus in recent school leadership research[74], particularly research with a strong policy orientation[75], but has so far been less significant for higher education researchers.

Distributed and dispersed leadership concepts draw attention to leadership capacity in a variety of formal and

[66] Bryman, A. (1992); Pielstick, C.D. (1998)
[67] Eg Ramsden, P. (1998b)
[68] As discussed on page 12
[69] Bensimon, E.M. et al. (1989); Birnbaum, R. (1992b)
[70] Birnbaum, R. (1992b)

[71] Burns, J.M. (1978)
[72] Bass, B.M. (1985)
[73] Burns, J.M. (1978) p20
[74] The term 'school' here refers to primary/secondary level education institutions
[75] Eg Gronn, P. (2003)

informal roles within organisations, and as such stand in contrast to the top-down and 'great person' emphasis in much new leadership theory and research. Knight and Trowler maintain that '[l]eadership in higher education at the departmental level and below is best when it is distributed across the workgroup'[76], though it is unclear from where the evidence for this bold contention derives. Birnbaum also discusses this concept, noting the large number of roles in US higher education institutions that entail a sizeable leadership component, and calling this shared approach 'dispersed leadership'[77]. While the acknowledgement of the existence of this form of leadership is interesting, exactly what it entails or what leadership effectiveness in relation to such dispersed leadership might mean, is not fully explained in such studies.

In Smith's UK study of departmental leadership in both a statutory and a chartered university he reports that in the latter, research was central to the department's operation and that according to one of the professors '[m]ost of the day-to-day leadership [wa]s dispersed to … leaders of the research groups'[78]. Somewhat separately, Smith also found that the staff felt leadership was dispersed quite a lot in both departments, although the process of distributing leadership varied by university, with implementation via a formal process in the statutory university and a less formal one in the chartered institution. It is not clear exactly what form they felt this dispersed leadership took, for example whether it related to formal roles within departments or was independent of such roles. In the chartered university, Smith describes the dispersed leadership as associated with chairing departmental committees and leading the research groups. In the statutory university, the formal structure of course and module leaders and year leaders formed the foundation of the dispersed leadership but in addition, informal processes of leadership were also discerned. These less formal roles have attracted far less attention among higher education leadership researchers who have mainly concentrated on institutional, school/faculty and departmental leadership.

A form of dispersed leadership was also evident in the study of UK vice-chancellors by Bargh et al[79]. What comes across in this study is that at this level 'leadership', if it is to be successfully accomplished, can rarely be a solitary activity

and instead involves the constant interaction with colleagues in the pursuit of a 'shared vision of reality consistent with broader institutional goals'[80]. This study suggests that setting strategic direction is not a simple case of free-wheeling transformational leaders acting alone, but in fact must involve working with senior managers and others in pursuit of the optimum course for universities. The impression gained from this study is that in practice, vice-chancellors need to influence these senior managers in order to change thought and action, because they act as emissaries and foot soldiers, persuading the wider institutional community of the significance and importance of new directions. At this level then, a sense of collective if not dispersed leadership is certainly evident, with vice-chancellors providing the impetus for direction.

As is so often the case when theoretical approaches enter into academic debates, the distributed and dispersed leadership tradition is already attracting some critical comment in relation to schools[81], and the potential for conflict over the boundaries of decision-making in distributed systems is beginning to emerge[82]. Middlehurst has remarked that collective leadership, a term that has affinities with dispersed leadership, needs consistency to be effective in practice, and as such requires a clear mandate from the centre[83]. Ramsden also argues that when leadership is distributed, it is even more necessary 'to have clear objectives and high-level vision at the centre to which local leaders are committed'[84]. This can be difficult to achieve given the strong traditions among academic staff of autonomy and individualism in working practices to which many commentators draw attention. Birnbaum highlights the tendency towards fissiparousness that lies at the heart of dispersed leadership[85], although he also suggests that dispersed leadership can be harnessed if the appropriate structures exist. Further, most studies do not address an important prior question posed by Locke, namely that when leadership is to be shared, which leadership tasks and roles is it appropriate to disperse?[86] Locke argues that some roles should not be included in the dispersal of leadership and as many studies show, successful dispersed or collective leadership, also requires a clear central vision and direction.

Moreover, little research exists on whether, or how far, the low value many academics place on leadership and

76 Knight, P.T. and Trowler, P.R. (2001) p176
77 Birnbaum, R. (1992b)
78 Smith, R. (2005) p454
79 Bargh, C. et al. (2000)
80 Bargh, C. et al. (2000) p92
81 Primary/secondary education institutions

82 Storey, A. (2004)
83 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p107
84 Ramsden, P. (1998a) p257
85 Birnbaum, R. (1992b)
86 Locke, E.A. (2003)

managerial positions places limits (or even militates against) the prospects for the introduction of dispersed leadership in universities. There are many roles within departments that perhaps look like leadership roles on the surface, such as course tutor, programme director, year tutor, and director of research, all of which may play a significant role in promoting a quality culture[87]. However, the extent to which these positions offer potential for true leadership to be exhibited is difficult to establish and it is possible that many of them are perceived to be largely routine administrative roles. Further, roles like course tutor and programme director are not just to do with the leadership of other staff but also of students. This perhaps further inhibits our ability to investigate the leadership potential in such roles, because we know very little about the impact on students of different leadership approaches and styles. This is largely because most research on higher education leadership is concerned with outcomes for employees rather than students.[88]

We also know very little about the other costs and consequences of distributing leadership to those who do not strive for it[89]. If there genuinely is meant to be a leadership component dispersed across such roles, imposing this on individuals if they are not properly trained, or inclined, to take on such positions may entail personal and organisational costs.

Leading higher education professionals

One of the concepts from leadership theory and research that has so far had surprisingly little impact on the study of leadership in higher education is Kerr and Jermier's influential notion of substitutes for leadership[90]. Their original claim was that there are features of organisations and the people who work in them that can neutralise the impact of leadership. This is a potentially significant concept within a higher education context because of the suggestion that when 'subordinates' have a professional orientation and a need for independence – both of which are arguably characteristics of academic staff – the impact of leader behaviour will be neutralised. Kerr and Jermier argued that a professional orientation and a need for independence would neutralise the impact of both relationship and task-oriented leadership[91]. They also suggested that when tasks are intrinsically satisfying, as

academic work is for many university staff[92], a relationship orientation will be neutralised.

The research conducted within the substitutes for leadership model has failed to provide unequivocal confirmation of its underlying principles. A meta-analysis of the substitutes for leadership research concluded that 'more than 20 years of research on the substitutes model has generally failed to support the model's hypotheses'[92]. While hardly a ringing endorsement for the model, part of the reason for its failure to receive empirical confirmation may be that most of the research has emphasised the 'task' versus 'relationship' contrast or leader reward behaviour. (In one other study which examined substitutes for leadership in relation to transformational leadership, here too the substitutes model was found to be wanting[94]).

Despite the lack of support for the model itself, much of the leadership literature does suggest that professionals require a different, or more subtle, form of leadership than non-professionals. In other words, leadership in the traditional sense of providing direction in the carrying out of tasks, is still likely to be less significant for professionals like university employees than for some other occupational groups. Such a view is consistent with hints in leadership literature on the management of professionals, as Mintzberg suggests: 'Most professional workers require little direct supervision from managers'[95]. Instead he suggests they require a covert form of leadership entailing 'protection and support', which involves leaders attending to links with important constituencies that help cultivate legitimacy and support for their department or organisation. Raelin, who wrote a book on the management of professionals, in relation to the management of academics concludes by arguing that the 'management of autonomy' is central to the management of the academic[96]. What these reflections suggest is that leadership in the traditional sense (ie associated with much of the leadership theory and research) may only be of partial relevance in the higher education context because academics' professionalism and the intrinsic satisfaction that many of them glean from their work could mitigate the kind of leadership they need. This may also partially account for the deep ambivalence expressed by many academics towards leadership and management in their organisations.

87 Gordon, G. (2002)
88 The study by Ramsden 1998a which is referred to on page 7 of this report, is one of the few studies encountered that examined leadership in relation to student rather than staff outcomes.
89 Huffington, C. et al. (2004)
90 Kerr, S. and Jermier J.M. (1978)
91 At the time of this study, leadership research tended to concentrate upon a contrast between relationship-oriented (characterised by behaviour indicative of relationships of

trust and mutual respect), & task-oriented (characaterised by an emphasis on goal-directed activity and securing structures to get things done) leadership.
92 This is discussed further in the section on 'Job satisfaction and stress among university personnel' pxx
93 Podsakoff, P.M. et al. (1996a) p396
94 Podsakoff, P.M. et al. (1996b)
95 Mintzberg, H. (1998) p143
96 Raelin, J.A.(1991); (1995: p210)

In fact, there is some evidence that leadership in the traditional sense, to the extent that it is overt and interferes with autonomy, may actually be significant for its adverse effects in higher education institutions, rather than for the positive ones that might be achieved in other contexts or milieus. In other words, this form of leadership may sometimes be more significant for the problems it can foster than for its benefits. This suggests that a key issue in higher education is not so much about what leaders should do, but what they should avoid doing. It also implies that leaders might do better to adopt a minimalist leadership approach, a suggestion which is consistent with Middlehurst's helpful characterisation of the role of leadership in the cybernetic[97] organisation:

> "Birnbaum [1988] argues that, in general, interventions from leaders (departmental or institutional, in our example) should be limited in order to allow the self-correcting mechanisms of the institution to operate effectively. Instead the leadership role should include the establishment of priorities, the design of appropriate early warning and communication systems, the coordination and balancing of the various subsystems within the institution and the directing of attention, symbolically and actively, towards the priority areas."[98]

All forms of leader behaviour carry risks that they will have adverse effects[99]. The substitutes for leadership literature reminds us that the leadership of internally motivated and broadly satisfied staff requires considerable care[100]. A salutary point has been made by Chalmers, a leading figure in the evidence-based practice movement:

> "Policy makers and practitioners inevitably intervene in other people's lives. Despite the best intentions, their policies and practices sometimes have unintended, unwanted effects, and they occasionally do more harm than good. This reality should prompt humility, and it should be the main motivation for ensuring that their prescriptions and proscriptions for other people are informed by reliable research evidence."[101]

This offers a note of caution: not only have leadership researchers been disinclined to investigate the negative impacts of leadership styles (other than in a few very specific areas[102]), but the substitutes for leadership concept highlights the adverse effects that leadership can exert on certain groups of workers. The quote above further reminds us of the need for systematic research on the impacts of leader behaviour, both positive and negative, particularly in the field of higher education.

The substitutes for leadership concept is more complex in relation to higher education leadership in the UK and Australia because in these countries, the wider political climate challenges the underlying precepts of the concept as far as universities are concerned. Trow has observed that the rise of managerialism in UK universities reflects a 'withdrawal of trust by government from the universities'[103]. Not only are university leaders enjoined through the Rayner and Dearing reports to be more managerial in their approach to running universities and dealing with their staff, but the machinery associated with teaching and research audits denotes a lack of trust in the reliability of the inner motivations of staff and the quality of what they do. Thus, while there may be a prima facie case for arguing that leadership is less likely to be significant for highly motivated and committed professional groups like university staff because professionalism can act as a substitute for leadership, this is certainly not the view of government. In part, this arises out of a need felt by governments to demonstrate to sceptical taxpayers, value for money in the public services. However it also reflects an unwillingness to accept the very premise on which the substitutes for leadership concept stands, namely that professionalism acts as a substitute for leadership, thereby rendering traditional leadership less important for the motivation of academics. As far as governments are concerned, the hands-off leadership associated with a cybernetic image is not politically or otherwise acceptable.

Collegiality

Collegiality frequently surfaces in discussions of leadership for at least two main reasons. Firstly because collegiality is depicted as declining under the rise of managerialism and the new public management[104]. Secondly, because leaders are frequently viewed as having a role in cultivating collegiality, although they are also often viewed as engaging in behaviour or creating values that are inimical to it. A key problem with research in this area is knowing exactly what is meant by the term 'collegiality' as many writers do not indicate how they are defining it even loosely. From the literature reviewed for this study, there appear to be two main meanings which correspond loosely to what

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97 The cybernetic image entails the notion of the organisation as a living organism. As such it carries the connotation of something that is flexible and which has the ability to be self-correcting when deviations from the norm are encountered. As such it implies a relatively optimistic vision of the organisation as something that learns as it encounters its environment and takes corrective action when necessary.
98 Middlehurst, R. (1993) p64

99 McCauley, C.D. (2004)
100 See section on job satisfaction and stress 2.2
101 Chalmers, I. (2005) p228
102 Such as in Conger, J.A. (1990)
103 Trow, M. (1994) p13
104 Such as in Bryson, C. (2004)

Tapper and Palfreyman, writing in the context of the Oxbridge model, refer to as 'academic demos' and 'intellectual collegiality'[105].

The first meaning associates collegiality with consensual decision-making. Decisions are supposed to be arrived at through discussion and debate, and outcomes accomplished through the full participation of knowledgeable and committed peers. It seems likely that this is the meaning Ramsden had in mind when he claimed that collegiality as an approach to managing today's universities is obsolete[106], and what Deem meant when she wrote that her focus groups conducted with UK university staff revealed a perception that 'collegiality was being replaced by more overt line-management'[107]. Further, when Raelin suggests that for change to occur in universities, 'collegiality and persuasion must reign over bureaucratic control' he is referring to this meaning of collegiality, as 'critical debate and open examination'[108]. Research on academic staff in Australia also suggests that this form of collegial decision-making has declined sharply in recent years, and this is seen to be a result of the rise of a corporate approach to management being introduced into higher education[109].

Hence, collegiality in this first sense, as decision-making through the involvement and full participation of staff, is viewed as slow and cumbersome by those committed to inculcating a managerialist ethos[110] (along with a number of others[111]). It is also sometimes viewed as contributing towards a resistance to change because academic staff are frequently seen as disinclined to change[112], and hence this emphasis on consensual decision-making can be depicted as playing into their hands. Thus, while heads of department may express a preference for open consultation on various issues, others may feel that in practice they are forced to resort to covert manoeuvres in order to get things done and fulfil senior managers' expectations[113].

The second meaning associates collegiality with mutual supportiveness among staff. Being 'collegial' in this sense means offering professional, and perhaps personal, support to others such as through reading drafts, mentoring younger staff and cooperative working. Knight and Trowler reflect this meaning when they argue that in recent years, one of the trends seen within universities is a loss of collegiality[114]. They report that this trend is reflected in three changes: less time to socialise; less time being spent in the university; and the corrosive impact of hard managerialism. Olsen also maintains that there has been a decline in collegiality in US universities, and its low levels are a cause of disappointment among academic staff in their early years. 'Support of colleagues' was found to be more important to these individuals' professional values and feelings of self-worth, than dissatisfaction with salary[115]. Thus, collegiality in this sense too can be viewed as antithetical to managerialism (which tends to place greater emphasis on competition and resourcefulness) and as declining in universities.

This aspect of collegiality is perceived as an important element of effective leadership in various studies. In Gomes and Knowles' study of the transformation of a marketing department, a key component of leader-led change was the creation of a high level of collegiality (in this second sense of the word), for which the department concerned became renowned within its university. Here, the leader concerned was highly supportive and was perceived to have created a climate of commensurate mutual supportiveness among others. In addition, encouraging group events and rituals like taking meals together was seen as creating greater collaboration among staff[116]. In a study of academics at a US university, Lindholm noted the significance for many of her interviewees of having '"like-minded" institutional peers' who either shared similar views about work or who were prepared to share the creative process. In this study also, the presence of such collegial relations was seen as an important component of the fit between person and organisation[117].

US studies have noted that collegiality in this second sense is also associated with academic staff being less likely to consider leaving their institutions[118]. For example, research by Johnsrud and Heck at a large public urban research university suggests that one factor distinguishing between 'stayers' and 'leavers' is 'chair/department relations', which includes a variety of variables including 'relations with chair', 'support for career progress from chair', and 'intellectual and social isolation and collegial relations'[119]. Being part of a community of scholars was one of five main reasons given by a sample of business academics in Australia for remaining in academic life rather than pursuing (potentially lucrative) careers elsewhere[120].

105 Tapper, T. and Palfreyman, D. (2002)
106 Ramsden, P. (1998a)
107 Deem, R. (n.d.)
108 Raelin, J.A. (1995) p208
109 Anderson, D. et al. (2002)
110 Hellawell, D. and Hancock, N. (2001)
111 Such as Bess, J.L. and Goldman, P. (2001)
112 Rantz, R. (2002)
113 Hancock, N. and Hellawell, D.E. (2003)
114 Knight, P.T. and Trowler, P.R. (2000)
115 Olsen, D. (1993)
116 Gomes, R. and Knowles, P.A. (1999)
117 Lindholm, J.A. (2003) p136
118 Matier, M.W. (1990)
119 Johnsrud, L.K. and Heck, R.H. (1994)
120 Bellamy, A. et al. (2003)

An interesting slant on the value of collegiality is provided in an article by three leading US researchers in the organisational research field. Academics in US management schools were interviewed about the nature and significance of relationships in their professional lives[121]. Gersick et al. found that the modal reason for a relationship's importance was to do with collegiality relating to the second of the two definitions, namely mutual supportiveness. They also argued that collegiality was important in its own right for their interviewees, not simply because it led to other benefits (such as getting good feedback on papers). They found that interviewees often told stories about joint work which focused around their collaborative working, and often discussed colleagues helping in various ways and providing emotional support. Gersick et al. argue from their findings that 'we need to ask ourselves how to make contexts more conducive to colleagueship, emotional support, and joint work'[122].

This suggestion has clear implications for effective leadership and there is further support for it in the wider literature. Johnsrud and Rosser, for example, suggest that collegiality in this second sense is a morale factor that influences the retention of staff[123]. Tschannen-Moran et al. found that productive US academics in the field of educational administration were more likely than a typical sample to mention that they enjoyed the benefits of collegial, supportive colleagues[124]. Also relevant is research from Australia, which found that cooperatively managed departments are more likely to be ones where individual research productivity is high[125]. Further, it may be precisely because of the significance of collegiality in this sense for academics, that Gmelch and Burns in their US study found 'resolving collegial differences' was a significant source of concern among heads of department[126].

Given the significance of collegiality in both senses for higher education leadership, it is perhaps not surprising that one study argues, from data collected from 23 current or former chairs in the US, that the dominant operating mode of those interviewed was in fact that of 'appeaser'. This entailed the individual attempting to 'Discover the primary 'needs' of each department member and try[ing] to promote harmony and happiness by satisfying those 'needs''[127]. The authors observe that this is not necessarily an appealing strategy for heads of department and it was reported with some embarrassment among those interviewed. Whether this is an effective way of building collegiality among academic staff and indeed whether it is effective in terms of any other criteria is impossible to uncover from this article, though it does suggest an awareness among heads of department of the significance of collegial relationships.

As this section of the literature review has shown, given that there are at least two distinct meanings of 'collegiality', unless authors explicitly state how they are using the term or it is possible to deduce the meaning from their writings, it is difficult to understand the implications for leadership. While it is undoubtedly a significant issue for university employees (academic staff in particular according to the literature reviewed), assessing whether it is declining, whether it is important to staff, and what leaders can do to enhance (or at least not to reduce) it is difficult to establish across studies with any great certainty without a common understanding of what the term means. Given that 'collegiality' is capable of being interpreted in so many different ways, data deriving from such studies might be of questionable comparative value.

A note about disciplinary contexts

An aspect of higher education leadership that seems to have received less research attention than might have been expected, is the impact and influence of different disciplinary contexts, both on leadership expectations, style and effectiveness. This could be considered surprising, given that there is a tradition in higher education research of examining the significance of disciplinary variations for various aspects of university activity[128]. Two studies that have examined this issue fell outside the remit of this review but offer an interesting perspective. Del Favero's US study of deans[129] suggests that disciplinary context is indeed an important factor in considering deans' administrative behaviour but that the issue is far from simple, in that mere affiliation to a discipline may be less significant than exposure to certain disciplinary paradigms. Kekäle's research on Finnish universities[130] suggests that different disciplines vary in their expectations concerning preferred approaches to leadership.

4. JOB SATISFACTION AND STRESS[131]

This section does not focus an effective leadership as such, but it does seek to summarise the factors related to job

121 Gersick, C.J.G. et al. (2000)
122 Gersick, C.J.G. et al. (2000) p1042
123 Johnsrud, L.K. and Rosser, V.J. (2002)
124 Tschannen-Moran, M. et al. (2000)
125 Ramsden, P. (1994)
126 Gmelch, W.H. and Burns, J.S. (1993)

127 Hubbell, and Homer, (1997) p211
128 Becher, T. and Trowler, P.R. (2001)
129 Del Favero (2006)
130 Kekäle, J. (1999)
131 The literature covered in this section is not the product of a systematic review so no attempt is made to distinguish studies in terms of the quality criteria for systematic review.

satisfaction and stress that could perhaps be capable of being mitigated, or indeed exacerbated, by leadership. The relevance of this section, is that job satisfaction and stress among university staff have been studied quite intensively and therefore provide a great deal of information about the kinds of work contexts that have adverse impacts on satisfaction and stress levels. In addition, both of these variables are, arguably, related to leadership. For example, if we agree with Evans' causal flow that '**leadership** has an impact upon **work context** has an impact upon **work attitudes**'[132] as previously mentioned, then leadership should be indirectly connected to job satisfaction and stress. Identifying aspects of the work context that have positive and negative effects on work attitudes and experiences should be very relevant to leaders' roles. Job satisfaction and stress are examined in tandem in this report because in many investigations both variables are studied. Job satisfaction is important for institutions in part because dissatisfied staff are more likely to leave the institution or higher education altogether - but also because, as Ramsden showed using data from Australia, dissatisfied staff are less likely to be productive[133]. Ramsden found that research productivity among dissatisfied staff was around half that of satisfied staff, although it is impossible to know what the causal connection between job satisfaction and productivity is from a cross-sectional study like this (in fact, it is notoriously difficult to unravel causal links in the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity in any sector).

Typically, stress is negatively related to job satisfaction within the higher education literatures as it is for education groups generally[134]. Kinman and Jones' 2004 survey of academic staff shows high negative correlations between job satisfaction and stress (-0.55); and between job satisfaction and perceived stress (-0.46)[135]. These coefficients are higher than those obtained in a comparable survey in 1998[136]. These findings are further supported by a US study of new lecturers which found early stress in the first year of their jobs to be clearly and inversely related to job satisfaction five years later[137].

University employees, and academics in particular, are generally considered to be a high job satisfaction/low stress

group and they are viewed as extracting a great deal of intrinsic satisfaction from the roles they perform[138]. The problem with this caricature is that it implies comparisons to other sectors which are, in fact, rarely made. 'High' and 'low' are often estimated in relation to scale means rather than in relation to other occupational groups and when normative data are available, the picture for higher education staff in regards to job satisfaction and stress appears somewhat more complex. Those working in HEIs certainly tend to display quite high levels of satisfaction with the work itself and with particular facets of it, such as the opportunity to use their initiative. However they also tend to be considerably less satisfied with such things as pay and promotion prospects, leading to the assumption that academics tend to trade off the pecuniary features of their jobs for intrinsic ones. This pattern can be discerned in research based on academics from the UK, US and Australia[139], as well as in a study of university administrators in the US by Volkwein and Parmley[140].

Rose uses British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) data from 2003 to show that 'university teaching professionals' are actually quite low in their level of job satisfaction relative to many other occupations[141]. These data show that just 42 per cent of 'university teaching professionals' scored above the sample median. At the extremes, this compares with 75 per cent of miscellaneous childcare and related workers, and 23 per cent of bus and coach drivers. This is consistent with a study in the mid-1990s of 20 occupational groups which found that staff in post-compulsory education reported lower levels of job satisfaction than the other groups[142]. Stevens also inferred that academics' satisfaction levels are lower than those for other occupational groups[143]. Bradley and Eachus found job satisfaction among a sample of UK academics was lower than in comparable occupations[144] and went on to conclude: 'The results of this study show that, in general, employees in this organisation were suffering considerably poorer physical and psychological health than other occupational groups'[145 (146)]. Kinman found higher stress levels in the UK when comparisons were forged with normative data for other occupational groups in 1998[147], and Kinman and Jones' findings from 2004 further suggest higher stress levels among UK university staff than for comparable occupational groups[148]. It seems that when

132   Evans, L. (2001)
133   Ramsden, P. (1994)
134   Eg. Abouserie, R. (1996)
135   Using the GHQ measure of stress
136   Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2003)
137   Olsen, D. and Crawford, L.A. (1998)
138   Kinman, G and Jones, F. (2004)
139   Ward, M.E. and Sloane, P.J. (2000); McInnis, C. (1996); Copur, H. (1990)
140   Volkwein, J.F. and Parmley, K. (2000)

141   Rose, M. (2003)
142   Quoted in Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004) p14
143   Stevens, P.A. (2005)
144   Bradley, J. and Eachus, P. (1995)
145   Bradley, J. and Eachus, P. (1995) p154
146   It should be noted that the institution in question was undergoing a great deal of organisational change which may have had an impact on these findings.
147   Kinman, G. (199
148   Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)

university academics' levels of job satisfaction are compared with those of other countries, we find little cross-cultural difference[149]. UK academics score overall slightly lower than US, but higher than Australian, academics. There does also seem to be evidence that job satisfaction levels are declining and stress levels increasing, particularly among UK university employees[150].

Data which examines different groups of university staff indicates a more varied picture. A study of a UK sample of university staff in a variety of job categories in 2005 found that stress levels were high compared to other occupational groups using normative data, although there was variation in stress levels by category of staff[151]. Tytherleigh et al. found that overall, academic and research staff report higher stress levels than other university staff groups, but that higher stress levels in specific areas were reported by other groups. For example, facility support staff reported the highest level of stress in connection with lack of control. This sample as a whole also scored lower than normative data in terms of perceived commitment to and from the organisation.

The impact of management

Interestingly in relation to the focus of this report, there is a general tendency for managers and management processes to be identified as significant sources of stress and dissatisfaction. Winefield and Jarrett found that the way the university was managed was one of only two areas of work with which academic employees at the University of Adelaide were dissatisfied[152]. Seven years later, another survey in the same institution showed that job satisfaction had declined among all academic and academic related roles, with the way the university was managed showing the sharpest decline[153]. Both these studies also recorded higher levels of psychological strain for university staff than for a national sample, with the later study indicating that this difference had grown even wider[154].

A further study focusing on stress among Australian academics by Winefield et al., found that 'poor management practice' was one of five major causes of stress[155]. While Johnsrud et al., in their study of US midlevel administrators in universities, found that 'the quality of relationships with supervisors and others' had an adverse effect on morale which in turn was associated with intention to leave the organisation[156]. The inclusion of 'and others' rather

contaminates this latter finding, but the study does point to the likely significance of relationships with managers for this group of higher education workers. In Stevens' investigation of English academics, satisfaction with relations with managers was one component of the non-pecuniary aspects of their jobs that was found to have an impact on propensity to leave UK higher education[157]. The limitation of such findings is that it is hard to establish precisely what it is about management practices that academics are dissatisfied with and precisely who the managers are about whom questions like these are being answered.

Some insights into the aspects of management practices that are viewed as contributing to job dissatisfaction and stress are provided by Kinman's survey of UK staff for the Association of University Teachers (AUT)[158]. Among the factors that Kinman identifies are: the emergence of more business-oriented approaches to running higher education institutions; increasing bureaucracy; less sensitivity among managers to staff needs than in the past; greater tendency to employ non-participative approaches to decision-making; reduced consultation; and aggressive management styles. Kinman and Jones later identified 'poor management and bureaucracy' as a commonly expressed reason for staff considering leaving higher education[159]. These features are echoed in an Australian study of academics deriving from focus group data[160]. Five sources of stress were identified, one of which was 'poor leadership and management'. This was made up of several factors, but the major source of stress in this category was the lack of or limited nature of consultation on the part of managers. Gillespie et al. found that even when consultation did occur, it was believed by focus group participants to be a token gesture because their views were not actively considered and managers stuck to a preconceived agenda.

The management of change was also felt to be a source of stress. To some extent, this was to do with the frequency of changes, but it also reflected concerns about such things as a lack of direction or vision when planning change, poor communication about the reasons for change, and lack of concern about impacts on staff. These sources of stress again imply a concern about lack of consultation, but they also suggest that academic staff do expect to be given a clear steer by managers, who are expected to provide direction and vision.

149 Lacy, F.J. and Sheehan, B.A. (1997)
150 Kinman, G. 1998; Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
151 Tytherleigh, M.Y. et al. (2005)
152 Winefield, A.H. and Jarrett, R. (2001)
153 Winefield, A.H. (2003)
154 The significance of this finding must be viewed in relation to known and very public difficulties at the University of Adelaide around the time of the second survey

155 Winefield, A.H. (2003)
156 Johnsrud et al. (2000) Johnsrud, L.K. and Rosser, V.J. (2000)
157 Stevens, P.A. (2005)
158 Kinman, G. (1998)
159 Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
160 Gillespie, N.A. et al. (2001)

There is evidence that academic staff tend to associate the adverse effects of the management of their organisations with initiatives and actions deriving from institutional leaders rather than their heads of department. For example, Doyle and Hind found that for a sample of UK academic psychologists, conflict with heads of department was not typically a stress-related factor[161]. Winefield found that although there were low levels of satisfaction with university management and with industrial relations between management and staff in both 1994 and 2000 among staff at the University of Adelaide, satisfaction with one's immediate boss was high in both years[162]. Kinman and Jones found that 63 per cent of UK university staff were satisfied with their line manager, but while 49 per cent were satisfied with the level of support obtained from their line managers, only 21 per cent were satisfied with that received from more senior managers[163]. A number of other studies have also found that whatever overall satisfaction with management in institutions may be, satisfaction with head of department is often relatively high[164].

A further aspect of this departmental/institutional leadership distinction is highlighted in a study of UK department leaders by Barry et al[165]. Their results showed that managerialism was less entrenched in universities than had been suggested in previous studies involving Prichard and Willmott. The authors argue that one reason for this difference in findings is that Prichard and Willmott's data derived mainly from senior managers, among whom managerialism is more prevalent[166]. Barry et al. found that many of the departmental leaders in their study managed to distance themselves from the extremes of managerialism and even to resist it. If this is a valid inference, it may account for the more favourable view of departmental leadership in comparison to institutional leadership that is sometimes found in such studies. Mistrust of top administrators is sometimes considered to be even more pronounced in the UK, for example an international study in the early 1990s reported that UK academics were much less likely than US academics, and slightly less likely than Australian academics, to view top administrators in their institutions as providing 'competent leadership'[167].

Several of the variables identified here as being related to job satisfaction and stress are to do with the work context of academic and academic-related staff. It is certainly reasonable to suggest that leader behaviour influences work contexts, although these are not entirely attributable to leadership (no outcomes are considered to be entirely the product of leadership variables).

The review of literature looking at job satisfaction and stress (a detailed account of which can be found in the extended project report), suggested the following variables affecting stress and job satisfaction, which are very much part of the work context, may be significantly affected by leadership in either a positive or a negative direction:

• Role overload

• Role ambiguity

• Quality of communication

• Autonomy

• Ability to participate in decisions

• A collegial atmosphere and climate

• Feedback on performance

The degree to which these components of work context are influenced in either a positive or a negative way, by either departmental leaders or by institutional leaders, varies. The crucial point, however, is that to the extent that the attitudes and stress levels of university staff are affected by the work context, leadership has implications for these responses. Both institutional and departmental leaders may at times, feel that they have no choice but to act in ways that may affect the work context adversely. This research indicates that should they do so, they must take into account the implications this could have for job satisfaction, well-being, and the organisational commitment of those who are so affected. In addition, of course, identifying these work context features provides implicit suggestions about the kinds of work contexts that leaders can attend to in order to enhance work attitudes and responses. The same can be said about heads of department. Further, while there has been quite a lot of attention lavished on the nature of departmental leadership, little of it has been concerned with the leadership *of* (rather than *by*) departmental leaders. Institutional leadership clearly has implications for the work context of departmental leaders, which in turn will have implications for their work attitudes and responses.

161   Doyle, C. and Hind, P. (1998)
162   Winefield, A.H. (2003)
163   Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2004)
164   Bryson, C. and Barnes, N. (2000); Ward, M.E. and Sloane, P.J. (2000)

165   Barry, J. et al. (2001)
166   Prichard, C. (2000); Prichard, C. and Willmott, H. (1997)
167   Boyer, E.L. et al (1994)

PART II – FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH LEADERSHIP RESEARCHERS

In addition to conducting the literature review, an important component of this project was interviews with 24 leadership researchers, who were asked to consider the forms of leader behaviour that they felt were associated with effectiveness in higher education. They were asked to draw on their own experiences, and on any evidence with which they were familiar. It was felt that these interviewees with their detailed knowledge of leadership theory and research, and their involvement in universities (frequently as both leaders and followers) would provide valuable insights into what makes for leadership effectiveness in higher education.

Methodology

Twenty-four leadership researchers were interviewed; only two researchers approached declined the invitation for interview. Interviewees were selected so that they represented one of three main categories of leadership researcher:

- *Leadership researchers whose interest was in school leadership or in the learning and skills sector.* These interviewees were typically located in departments, or schools of education in universities. There were six interviewees with this background.

- *Those with a management/business school background* who were mainly interested in leadership outside of education generally. This was the largest group with ten interviewees.

- *Leadership researchers who had an interest in leadership in higher education.* These researchers were sometimes located in schools or departments of education or in management/business schools. There were eight interviewees with this background.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and interviewees were given considerable latitude in how they replied to questions. During each interview, each interviewee was asked general questions about leadership issues, they were then asked a series of questions about higher education leadership. This second batch of questions made up the bulk of each interview. Interviews varied in length from 32 minutes to 125 minutes, the mean duration was in the region of 55-60 minutes (all interviews except the first two were timed precisely). The mean of the 22 timed interviews was 62 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed fully, they were then coded thematically using the QSR NVivo 7 qualitative data analysis software.

Findings

The findings presented in this section are those which focus on the research question that also guided the literature review: 'What styles of, or approaches to, leadership are associated with effective leadership in higher education?' The main questions that produced direct insights into leadership effectiveness in higher education, were a pair of questions asking what kinds of behaviour characterised effective, and ineffective, leadership in universities; and another pair of questions that asked about particularly effective and ineffective leaders with whom each respondent was familiar, asking what characterised their leader behaviour. Insights into the factors associated with leadership effectiveness in higher education also materialised in the course of answers to a number of other questions during the interview.

In this context, the analysis of interviews reported six main aspects of leader behaviour felt to be associated with effective leadership:

- **An effective leader is a figure who is trusted, and who has personal integrity**

- **An effective leader is supportive of his/her staff**

- **Effective leadership requires consultation of others**

- **Effective leadership requires the inculcation of values that help others to understand and appreciate the leader's direction**

- **Effective leadership requires a sense of direction**

- **Effective leaders protect their staff**

The main contours of the interview findings are, therefore, broadly consistent with those derived from the literature review. In particular, no single aspect of leader behaviour emerges as being especially significant in what is regarded as effective higher education leadership. Indeed, only one aspect of leader behaviour was mentioned by more than one-third of interviewees as being associated with effectiveness. This was that the leader should be s**omeone who is trusted and who has personal integrity**. This feature was often intertwined with the notion of the leader as someone who is honest:

> "I think you really have to have humility, honesty, you have to instil trust. […] there are certain characteristics that are not great, as leaders, and you have to have trust and people have to know that you're prepared to fight for them as well." (Interviewee 18)

"I think in some ways, they both did very similar things. They were both strong developers of people. They found, in people, what it was possible to make something of and then they supported those people to achieve beyond, perhaps, what the individuals thought they were capable of in the first instance. They both did that within a framework which was absolutely trustworthy, if they said they were going to do something, they would do it to time, or, if something was not possible, they would say that. They were not political manipulators and they had a clear and strong commitment to what the group of people was about." (Interviewee 13)

Interviewee 13 is here referring to two leaders he/she knew in higher education whom he/she thought of as especially effective. The interviewee simultaneously refers to another characteristic of effective leadership that was frequently mentioned, namely, that the **leader is supportive of his/her staff.** This characteristic was also described by the following interviewee'.

"He was very interested in all the staff, and he always had time to kind of stop and talk, not necessarily a long time, and he was very, very committed to both the department and also to trying to help everybody achieve what they wanted to achieve so he was, he was interested in kind of what you wanted to do, what you were trying to achieve, I don't mean just in achievement, career terms, I mean just in terms of what you were interested in." (Interviewee 10)

Two other aspects of leader behaviour that were described as being associated with effectiveness in higher education were consultation, and values. The former, as its name implies, entails **consulting others regarding decisions and at other stages.** For example

"that reflects my own values as a leader, ie that people should be consulted and should know what's going on and that people should not be asked to do things [if] they don't understand why they're doing it. And we need to take account of those people who are carrying out operations, you know, their views, before we decide what the next step is." (Interviewee 4)

Values as a factor in leadership effectiveness in higher education are to do with the leader **inculcating unambiguous values that help others to understand and appreciate the direction he/she is taking.** Values are seen as helping to make organisational activity meaningful for others. For example:

"It's again, very much, the leader has to make it meaningful. Has to frame that reality for you in a way that […] the people you're leading, accept, as something that's meaningful to them." (Interviewee 23)

Inculcating a transparent set of values is consistent with another aspect of leader behaviour that was seen as associated with effectiveness in higher education – **a sense of direction**, which was mentioned by around a quarter of interviewees. The following interviewee links values and direction in a very explicit way:

"So, that's about clarity of values, clarity of direction." (Interviewee 15)

For the following interviewee having a clear sense of strategic direction is crucial:

"Somebody in a strategic leadership position, needs to act as a strategic leader, which is the develop a strategy and then sell it and enact that strategy, so that people can go with them." (Interviewee 23)

The aspects of leader behaviour mentioned thus far are ones that might appear on many lists of leadership competencies. However, one aspect of leader behaviour in higher education that was seen by around a quarter of interviewees as significant was that **effective leaders protect their staff**. This was often linked to the notion of the value of autonomy that was mentioned in the literature review, in that effective leaders are seen by some interviewees as protecting their staff so that they can get on with their work relatively unhampered.

"Maybe another way of thinking about it is can you facilitate an organisation and a culture which will allow people to do what they're best at. So in terms of, say, academic strategies, is this the direction we should be going in, but can you, in some ways, limit the problems that inhibit people from doing the research […].That's how you get good research, by taking things away from people and saying, "Right, here's the time and space to do it". If you can provide that, then you can generate the research which then leads to the success." (Interviewee 7)

Only one interviewee identified the protection of staff as an ingredient of effective leadership generally, ie beyond the confines of higher education. This could mean that protecting staff is singled out as something that contributed more specifically leadership effectiveness in a higher education context.

Beyond these six factors, a wide variety of forms of leader behaviour were referred to as conducive to effectiveness in higher education. One feature that is striking about them is the virtual absence of forms of leader behaviour associated with the new leadership approach, such as transformational or charismatic leadership[168]. Only one person mentioned charisma in this context. There was occasional mention of consideration, which is a component of transformational leadership in the Bass model (see Box 1 page 8). Even the emphasis on a visionary style of leadership, which was very much a cornerstone of the more popular versions of the new leadership approach, rarely figured in accounts of effective higher education leadership. To the extent that it did figure, it was conveyed in a sceptical way.

Ineffective leadership in higher education

As noted in the introductory paragraph, interviewees were also asked about ineffective leadership in higher education. Some of the themes emerging from the analysis of replies were, possibly unsurprisingly, the inverse of those mentioned previously. However, this was not entirely the case. For one thing, considerably fewer forms of leader behaviour were identified in relation to ineffectiveness than in connection with effectiveness. This is quite interesting because several of the interviewees remarked that they found it easier to think of ineffective leaders than effective ones! As Interviewee 9 put it:

> "I guess we've all encountered a whole raft of those [ineffective leaders]. I mean, effective leaders we could probably count on one hand, I think the ineffective leaders, we see examples of continually."

Thus, while the implication of this is that strikingly ineffective leaders are more prominent (or possibly more memorable) in universities than strikingly effective leaders, fewer forms of leader behaviour tend to be identified in relation to ineffective ones than in relation to effective ones.

One aspect of leader behaviour that stood out in terms of frequency of mention (over one-third of interviewees) was a **lack of trust or integrity**. For example:

> "I think dishonesty is sometimes, people not being honest is a problem." (Interviewee 18)

> "I think secondly, somebody who you know you just can't trust and that's very difficult, actually, to weigh that one up." (Interviewee 8)

A failure to be consultative was mentioned by around a quarter of interviewees. For example:

> "I think it's relatively easy to screw things up, in the sense that you're attempting to impose things upon people or […] misunderstanding what's going on or whatever." (Interviewee 7)

However, by no means all of the forms of leader behaviour associated with effectiveness had their opposite analogue in relation to ineffectiveness. Thus, although lack of trust and not being consultative are opposites of approaches associated with effectiveness, forms of leader behaviour that were identified as contributing to ineffectiveness were not always opposites of factors associated with effectiveness. Of particular interest in this context is the fact that around a quarter of interviewees identified i**gnoring problems** as something that was associated with ineffectiveness among higher education leaders. Interestingly, only one person identified this as a feature of ineffective leadership more generally, implying that there is at least the possibility that ignoring problems is more likely to occur in relation to ineffective leadership in higher education. Further, **a laissez-faire approach to leadership,** which has some points of affinity with ignoring problems, was also identified as a contributor to ineffectiveness by a small number of interviewees. In fact, these two aspects of leader behaviour tended to shade into each other in the replies that were given to questions.

Viewing the interview findings in relation to the literature review

There are strong points of affinity in the literature review with several of the findings deriving from the interviews. That is reassuring in that a divergence would be a cause for a degree of concern about the study as a whole. There are undoubtedly clear messages to leaders in terms of the importance of such things as creating and maintaining trust in them; giving a clear sense of direction; ensuring that they do not ride roughshod over those they lead; and conveying a clear sense of the values that guide their leadership. Many other factors identified in the literature review also cropped up in the interviews but were rarely mentioned by more than three or possibly four interviewees.

On the other hand, there were some issues which were not obvious from the literature review, but which figured strongly in the interviews. For example, the need to protect staff does not figure very strongly in the literature on higher education leadership, although it does arise obliquely in the context of the discussion of job satisfaction and stress

   168 Parry, K.W. and Bryman, A. (2006)

among university staff, and in the head of department level analysis. The issue of ignoring problems as a factor in ineffective leadership in universities did not materialise in a direct way in the literature review at all. Perhaps this is because an issue such as this smacks more of management than of leadership, although as argued in the literature review the literature is remarkably inconsistent about what

is identified as relating to leadership, so that alone cannot be the answer.

Together, the two phases of this investigation do provide a fairly comprehensive account of the forms of leader behaviour associated with effectiveness in higher education.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

There is no obvious single way of summarising or capturing the findings covered in this report. The lack of consistent use of some key terms, and the way in which each investigation appears to focus on some issues but not others, make this an area where knowledge and understanding of leadership effectiveness is not as cumulative as some might like.

The findings from this research project point to the importance of the following facets of leadership at both departmental and institutional levels:

- **Providing direction**
- **Creating a structure to support the direction**
- **Fostering a supportive and collaborative environment**
- **Establishing trustworthiness as a leader**
- **Having personal integrity**
- **Having credibility to act as a role model**
- **Facilitating participation in decision-making, consultation**
- **Providing communication about developments**
- **Representing the department/institution to advance its cause(s) and networking on its behalf**
- **Respecting existing culture while seeking to instil values through a vision for the department/institution**
- **Protecting staff autonomy**

What seems to lie at the heart of this list is the need for a leader to create an environment, or context, for academics and others to fulfil their potential; and also to ensure the work interests of staff are supported. As noted in relation to the discussion about substitutes for leadership, there are also clear indications from the literature review and the

interviews regarding what leaders should not do; in other words, there are implications that can be translated into ill-advised actions. It is likely that some of these actions would be ill-advised in any context, but some seem to have a particular resonance for academic and academic-related work. The following are all likely to cause damage:

- **Failing to consult**
- **Not respecting existing values**
- **Actions that undermine collegiality**
- **Not promoting the interests of those for who the leader is responsible**
- **Being uninvolved in the life of the departments/institution**
- **Undermining autonomy**
- **Allowing the department/institution to drift**

These are in many respects, common-sense things to avoid doing and it is likely that they would be damaging in most contexts not just higher education ones. However the significance of fostering a collegial climate of mutual supportiveness and the maintenance of autonomy do seem to be a particular desiderata in the academic context.

Indeed, it is striking how close the core recommendations about what to do and what not to do are to Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Challenge Model (see Box 2 overleaf). This model was employed by Lillas Brown of the University of Saskatchewan to provide the leadership competency model for the Department Head Development Program he developed when director of leadership programmes at this institution[169].

There are also affinities with Locke's characterisation of the key roles of a top leader (see Box 3 overleaf), most of which seem to be relevant to heads of department in the higher

169 Brown, L.M. (2001)

KOUZES AND POSNER'S LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE MODEL

As a result of a large number of surveys of the kinds of leadership that work best for most people, Kouzes and Posner[170] came up with five factors:

Modelling the way – leading by example in a manner that is consistent with leader's stated values; celebrating 'small wins' that signify achievements consistent with values; dismantling barriers to achievement of values.

Inspiring a shared vision – developing a compelling vision of the future and enlisting the commitment of others.

Challenging the process – being on the look-out for opportunities to improve the organisation and being prepared to experiment.

Enabling others to act – promoting collaborative working; empowering others; building trust.

Encouraging the heart – recognising individuals' contributions; celebrating accomplishments.

Based on Kouzes and Posner (2003)

education context, in spite of the fact that Locke was writing about 'top leaders' rather than middle managers in organisations. Like Kouzes and Posner's list, Locke's is based on empirical research on leadership as well as on published literature on the topic.

Quite why there is such a close symmetry between the findings reported in this study, and in models like those of Kouzes and Posner and Locke is itself an interesting question. One possible reason is that there are fairly universal leadership actions that are desirable or undesirable and that higher education institutions are not as distinctive in this regard as we sometimes think they are. Another, of course, is that leadership researchers ask questions and their respondents give answers that are consonant with the leadership ideas and themes of the day.

However, it would be wrong to imply that there are no distinctive features of leadership effectiveness in higher education. In the context of departmental leadership, it has been noted in this report that a very significant feature of the expectations of academic staff in particular are:

- **The maintenance of autonomy**

- **Consultation over important decisions**

- **The fostering of collegiality in both senses referred to (both democratic decision-making and mutual cooperativeness**

- **Fighting the department's corner with senior managers and through university structures.**

There are elements of these desiderata in Box 2 and Box 3 (for example, 'enabling others to act' in Box 2 and 'motivating employees' in Box 3), but it is the intensity of these expectations among university employees that is distinctive. Also, the high value placed on leadership entailing a commitment to the department's cause is highly significant and not expressed even indirectly in Box 2 or Box 3. This reflects that desire of academics in particular, for a congenial work context in which to get on with their work. It marks middle leadership in higher education off from middle leadership in many other contexts, because it means that the head of department is often in a position where he or she is not engaged in executive leadership – implementing policies and directives emanating from the centre – but in defending or protecting his or her staff, quite possibly in opposition to expectations among senior echelons.

Two developments in this project are especially desirable for those with an interest in the practice of leadership. First, systematic research that directly examines the connections between leader behaviour and effectiveness in the UK are necessary - most UK research addresses this issue in an indirect way. Second, such research only should be used as a springboard for developing principles of leadership effectiveness, that could be employed in training leaders. Currently, as noted at the beginning of this section, there is a gap between research that examines (usually rather indirectly) leadership effectiveness and handbooks about leadership practice that are based on anecdotes, personal experience or are loosely connected to empirical investigation; this gap needs to be filled. Further, much of

[170] Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z. (2003)

BOX 4

LOCKE'S TASKS OF A TOP LEADER

Vision – what the organisation should be like

Core values – what the organisation stands for

Structuring –structuring to support strategy

Selection & training – recruiting appropriate people

Motivating employees – includes role modelling, empowerment, goal-setting, recognition, rewards, and building morale

Communicating – cultivating communication throughout the organisation

Team building

Promoting change

Based on Locke (2003)

the available research provides few guides for action, not just because of the factors identified in the opening paragraph of this section but because it is often short on specifics. For example, while it is clear from the literature that leaders who ignore the desirability of consulting academic and non-academic staff take great risks in terms of maintaining the support and commitment of staff, there is less guidance on precisely how the leader – regardless of level – should go about this consultation. It is likely that to get hints about how to go about such aspects of leadership, leaders would need to examine manuals of higher education leadership, most of which are either not apparently based on research[171] or are based on it to only a limited extent . Further, there is far too little research on the variety of leadership roles that exist in universities at departmental level (eg programme director, director of research), as noted previously in this report. Research on such roles and their leadership elements would further provide insights into such areas as dispersed leadership and shared leadership[172].

What is also clear is that simple nostrums that abound in popular leadership writings which valorise leadership over management; or transformational over transactional leadership; or which extol the virtues of dispersed leadership; may be too simple to provide much value in the higher education context. Arguably, they are too simple for most contexts. As the lists of desirable leadership features generated from this research suggests, both management and leadership, both transactional and transformational leadership, and dispersed leadership in some contexts (although not others) can be effective. The demonisation of management and the elevation of leadership has been unhelpful to leadership researchers and practitioners[173], not least because both are necessary, albeit at different times and in different contexts. Also because they frequently shade into each other, so that distinguishing between them becomes a semantic exercise that is unhelpful to apply in concrete situations.

171 Hecht, I.W.D. et al. (1999); Lorange, P. (2002) - among others
172 Pearce, C.L. and Conger, J.A. (2003)
173 Gronn, P. (2003)

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