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Control over knowledge creation and dissemination has long been associated with power and the pursuit of particular interests within society. History is littered with the debris of sectarian power struggles, battles over sovereign territories, and attempts to censor and restrict access to knowledge as a means of holding power over the populace. For example, Battles provides evidence of how the great Library of Alexandria was destroyed in AD 641 by a Muslim general in an attempt to destroy the wisdom of conquered nations, how from the 15th to the 16th centuries there were many attempts to control and regulate printing to ensure that seditious material not sanctioned by either religious bodies or the state was repressed, and how access to knowledge (books) was limited to those from appropriate groups (classes or religions) in society. These attempts to control knowledge were at a time when knowledge was generally contained within a book form, either printed or scribed. In essence, control over knowledge was centered on ensuring that only sanctioned knowledge was contained within books and to maintain control over the vehicle containing the sanctioned knowledge.

In more recent times, power subtly shifted to large publishing houses that encouraged the spread of knowledge that was profitable. Inbuilt editorial controls and the need to produce profitable print runs acted as a form of censorship by not printing or disseminating unprofitable knowledge. In modern times, however, the knowledge genie has been liberated by the digital age, and this Pandora’s box of issues about knowledge creation and
dissemination is not the subject of our writing here. The issues provide a broader context in which the role of higher education within society is situated and introduces our perception of the continuing role of vested interests in higher education. Control is no longer about knowledge itself but about access to knowledge and how specific knowledge can be demonstrated via credentials. Credentials have become the keys to doors, and perceptions about the quality of credentials (keys) are a significant feature of modern higher education.

As society evolves, so universities have evolved to mirror the needs and wants of society. Eric Ashby noted in 1944 that “being concerned with an earthly, not heavenly kingdom, the universities have had to shape themselves to a changing society. They have assumed obligations to industry.” The increasing mobility of information, people, and employment has created a need for comparability of knowledge and for universities to respond by becoming less parochial and more international in their operations. Universities are increasingly “customer-focused” as they compete with each other and with emerging industry-based alternative suppliers of tertiary education. The changing environment has reduced homogeneity on many levels, and the pressures for change have also affected the character and perception of the role of universities. The most appropriate content for tertiary education, and the role of universities generally, are matters that have been debated over centuries, with little consensus as pressures for change ebb and flow. The lineage of the debate harks back to the time of Socrates, who considered that an education should contribute to the development of citizens who are able to think in reasoned, critical ways about important issues that affect the common good, and also to Aristotle, who claimed the following:

At present opinion is divided about the proper tasks to be set; for all peoples do not agree as to the things that the young ought learn, either with a view to virtue or with a view to the best life, . . . and it is not clear whether pupils should practice pursuits that are practically useful, or morally edifying or higher accomplishments.

Ashby wrote of the tensions within universities in Australia, where the need for universities to inculcate professional knowledge (for professions such as law, medicine, and the church) was pitted against the need for universities to also be “nurseries for intellectual progress . . . to encourage a ferment of thought . . . and cultivate the intellect.” He also claimed that “without a spring of disinterested thinking, without the welling-up somewhere in the community of discovery for discoveries sake, civilization would dry up.”
More recently, Glyn Davis, the vice chancellor of The University of Melbourne, noted that the role of a university depended on time and circumstance. He suggested that most institutions combine several traditions, often in uneasy tension. These traditions include a research university, as proposed by Humboldt in Germany, the British model of liberal education, and the French professional training model. A university has, to a greater or lesser degree, a role as “an autonomous, independent institution, it upholds academic freedom, acts as a repository of knowledge and expertise and embraces its role as a critic and conscience of society.”

It is reasonable to presume that public universities, as citizens of society, would engage in behavior that involves a predisposition toward furthering public good. Being a good citizen involves having virtues that work for the advantage of others. The continuous incursion of market philosophies into academic domains finds universities aligned with particular interest groups, giving privilege to those groups rather than citizens in general. Dominant groups such as professional bodies that provide accreditation of courses, consumers (students) with wants that are to be satisfied, funding bodies with particular priorities, and government funding policies, for example, have had significant impacts on the ability of universities to act in ways that benefit society generally. Saul suggests that universities are obsessed with aligning themselves with specific market forces and continuing their pursuit of specialist definitions as a means of assuming some form of greater relevance to society. This form of alignment involves selective engagement, selective purpose, and partial citizenship.

It is not our intention to review the weight of historical debate on the form and content of tertiary education. Rather, we wish to consider the dominant influences that impact the provision of university education in Australia and New Zealand. In the contemporary environment the education needs of a “knowledge-based economy” are as elusive as a clear enunciation of what constitutes a “knowledge-based economy.” Numerous government discussion papers have grappled with what a knowledge worker is, what types of activities can be classified as highly skilled, and what skills need to be developed by educating institutions.

There is an inference in these international and national reports that the role of tertiary education in this new globalized world should again reflect an approach that Sharrock refers to as “nation building.” Sharrock suggests that universities traditionally participated in a role that was based on a “model of an ideal society, by articulating universal standards of praxis for citizens to live by.” Nonetheless, the role of universities in society is now increasingly challenged by globalization and distance education. The global nation increasingly requires a standardized framework for education in line with, for instance, the Bologna initiatives in Europe, as the
importance and need of a mobile and flexible workforce in knowledge-based economies continue to rise. Australian Minister for Education, Science and Training Julie Bishop suggests that the Bologna Process:

is about mobility for students and graduates—about bringing together a disparate array of systems and working towards a consensus model that enables students, and institutions and employers to more readily understand and translate qualifications across national borders. ¹⁴

Such pressures for standardization undermine the “nation-building” role of universities as the focus is shifted from the needs and norms of local society to the needs and norms of the global economy. The nation-building role has lost its potency, as vested interests exercise power through tentacles wrapped around resources for which revenue-strapped universities must compete.

THE NEW POWER BROKERS IN ACADEME

Universities are social institutions whose form and function are inextricably bound to the societies in which they operate and, more recently, shaped by trends in global higher education. They must adapt or risk becoming irrelevant as society finds alternative means for securing knowledge. ¹⁵ Universities have indeed adapted. We now have universities with operational norms that are like companies rather than public agencies. When universities were largely funded through the taxes of citizens, the prime stakeholders were the citizens. In more recent times, however, the public purse represents a dwindling proportion of funds, and competing stakeholder groups have emerged in the form of “market” pressures and “customer” needs and wants. These new stakeholder groups have been given hegemony as the vagaries of local and international markets dominate economic perspectives in higher education.

A more contemporary role espoused for universities both within Australia and internationally has been the desire for citizens to have “lifelong learning” skills in a knowledge-based economy. Axford and Moyes ¹⁶ suggest that the rhetorical power of lifelong learning has been diminished. They claim that the

ready adoption of the term by policy makers, addressing a range of issues from structural reform of education and training provision to human resource management and the impact of technology, has rendered the term rather hollow—something of a “motherhood” statement—the meaning of which is mostly assumed.
Although universities in Australia and New Zealand were initially images of British higher education, the current higher education environment has evolved to reflect the peculiarities of each country's culture and political trajectories. The advent of managerialism within government is a common thread with a continuous rise in the assignment of roles to private interests through public-private partnerships, contractualism, and "user pays" principles that are now common in governments worldwide. Capture theory recognizes that regulations that have economic consequences for the regulated induce them to invest considerable time and money to ensure that their interests are protected. Capture theory also recognizes that this may involve assigning rights to third parties. Fitzgibbons\textsuperscript{17} claims that:

(t)he capture theory of regulation, which is associated with the Chicago economist, George Stigler, emphasises the role of industry pressure in initiating policy change . . . Rival private interests may compete to capture the regulator to promote their own particular purposes. The regulations are then redirected away from the public interest and used to enhance industry profits, often by restricting new entrants or constraining supply.

Quiggin\textsuperscript{18} also suggests that the process of capture can occur as the result of a co-dependence where there has been a:

long association between regulators and the industries they controlled, and the need for cooperation in the exchange of information, would lead to a commonality of interest, so that the regulation benefited the industry it controlled rather than the public it supposedly protected.

Using the discipline of accounting as an example, universities have provided education that meets a vocational need in industry with accreditation guidelines informing course content. Universities have been criticized by the accounting profession and industry groups for providing accounting education that is too narrow and devoid of critical and analytical skills required for lifelong learning (this is discussed later in more detail). This suggests a tradeoff between specific discipline skills and generic competencies that are required to be adaptive. Interest groups generally compete with each other to secure outcomes that favor their own needs. History has clearly demonstrated that certain groups, such as the church and governments, have been more successful than others in promoting their interests as a consequence of power dynamics. In the discussion that follows
we consider how government, customers, and the professions exert significant power over university agendas by actively changing the role of universities to suit particular interests.

It should be noted that both authors are from business faculties, which provide the basis for their viewpoints.

**Government**

The environment of managerialism and performance management in higher education is now well entrenched. Even without legislation, the administrative fiat of funding agreements can be used to compel universities to implement and follow government policy agendas. Universities are expected to satisfy both the invisible hand of uncertain markets and the long arm of micromanaging governments.

As the emphasis on small government continues, politics and money have forced universities to become more open to alternative methods of acquiring resources. To traditionalists, this was perhaps like “dirtying your hands”; however, it is clear that the advent of the corporate university is an increasingly common representation of how universities have adapted to the new environment. This environment has created a curious affinity with corporate behavior, with universities now competing with one another, engaging in large-scale advertising and promotional expenditures to recruit students, tacit (and often declared) understandings that deal with students as customers, the prioritization of financial and commercial interests and education as a product, and increasingly reducing academic autonomy through standardization and accreditation regimes. Parker confirms that core concepts underlying university operations:

now include financial viability, vocational relevance, industry relationships, market share, public profile and customer/client relations . . . (s)cholarship, knowledge development and transmission, and critical inquiry have been transformed . . . into exploitable intellectual capital for the pursuit of the “new” enterprise university.

Within Australia, there is evidence to suggest that the role of academics has become fixated on the need to meet increasingly particular needs at the expense of time to engage in scholarly conversation and debate. With reduced funding from the public purse and ever greater mechanisms of accountability, academics are increasingly occupied in quantitative rather than qualitative pursuits. Academics are expected to account (often in terms of annual targets) for publications, numbers of students, student evaluations, the number of grants applied for, the hours spent teaching,
the number of conferences attended, the student attrition rate, the student failure rate, casual staff hours and budgets, numerous committees, budget for grants received, recruitment of casual staff, mentoring of students, higher degree candidates, and a host of other key performance indicators associated with internationalization and university marketing.

These performance indicators align with university targets and, in ways very much like the quest for bottom-line profitability in corporate entities, have a short-term focus. Doring suggests that the "task for all stakeholders is to refocus on a shared understanding of the identity of a university and what the concept of a 'university' means. Currently it seems that there are fundamental shifts in the meaning of the term university from 'a centre of learning' to 'a business organization with productivity targets.'"

Traditional notions of universities as a community of scholars have also changed. The community itself is becoming increasingly standardized as academics need to fit into research groupings and research priority areas (often based on government political agendas) to gain access to funding opportunities. Priorities also extend to expertise that is valuable to the business community so that revenue rewards will flow back to the university through consultancies and commercial exploitation. The selling of expertise for a profit represents selective engagement with the community for commercial rather than community benefit.

There are a number of viewpoints from which the notion of capture could be applied in relation to the role of government in higher education. Governments can intentionally promote certain policy initiatives by constructing funding models for university revenues that support particular agendas. Universities then adapt internal performance objectives to align with these policy objectives as a means of maximizing revenue opportunities. This manifests itself in a number of ways. Research priority areas inspired by current political agendas give covert direction to research by directing funding for research toward the nominated areas. Not surprisingly, universities encourage the same agendas internally by specifically supporting those efforts that may secure such external research revenue. This type of alignment acts as a means of reducing research diversity and co-opts notions of better or more preferred research. Targeting of funding for a particular agenda is also evident in the current Australian government policy of encouraging more students to study education in response to a skills shortage by lowering the fees payable for those that enroll in such courses.

The need to seek alternative revenue streams by cash-strapped universities has meant seeking alternative markets for new students to supplement income and offering the types of courses these new markets demand. Universities now offer increasingly narrow degrees with a myriad of
specializations, majors, and course titles that serve the needs of particular professions. The large increase in international student numbers and the preferential allocation of points for permanent residency in areas of identified skills shortages have also significantly contributed to course demand and university income, particularly for accounting studies. International students pay full fee for courses, whereas local students can obtain a government-sponsored university place at a lower (and often deferred) cost. Full-fee student places generate greater revenue for universities, and although there are many benefits to diversity in student populations, there are also challenges that the shift in demographics has created in the character and nature of universities.

The influence of the government, especially the Treasury, in the 1980s reforms in New Zealand is well documented by Malcolm and Tarling. From their perspectives as a former vice-chancellor of the University of Waikato and an emeritus professor of history at the University of Auckland, respectively, they provide firsthand insight into the impact of the reforms. In their view, the Treasury was a strong advocate of market reforms. Indeed, it often seemed to be playing a role more appropriate to a political party than an adviser to government. It argued that education was not a public good and that the role of universities as social critic was superfluous in the information age.

The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee commissioned a review of the seven universities by an international panel headed by Professor Ron Watts of Ontario. The Watts report, New Zealand's Universities: Partners in National Development, was criticized by Boston, one of the few academic specialists in the tertiary education field, as "somewhat disappointing" as a counter to "the market-liberal philosophy advocated by the government's economic advisers." Against Treasury views that "broke the link between teaching and research, argued against tenure and dismissed the need to insist on academic freedom the Watts report offered an inadequate defense."

Subsequent government proposals culminated in draft legislation that "advocated devolution, but gave the Ministry [of Education] control; advocated simplicity but abolished the UGC (University Grants Committee); advocated equity and efficiency, but ignored the current cheapness of the system; said research and teaching were interdependent, but funded them separately; advocated a policy-oriented Ministry, but gave it the task of approving charters and funding." A judicial review was sought in the High Court by Auckland University and Canterbury University. Although this action was ultimately withdrawn, it had some influence on the legislation that was ultimately enacted. Explicit recognition was given to the unique academic character of a university, to the need for that to be
sustained by a concept of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and to the link between research and degree teaching. Malcom and Tarling conclude that New Zealand's universities had perhaps been unique in their determined resistance to the outside attacks by government and Treasury of the 1980s.

Customers

Rochford suggests that students have transformed from a status relationship, where they are a member of the university community, to that of a client of the university. This accords with Axford and Seddon's view that "in reality the notion of lifelong learning has moved to embrace market orientations that place the individual learner not so much within a strong civil society as within an economic environment in which he or she must take responsibility for whole range of economic imperatives and choices." Business terminologies, methods, and practices permeate both the function of academe and learning choices available to the customers of higher education. Customer demand and customer satisfaction are now significant factors that mobilize university resources. Courses that are "attractive" and tap into certain market sectors are openly sought and marketed. The views of students on course material, resources, and teaching and assessments form part of performance indicators, with student satisfaction often used as a surrogate for course quality. Graduate Course Experience Surveys (CEQ) are reported nationally by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, acting as another form of quality indicator enabling ranking of student experiences across institutions.

New Australian Bureau of Statistics figures reveal that education exports totaled $13.7 billion in the 2007 financial year, with higher education accounting for 63 percent of that figure. The revenue contributions of mass education, and in particular international student fee income, over the last two decades have created a significantly different education environment in the universities of Australia and New Zealand. The needs and expectations of students are increasingly viewed through economic and legal constructs. Student identity has shifted from learner to consumer.

The recent influx of international students, who pay large sums of money for their educational product, have expectations about learning environments that are often not aligned with reality. The demographic of international students during the last 10 years has moved from high representation of Southeast Asian and Chinese students to now incorporate a growing proportion of students from India. In addition to rising class sizes, this trend presents a lack of homogeneity (diversity) in learning styles that has significant consequences for the processes an academic might use.
to achieve desired learning outcomes. Despite proven challenges faced by staff and students associated with variable English language and skills competencies, the need to meet the expectations and demands of students has resulted in changed academic emphases. For example, there is less emphasis on oral presentations, less emphasis on theory in examinations (as this would take more time to interpret and answer with implied equity constraints), and more emphasis on student support services associated with transition and skills development.

Illustrations of the impacts the emphasis on international students has had on the academy abound. The following are but a few. Rochford describes how students view their place in universities as being part of a process rather than any form of learning community. Nagy describes academe as a production process where the outcomes are increasingly criticized as not fit for the intended use by employers. The recent submission by CPA Australia, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and the National Institute of Accountants to the Bradley Review of Higher Education in Australia in July 2008 confirms that the professional accounting bodies view graduates (particularly international students) as not possessing the kinds of generic skills needed by the profession. In recognition of this deficiency the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) has called for the development of a new program to build graduate competencies through a Skilled Migration Internship Program for Accounting (SMIPA). The program is designed for accounting graduates wishing to apply for permanent residency and offers business communication and Australian workplace skills development. Such innovations are a feature of the current revenue-related need to focus on supply and demand.

In recognition of the needs of international students, resources are also provided for a range of support services in line with the requirements of The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007. These tend to be clustered in business faculties where the majority of international students tend to study. As significant contributors to university revenues, it is no surprise that higher education providers are finding increasingly creative means to attract international students and make the university processes more “friendly” to non-English-speaking students. It is increasingly apparent that the environment of higher education is now captive to the needs/demands of students (and in particular international students), with universities at the mercy of consumer preferences, profitability, and competitive pressures.

A recent report stated that New Zealand’s stringent entry requirements for tertiary education “have driven the Saudi Arabian Government to look
at sending its scholarship students elsewhere.\textsuperscript{35} A spokesman for Education New Zealand acknowledged that students were arriving with language skills and qualifications "far below those needed to begin a tertiary degree and their government was looking for countries with more flexible requirements. Some students who had expected to take only six months to prepare, were finding it could take almost two years to get their English to a high enough level to start a degree.\textsuperscript{36} The spokesman's comment that New Zealand's universities "provided a premium product and did not want to undervalue that" reinforces the view of Rochford\textsuperscript{37} that students are clients of the university and not members of it.

The Professions

As new public management practices have colonized the public sector, managerialist objectives have created a competitive environment that extols the virtues of responding to the market and offering students what they wish to learn. Crittenden\textsuperscript{38} suggests that:

(i)n recent years, Australian universities, like many in other countries, have been increasingly driven by the values of commercial enterprise. A key consequence has been the growing emphasis on the kinds of vocational education likely to attract large enrolments and be financially profitable. In strengthening such programs (and related research), universities have been whittling down their involvement in what has traditionally been known as liberal education.

The professions are the great beneficiaries of this demand-based focus, with the rise in accreditation of university offerings to ensure subsequent memberships within their fraternity. Accreditation serves a number of purposes for the institution or program being accredited. Accreditation can provide status, legitimacy, and a public statement about a certain threshold of quality being achieved.\textsuperscript{39} Some have suggested that accreditation serves to homogenize offerings between universities\textsuperscript{40} as a consequence of seeking to attain the same "quality" label. Although accreditation provides the means for universities to market their courses, it is the process of becoming accredited that in effect constrains course content. This could be viewed as a form of agenda capturing of the type criticized by Craig and Amerine,\textsuperscript{41} who suggest that accounting educators "should focus less on technical menus and more on social critique."\textsuperscript{42}

Evidence suggesting that the professions have a considerable hand in capturing course content is also found in the way that education has become practically useful rather than morally edifying. As students have
increasingly been required to pay for their education, the reasons for undertaking further education have become more closely aligned with securing employment. Course experience questionnaires, graduate destination surveys, and graduate salary surveys conducted in Australia serve to reinforce the learning/vocation nexus by ranking universities on the basis of the percentages of their graduates that attain employment in chosen fields and have found their course to be “useful.” To imply that education should be immediately useful upon graduating is not necessarily compatible with learning that is *morally edifying*, as the usefulness of the latter would emerge only slowly over time.

Sikka et al. have documented the impact of the profession in controlling the content of accounting education in the United Kingdom. They criticize the prevalent practice involved in accreditation of courses as prioritizing “technical aspects and narrow business interests” and calling for coverage of ethics “while their own policies leave a lot to be desired.” Similar criticisms can be made in New Zealand. Two examples directly experienced by one of the authors may be cited. Following one accreditation exercise, the professional accounting body made it a requirement that the year’s marks in a first-year accounting paper be recorded so as to identify whether the student had passed each of three technical topics. Although there was internal dissention over the right of the professional body to make this demand, it was reluctantly agreed to.

The second example relates to a department receiving an annual grant from a local professional partnership. The money was given without any restrictions and was typically used for staff development. Then a request was made by the managing partner in relation to an employee, a final year student, who was being sent to an overseas associate part way through the academic year. The request was for a special examination paper to be set for this student so that employment issues were not interrupted. The university declined on the grounds that it would impose an unreasonable cost on the staff and because the student could sit for the same examination overseas at the same time as it was being held on campus. A brusque letter from the managing partner said that this was not acceptable and that if the department was not more “commercially realistic,” it was unlikely that the accounting firm would make its donation again. No special exam was set and no further donation was received from that Big Four firm. Intrinsically bound with this scenario of contradictions are the expectations of employers generally. An educated populace that is able to engage in a variety of different pursuits by using adaptive skills that transcend particular disciplines has greater potential to contribute to a knowledge-based society. Barrie highlights that graduate attribute statements by Australian universities envisage “equipping graduates as global citizens and effective
members of modern day society who can act as ‘agents of social good.’” Notwithstanding a perception that universities should be instilling such qualities into the education process, however, Barrie points out that:

(d)espite the lengthy history of rhetoric of such policy claims, universities’ endeavours to describe generic attributes of graduates continue to lack a clear theoretical or conceptual base and are characterized by a plurality of viewpoints. Furthermore, despite extensive funding in some quarters, overall, efforts to foster the development of generic attributes appear to have met with limited success.

Barrie identifies the difficulties of determining what skills and attributes should be considered generic to all graduates, how such generic skills can interact with and shape discipline-specific knowledge, and then, whether or not graduates can apply such integrated knowledge to on-going learning in new contexts, as a progression in the learning process. Where desired outcomes are uncertain and poorly articulated in an environment of decreasing resource availability, it is difficult to envisage how universities would be able to claim that society’s needs have been met.

UNIVERSITIES WITH MULTIPLE VESTED INTERESTS

Universities are now involved in training students for particular outcomes, with the more generalist philosophical disciplines that concentrate on knowledge for knowledge’s sake dwindling in popularity and resourcing. The arts generally, and philosophy and history in particular, have become unpopular, as they do not have clear vocational outcomes. When the cost of education was not the subject of specific hardship, such “academic” pursuits were more defensible as the basis for providing a foundation for learning. Saul suggests that:

(w)hat the corporatist approach seems to miss is the simple role of higher education—to teach thought. A student who graduates with mechanistic skills and none of the habits of thought has not been educated. Such people will have difficulty playing their role as citizens. The weakening of the humanities in favour of profitable specializations undermines universities’ ability to teach thought.

Universities now speak the language of economy, efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes, value for money, and performance indicators. Technologies and distance education models have enabled many groups previously unable to engage in tertiary education. Many new providers of tertiary
education offer virtual campuses with flexibility previously unavailable in traditional modes of learning. For the consumer, choices abound. Universities are increasingly “customer-focused,” with courses and subjects emerging in response to demand (or perceptions concerning possible competitive advantage) and qualifications are becoming increasingly portable. These developments give an indication of the power attributed to market mechanisms and how they may combine to impact the character and perception of the role of a university. Students are spending less time on campus and are willing to shop around for the university that provides them with the flexibility and resources they desire. They have expectations of their educational experience and desire value for money. As universities have come to rely on funding from many sources (or have many masters), the public agency role and values attributable to universities, as enunciated by Aristotle, have diminishing relevance to contemporary universities. “It is the business of the educator to produce the type of citizens which the statesman (society) requires.” Aristotle believed in developing good citizens through education rather than producing consumers or customers. Those with vested interests pursue specific interests that may be at odds with the needs of society.

As significant stakeholder interests have progressively changed the character and role of universities, so new issues that will impact these factors continue to emerge:

- the graying of academe,
- skills shortages in certain disciplines,
- research becoming increasingly directed toward partnerships and targeted priorities.

Students desiring employment will not necessarily seek the form of education that may better create an educated pool of graduates able to contribute to the needs of society as adaptive, critical, and analytical citizens. Craig and Amernic and Boyce suggest that it is possible to embed tangential thinking in graduates as part of programs within accreditation and curriculum requirements. It is perhaps appropriate to question how well universities are serving society’s needs and whether adaptive behavior by institutions in terms of educational content and options for flexible teaching that specifically caters for learning foundation diversity, rather than the operational environment, is also needed to maintain relevance in a global environment. Institutions of higher education in Australia and New Zealand have traditionally been public service institutions with all attendant notions of ponderous, slow-to-change bureaucracies. The need for greater accountability, operational efficiencies, and revenue-earning capabilities is
not denied, but consideration of the desirability of this role for universities in the context of the wider educational needs of society is important.

Along with many other more businesslike practices in higher education, the role and titles of senior administrators/managers have changed significantly. What used to be a staff registrar is now likely to be a director of human resources. The faculty registrar is now the general manager and a vice chancellor is likely to be described as the chief executive officer. Administrators have, in short, become professional managers, and their relationships with academics have changed. Power relationships have shifted, with control over finances now held by the managers, with academic access to financial information increasingly shrouded in long approval chains. Clerical staff are vested with documentary accountability imperatives that have greater priority than academic time, thus creating conflict between academic values and managerial values. Within New Zealand universities there have been several such clashes. At Victoria University of Wellington, when moving a vote of thanks, Emeritus Professor Peter Munz suggested that Victoria was “no longer the real university it used to be.” His vice chancellor, Les Holborow, said that was an “irresponsible” comment and that he wished that Munz “would not run down Victoria University.” Holborow also warned lecturing staff that they were “not permitted to speak to the media on matters relating to university management, policy or operational issues unless they have first cleared it with [senior management].”

Change is never easy, with internal conflicts often making external headlines as issues escalate. Academics have traditionally been encouraged to engage with the media as part of their role as independent voices in world affairs; however, this does not extend to criticizing their own employer. In an open letter to Holborow, Munz made a trenchant criticism of “the way Victoria’s academic life is being stood on its head”:

You have allowed the first class librarian, one of the kingpins of scholarship, research, learning and science, to be demoted so that he left. The Victoria history department was proud and fortunate to have New Zealand’s two leading historians on its staff. You have allowed both of them to depart by letting their employment conditions become too unrewarding. Your successor, the new Vice-chancellor, was appointed without consultation with the academic staff, behind their back. This procedure is unprecedented and counterproductive. For, like you, your successor is supposed to serve the academic staff, and not the other way round. These are just three examples, chosen at random. What is going wrong? The thing that is going wrong during your tenure of the office of Vice-Chancellor is that you have
allowed a wedge to be driven between management and academic staff. Management has become top heavy and Victoria is no longer the fine university it was, a community of scholars and scientists engaged to organise to do teaching and research. It is now being run as if it were a bank or a firm of stockbrokers. All this under the pretext of saving money and of promoting financial efficiency.\(^{57}\)

Another clash of academic values and management values occurred at Auckland University in 2002. Competition between the schools of medicine and science for government funding led to public or semipublic comment about the respective claims. Vice chancellor John Hood was reported as saying that “anyone caught talking down another part of the university will be summarily fired.”\(^{58}\) Hood denied making the threat, expressing concern that negative comments might frighten off “potential investors and business partners.”

The *Herald* seemed unconvinced. It pointed out that in 2001 the vice-chancellor had warned that if the government gained the power to dissolve councils, academic freedom could be stifled. “He cannot have it both ways. A university which denies its staff the freedom it demands as an institution would be a poor university indeed.”\(^{59}\)

The tension between the need to attract students for their revenue contributions and the impact of public comment on a university’s public image has seen a style of behavior by university management more closely aligned with corporate entities. Any issues or comments that may reflect badly on a university or may damage stakeholders’ interests are discouraged and are made only by the brave.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Harris\(^{60}\) asks: what is a university’s contribution to civil society today at a time when democracy has become synonymous with capitalism and consumerism? When students represent the values and norms of many different societies, do universities funded by domestic economies have a responsibility to the global economy? Rather than lament past associations, roles, and responsibilities, perhaps it is appropriate to consider that roles and responsibilities have evolved. The negative connotations of the “market” are emotive, and the need to provide value to resource providers is logical. As public funding diminishes, so must public agency in its traditional sense. A benevolent form of higher education institution is no more relevant than a benevolent public sector that treats all citizens as equals when capacities and needs are diverse. Institutions of higher education cannot continue to be “all things to all people.”
The educational values traditionally considered to be part of the role of universities "includes the type of intellectual that is moulded through the tertiary learning process: a thinking, critical individual instead of a skill-based technocrat, who may be ignorant of tensions that underpin recurring socio-economic crises." This seems to suggest that Aristotle's reference to the indecision concerning education content as useful for life or conducive to virtuous behavior continues to have a place in tertiary education. The current popularity of governance and ethical studies continues to highlight that morally edifying behavior needs to be a significant part of the learning process. The difficulty seems to be one of determining the correct balance between usefulness in the short term and those skills that will allow individuals to engage in lifelong learning in an adaptive society.

In Australia, there are now a significant number and variety of investigations and consultations as part of a continuous review processes that inform government policy. In addition to the Bradley Review of higher education, there are inquiries into voluntary student unionism, academic research, intellectual property, research training, the learning and teaching fund formula, and research misconduct. There is also a senate inquiry into academic freedom, an inquiry into climate change skills, a review of government offshore education activities, national gender equality, and a review of full cost research. It is also interesting to note that there are signs of a movement toward what could be described as a more liberal education. The Australian national newspaper also noted that:

A REVOLUTION from below is transforming Australian higher education as leading universities unleash radical course reforms in advance of the Rudd Government's policy overhaul. The University of Western Australia has joined a group including Melbourne, Macquarie, Monash, South Australia and Victoria universities undergoing radical course reform unprompted by government policy. Melbourne, UWA and Macquarie have jettisoned the smorgasbord of credentials characterising Australian higher education in favour of a much smaller number of broad undergraduate courses integrating the humanities and science.

There appears to be an acceptance that offering students ever more increasingly specialized choices of subjects for learning is counterproductive as universities compete with each other. Paradoxically, the trend in New Zealand is a move away from the broad undergraduate degree. At Canterbury University, a recent change to the bachelor of commerce degree makes it "flexible" and allows students to "choose from twelve endorsements or
five major subjects.\textsuperscript{64} There is clearly uncertainty concerning the role of education in society, with the push and pull of resource dependency impacting paths chosen.

Tilling\textsuperscript{65} suggested that perhaps it was appropriate to look backwards to see what lies ahead. The traditional Oxbridge style education referred to by Tilling and Sharrock\textsuperscript{66} sought to instill graduates with values and virtues appropriate to citizenship. There are similarities between a liberal education that promotes citizenship and the ability to be discriminating, critical, and analytical as a prelude to environmental adaptability and continuous learning. Although they are not the same, both have a more general approach to “equipping graduates with tools for life as distinct from tools for a profession.”

NOTES

5. Ashby, 10.
6. Ibid., 11.

13. Ibid., 267.
24. Ibid., 135.
25. Ibid., 149.
27. Malcolm and Tarling, 150.
28. Ibid., 165.
29. Ibid., 165.
32. Rochford, "The Contested Product of a University Education."
34. The Business and Law Faculty of Deakin University has 64 percent of all international enrollments at the university. A similar situation exists at Canterbury University. Canterbury has adopted a policy limiting international enrollments to 20 percent of total enrollments of the university; because there is no limit by faculties, the number in first-year commerce courses can be between 45 and 55 percent.
36. Ibid.
37. Rochford, "The Contested Product of a University Education."
40. Churchman, "Voices of the Academy"; Stewart Lawrence and Umesh. Sharma, "Commodification of Education and Academic La-

41. It is appropriate to note, however, that professions have the same vested interest in graduate outcomes as tertiary institutions and society in general, for example, an educated pool of graduates able to contribute to the needs of society as adaptive, critical, and analytical citizens. This is also supported by specific initiatives within the accounting discipline that recognize a broader educational experience can bring other desired qualities to a profession. In particular, alternative pathways for the attainment of professional accounting qualifications for nonaccounting graduates in Australia through the Graduate Certificate of Chartered Accounting Foundations (a variation introduced earlier in the United Kingdom and more recently by Deakin University in Australia) is a means of valuing diversity in discipline foundations.


44. Ibid., 63.


46. Ibid., 261.


51. Craig and Amernic, “Accountability of Accounting Educators and the Rhythm of the University.”

53. The SMIPA program mentioned earlier suggests that for international students, it is difficult to ensure that required skills are inculcated before graduation, and efforts to remedy this situation are made after graduation.

54. The vice chancellor of the University of Tasmania is also formally titled the president.


56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 4.


59. Ibid.


63. Ibid.


66. Sharrock, “Rethinking the Australian University.”