Excellence and inclusion in universities

Paul Blackmore
International Centre for University Policy Research
King’s College London
Agenda

- Can a university be excellent and inclusive?
- Issues at levels of
  - System
  - Institution
The influence of global rankings

- Beyond control of government
- Mainly prestige measures including academic opinion
- Underplaying teaching and community engagement
- Focusing on individual institutions not systems
Academic Prestige
Definitions

Stock of prestige

• Measured relative to others
• Defined by faculty and insider desires
• Depreciates slowly
• A rival good

Stock of reputation

• Measured in absolute terms
• Defined by customer desires
• Depreciates rapidly
• A non-rival good

The excellent and inclusive university: an institutional framework

“The ways in which these pressures are managed and accommodated - or not.”
Changing ideas about excellence

• “cultural reframing so that excellence and inclusion are not seen as opposites”. (KCL)

• “Every university’s strategic plan is to be as close to Harvard as possible. Excellence is of many kinds and needs to be spread out ..(but) ..we are trying to make everybody excellent in the same way” (UNSW).

• “Not defining yourself by whom you exclude”. (ASU)
Policy context

• Teaching

• Research

• Service to society
  • Government distance from decision-making differs from one country to another.
  • Declining resource from government as proportion of total university income
  • Excellence and inclusion as separate concerns
Institutional factors

- Age and traditional mission of institution
- Geographical positioning
- Mix of disciplines
- Teaching and research mix
Competition and collaboration

- UNSW in a formal alliance with Wollongong and Newcastle
- KCL – few contacts with teaching-led institutions
- ASU – a system in its own right?

Size facilitates dealing with diversity
Teaching concerns

• Inclusion into what?
  • Matching the teaching and assessment to learner needs and aptitudes

• How do we identify potentially excellent students?
  • Beyond grades and institution-based assessment

• The need for institutional research
Relevant research

“We wanted line of sight from discovery to application” (KCL6)

What is our research for and who is it for?

- Discipline or activity focus?
- Basic and applied: parity of esteem?
- Engaging with end users
- Intellectual Property rights
Teaching, research and ????

• What is our social contract?

• How to evaluate hard-to-measure “service” outcomes
Aspects of excellence and inclusion

- Intention
- Strategy
- Indicators
- Practice

Teaching
Research
Service
Reviewing strategy and practice

Intention → Strategy → Indicators → Practice → Intention
Reviewing strategy and practice

- Intention
  - Congruent with?

- Practice
  - Reflecting in?

- Strategy
  - Evaluated by?

- Indicators
  - Illuminating
Reviewing strategy and practice

- Intention
  - Implicit?
  - Congruent with?
  - Not observed or evaluated

- Strategy
  - Reflected in?

- Practice

- Indicators
  - Evaluated by?
  - Not collected or interpreted

- Illuminating

Unstated or not enacted
Questions

• Does the excellence and inclusion tension “ring true”?
• If so, where does it occur in universities?
• Is it recognised and managed?
• What might help institutions to manage the tension?
References


Prof Paul Blackmore, King’s College, London, UK

• paul.blackmore@kcl.ac.uk

• +44 (0)20 7848 1958
Prof Paul Blackmore
King’s College, London, UK
paul.blackmore@kcl.ac.uk
+44 (0)20 7848 1958