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INSIDE

Court, which had been a forum ensuring a degree of democratic accountability, and abolished also the Guild of Graduates, designed to bring the views of graduates to bear on issues in Wales. At the same time there began a practice of referring to the graduates as *alumni* or old students, which we are not. In Wales we graduated *from* our colleges and *into* the University, becoming life-members from the moment we shook hands with the Pro-Chancellor or his representative. The Guild, for reasons totally unexplained, *either* has been *or* is to be (the account varies, even within the same document) replaced by an *Alumni* Association. Of such quality are the garbled explanations, the lame excuses and the empty disclaimers issuing from the new régime, when pressed, and between long North Korean silences.

It is also of some significance that the legal notice of 28.11.11 was issued by and on behalf of UW: TSD; it can therefore not be considered part of the required consultation between UW and its members.

It has just been announced (10 December) by the still functioning University Council that provision is to be made for the maintenance of the "four services" through a series of trusts. This comes close to what some of us have been advocating over the past year, but the sum available (£6.8 m.) is very small and will need to be supplemented by a regular income. The Funding Council and the former university colleges must come to accept their share of responsibility, and the creation of an Arts and Humanities Research Council for Wales would seem to be a necessary step.

The whole idea of the merger remains highly unacceptable. In September 2012, 350 graduates, responding to a Welsh government White Paper on Education, made known their opposition. Other measures are being considered. The University of Wales was, and still is, a unique organization, and readers of this magazine may feel that there are no lessons here which can be applied anywhere else. But *Oxford Magazine* has consistently warned against what it perceives as attacks on the universities, and readers may find here the attack to end all attacks, the betrayal and ruin of an institution which, though not without its faults, has served Wales for over a century in a way that no other institution could have done. In this scandalous history, several things have worked together: a singularly inept form of managerialism, coupled with cheek. There is an immense task of reconstruction, which should take place under the University of Wales charter. The day should never come when the Crown receives the charter back.

Denmark rejects UK HE policies

JØRGEN ØLLGAARD

UNIVERSITIES and scientific research are globalized and thereby exposed to the same ethos of effectivization throughout the world. Cynics would claim that government policies everywhere pursue the same rationale: cutbacks, the prioritisation of "useful" research, privatization, and so on.

Politicians strive to utilize higher education funding as an instrument of direct or indirect support to domestic industry. This has been the case in Denmark in the period 2001-2011, a decade of conservative coalition government. Higher education policy even proceeded under the banner headline *Fra forskning til faktura* (literally: From research to invoice). The reformed Danish University Act was gradually introduced between 2003 and 2007 (the interested reader might like to consult Ingrid Stage's *Lessons from Denmark*, *Oxford Magazine*, No. 291, MT 2009). In short, this was a wave of legislation, reduced funding and chains of contractual obligations providing government with a series of powerful tools by which to steer the universities. Moreover, it affords politicians and external stakeholders the means by which to directly influence the running of the eight Danish universities, should they so wish.

Denmark's new coalition government

But luckily for the Danish universities a new government came to power in 2011. As in the UK, a liberal centre party now holds the balance of power. *De Radikale*–the Social-Liberal Party–declined to enter into an alliance with the Right, opting instead to join forces with the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party. The coalition has plotted a rather irregular course, the Social-Liberal Party keeping a tight rein on finances with a rightist economic policy of tax cuts for those in employment and cutbacks in social benefits, much in the spirit of the previous conservative government. Such measures contrast with traditional Social Democratic Keynesianism pursuing growth through public initiative and investment. In other areas, policy is more classically liberal.

Perhaps the most important area in which policy has changed is higher education. Despite the financial crisis, the minister responsible, Morten Østergaard of the Social-Liberal Party, has in fact managed to implement frequently vented newspeak visions proclaiming education and research to be the way forward through recession. The government's 2012 budget provides him with all the means necessary to ensure the agenda continues to be carried through. One major difference here in respect of the former government is that funding comes as basic funding to be put to use much as the universities see fit, whereas formerly money was earmarked for strategic initiatives. Most significantly of all, Østergaard has succeeded in pushing through three-year budget horizons. The universities had been pleading for the agreeement for decades, but until now no minister responsible has had the requisite clout to engage with intransigent finance ministers unwilling to tie up money for anything but the shortest possible timespan.

Higher education was fortunate in another respect too, insofar as it was assigned to the Social-Liberal Party. The drastic university reform of 2003-7 enjoyed wide consensus in the Folketing (Danish parliament), while only the far left and the Social-Liberal Party themselves have opposed it. Now in office, the latter strive to push through their own platform. Had the area been placed in the charge of the Social Democrats, things might well have turned out differently, the party of premier Helle Thorning-Schmidt having modelled itself in the soft-core image of Tony Blair's New Labour. The Social Democrats have tended to construe research policy in terms of technology policy, by which technological innovation and the creation of new (industrial) jobs are seen as the prime motors of economic growth, a stance wholly in accordance with that of the industrial trade unions. And they are highly cognisant of the fact that a high-profile "support academic freedom" platform is hardly going to bring in the votes from the broad population.

All in all, Østergaard has proved to be something of a gift for the universities. The lesson seems to be that despite the looming spectre of globalization it does actually seem to make a difference who is in power. Indeed, the Danish Vice-Chancellors have gone so far as to openly thank the minister for his efforts; the Academics' Union likewise having praised Østergaard in an almost unprecedented display of gratitude.

Denmark resists following the UK's lead

Internationally, academics often tend to compete on who among them is worst off (see e.g. Terence Karran's comparative analyses (*Oxford Magazine*, No 291, MT 2009) or ***www.forskerforum.dk/downloads/ff-203.pdf***). In any worst-case comparison, Denmark would lose hands down to the UK.

One indicator here consists in British student protests against student fees, as well as similar outcry from the silver-haired academics in the newly Council for the Defence of British Universities (CDBU), which has spoken out against cutbacks, marketization, privatization, and so on. If members of the latter group can be animated unto the breach it seems fair to assume that they feel themselves hard done by indeed. Conservative politicians in Denmark have expressed interest in introducing student fees, but so far any talk of mimicking the UK has been doused down, opposition status notwithstanding.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between Denmark and the UK in fact is that the Danes have yet to introduce any form of student fees, thereby being spared a form of semi-marketization that liberates government in respect of the funding imperative, handing on much of the responsibility to the market forces and propagating consumer attitudes on the part of the student community with a shift in learning perspectives to boot.

Another significant difference is that while corporate lobbying works forcefully for unambiguous prioritizing of business aspects in university disciplines, the policy area as a whole remains largely unaffected. True, technology and science are given by far the majority of Ph.D scholarships, the humanities lagging way behind, but the same prioritizing has yet to find its way into basic funding, though the humanities and the social sciences are much more heavily burdened in terms of the student-teacher ratio than the wet sciences, which receive the lion's share of research funding.

Following on from this, a third major difference is that the marketization of research funding is generally far less entrenched in Denmark. While the former conservative governments of 2001-2012 upped strategic management and the earmarking of resources (medicine, nanotechnology, environmental and energy research, etc.), the present government has halted these processes and has once more prioritized basic funding, aware perhaps that such measures hampered free science to the detriment of society as a whole.

Interestingly, some discord came to light in Danish business as to the issue of basic funding versus strategic earmarking. The Danish business community is characterized by a large number of small and medium-sized businesses existing largely on their innovative abilities and without their own research departments or resources. Thus, it is widely held that the state should contribute to their growth and continued renewal (indeed, this is the policy as formulated by lobbyists of the Danish employers' association, *Danish Industry*). On the other hand, a small number of research-heavy hi-tech industries, the medical industry (e.g. *Novo Nordisk*) being at the forefront, profit from the basic research done by universities as well as the graduates they produce and on whose broad qualifications such corporate entities can build. Indeed, spokespersons for such major players are currently declaring their support for government focus on basic research.

Managerialism in Danish universities

Once the positive news of stable basic funding has been recognised, it should be added that Danish universities remain entities pervaded by top-down steering, a beast that bares its teeth in university managements' allocation of basic funds. With a specific University-law, Denmark has for some become a European spearhead regarding research management and a horror scenario for others (for an international comparison see ***http://www.jorgen-ollgaard.dk/?p=101***). The politicians possess both the structural framework and the instruments by which to control university activities strategically and with a heavy hand – which is partly what they are doing.

Basic funding is in essence at the full disposal of university management. A number of factors may negatively influence allocation:

1. The government may steer allocation via contract policy. Universities are legally obliged to enter into contract with the appropriate ministry as regards establishing strategic objectives, success criteria, research priorities, study programmes, etc. Allocation may be indirectly dictated in this way, for instance by insistence on co-funding with industrial partners.

2. All other initiatives are supported by a large selective redistribution of research funds. The governmental plan is 'put out to tender', which in liberal terms basically means competition between institutions and researchers, and in political terms that government may direct research funds as it sees fit. Basic funding has in the main remained frozen at the same level (or a little less) for years.

3. The funding pools for free research without specific conditions or terms (under the Free Research Council) have been squeezed. During the same period, pools for strategic research or innovation ballooned by more than 50 per cent in 2004-2010, though this trend has been halted by the new government. Collaboration with private-sector partners is still rewarded. Politicians have thus selected specific research themes in science, medicine or engineering, and scholars have been forced to scramble for funding in other fields, making government policy a sophisticated way of disciplining the scientific community.

The author is indebted to Martin Aitken for assistance in translation.

Consolidating Libraries: Lessons to be Learned?

FERGUS MILLAR

DEBARRED by senility from attending the Discussion on Libraries, I none the less read with interest the report of the proceedings, and was struck by the claim by Bodley's Librarian that 'Since 2000... 19 libraries have been merged into larger administrative or physical units'. It is clearly implied that this is an achievement which is to the credit of the Bodleian Libraries. But has this major change in fact been beneficial, or damaging? More profoundly, since it is quite clearly represented as a systematic policy, with very real changes to working conditions in a significant number of different areas of the University, was this policy submitted to Congregation for approval? If it was, and Congregation accepted it, then well and good, and we can regard this as a pre-existing example of the openness and spirit of collaboration which is now promised.

If it was not submitted to Congregation, then this represents a lesson which needs to be learned for the future. But the question of consultation, collaboration and assent goes further than that. Once the policy objective had been established, whether with Congregation's knowledge and approval or not, was each closure or amalgamation of a departmental or faculty library conditional on the assent of the academic unit concerned? Which indeed were the 19 units which either lost their libraries as physical spaces or saw them administratively subsumed into larger entities? A published list of these will be essential if we are to take serious cognisance of recent changes.

Of course, in a period of financial pressure, economic considerations have to play a large part; equally, as everybody knows, some subjects now function entirely on line, and have no further use for physical libraries, and collections of hard-copy books and journals; others may have felt that the relevant space could be put to better use.

So there surely will have been units within which the closure of their library was not an issue. But it is hard to believe that this was so in all cases. For some subjects the presence of a specialised library within the physical space occupied by a Faculty or Department can be of fundamental significance for methods of research, for graduate and undergraduate teaching, and for intellectual activity and social interaction.

Someone from one of the Faculties concerned, in deeply regretting the change, pointed out to me that anyone who was now consulting books or journals in their field was *ipso facto* not in the same building as colleagues and students, and therefore, for that period, out of contact, and not available for casual exchanges or discussions. Another former student expressed horror on hearing that the relevant Departmental library had closed. For it was there that she and her fellow students had spent their working time, when not in tutorials or attending lectures, or taking a break for coffee (all of which happened in the same building).

I have had the good fortune in retirement to be installed in the Oriental Institute, where all the above features are combined under the same roof, along with Faculty and administrative offices. In my view it is difficult to exaggerate the benefits of an immediately accessible specialist library, which is not just a book depository where access to material that one has already identified can be obtained, but a physical space which confronts one with material that one had not known about, and which may change one's ideas fundamentally. I may be wrong, but I cannot help feeling that the currently dominant principles of Library management do not place enough value on the benefits of small specialised libraries which are integrated in the working environment of the primary body of their readers, whether staff, graduates or undergraduates. We should also take account of the fact that any academic unit will have attached to it a wider range of people with relevant interests, whether providing tutorials, or retired, or members of other departments in the University, or of related institutions, who need to consult the same materials, and keep up with new publications, whether books or journals. In their case a departmental library or equivalent offers both a working space and the possibility of constructive contacts. It is not just the costs but the benefits of specialised libraries which need careful consultation, and public discussion.

That is no more than a personal opinion of course. What matters is that there should be a candid published report on what consultation took place over the programme of amalgamation since 2000, and an assessment of what the consequential benefits and losses have been. Such a report would be a very positive sign of the Bodleian Libraries' commitment to consultation and collaboration in the future.