

APPENDIX 9

Example of a Coded Transcript

This appendix comprises the coded transcript of the interview conducted with OVC 11 on Tuesday, 22nd December 2009.

The comments boxes to the right list the codes (1-8) assigned to the text. The origin of and the code/label applied to each number can be found in Table 5.2.

In the transcript certain changes (XXX) have been made in an effort to protect the anonymity of the interviewee.

Question 1

- (a) I am interested in the broad changes in the higher education sector that have occurred over the last eighteen years (i.e. since 1992) can you briefly describe the main changes that you have seen, please?

Answer 1

The RE was in 1996 – I think and I would say that therefore the biggest change has been the concentration of research funding—have you got that? Have you got that? (Yes). The biggest change probably is the concentration of research funding and I would say that the research-led universities have become more and more influential over the last twelve years and have begun to define what a university is all about. I mean to a certain extent its always been there in the ether but I would say that the Russell Group has responded pretty well to the way in which the Government has framed thinking about the universities and they've been helped in that by the appointment of Lord Sainsbury as Science Minister which means that they've had a ready access to the Government through Lord Sainsbury who's been pretty uncritical of what the research-led universities have been saying. So I would say that's the first thing. The second thing would be increasing anxiety about teaching quality and 1997 to about 2000 was marked by the declining influence of the QAA because of course this was also around the time of the Dearing Report publication, less important after about 2000 I think it was I can't remember when John Randall was sacked. And that means that teaching quality's had less of a priority. There have been all sorts of attempts to move teaching up the agenda with the creation of the ILT (*The Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*), then HEA (*Higher Education Academy*) and things like that but actually not had much of an impact institutionally. And the fourth thing, third thing would probably be the commercialisation of universities, so in the sense that universities have to diversify income streams in all sorts of ways. Again research-led universities are better able to do that because they can...they've got more access to a much broader range of funds than we have and so

Dawn 6/10/12 17:19

Comment [1]: 5 (Changes in HE)

Dawn 30/3/13 20:17

Comment [2]: Increasing influence of research-led universities. Consider implications for 5 and 1 (Differentiation)

Dawn 6/10/12 17:21

Comment [3]: Interesting comment - outside of the sector (5)

Dawn 6/10/12 17:22

Comment [4]: 5 where does this leave knowledge/research? Is this a move towards equality?

Dawn 6/10/12 17:23

Comment [5]: 5 obviously viewed as important

Dawn 6/10/12 17:24

Comment [6]: 5 does this define commercialization?

therefore the percentage of HEFCE funding as a part of the research-led universities income stream is much less than it would be for a teaching-led institution. And then there's been the promotion of what is called ... variously called **third mission** which is the forth thing, which is in a sense an aspect of the third. Then finally there's been the **introduction of student fees in various forms**, or in two forms which have shaped the debate quite significantly. Finally, there's the concern with a **higher level skills agenda** which has always been hovering around but has been given greater salience as a result of the Leech Report. And I haven't mentioned widening...but there would be a sixth thing which would be **continuing rhetoric about widening participation** in one form or another, but that's six things. Many of those are constants actually but they've got different emphasis in different parts of the period.

Dawn 6/10/12 17:27

Comment [7]: 5

Dawn 6/10/12 17:27

Comment [8]: 5

Dawn 6/10/12 17:27

Comment [9]: 5

Dawn 6/10/12 17:28

Comment [10]: 5 - Interesting choice of words "continuing rhetoric"

Question 2

Do you believe that widening participation and the pursuit of excellence can co-exist (in one institution)?

Dawn 6/10/12 17:30

Comment [11]: This question was not asked in all of the interviews (bear this in mind when analysing data).

Answer 2

It depends what you mean by the pursuit of excellence because some people will say that you can be excellent in your work in widening participation so therefore you can have an excellent record for example as defined by progression rates despite recruiting students characterised by their neighborhoods, their parental experience or not of higher education, and their A-level achievements which will broadly define widening participation students; you can be excellent in the way in which you provide support and all that kind of stuff or a university which recruits students who are usually described as widening participation students can have centre's of excellence in the research or indeed teaching and probably say that we've got four or five centers of excellence in research. *(Would you agree that the government may say that its support the different missions of university's equally but in reality (i.e. in financial*

Dawn 6/10/12 17:31

Comment [12]: 1 This is interesting - talks about inequality in respect of missions what Govt does and says is clearly not seen as the same thing!

terms etc) its treatment is not always equal?)) I think...that it is...I think most official talk about higher education is framed on the assumption that everyone goes to the university that they went to and therefore it's a pre-1992 university, when you point out to them that the majority of students will experience university like this, they just register it and they intellectually say yes you're right but there are residual concerns about quality and snobbishness, you know kind of assumptions about what university education means that's makes it very difficult for policy makers to engage properly with this kind of university. So was the question about widening participation or about universities.....

Question 3

- (a) The government has recently announced its intention to save £600 million from higher education and science and research budgets from a combination of changes to student support within existing arrangements; efficiency savings and prioritization across universities, science and research; some switching of modes of study in higher education; and reductions in budgets that do not support student participation. On a vaguely speculative note how do you think this may impact upon your institution?
- (b) More specifically will it influence your commitment to third stream activities? (I am particularly interested in understanding more about your relationship with third stream funding/activities and research).
-

Answer 3

Let's go back to the question you just asked a minute ago and then we'll come to that. Because the answer I didn't give you was the answer about funding and I actually think that the sector is funded equally for activities of an equal kind. So therefore with

Dawn 6/10/12 17:34

Comment [13]: 1 particular issues relevant to post-1992 sector "snobbishness", assumptions of policy makers.
8.(Other) Policy makers tend to have attended more traditional HE institutions and mis- understand HE sector today

Dawn 11/10/12 12:11

Comment [14]: Interviewee is taking this opportunity to think about what has gone on (relevance/topicality of questions).

the exception of part-time students, part-time students are funded in a different way, but broadly if you have widening participation as a core part of your mission you'll get funded equally with teaching in the same way that a research-led university would but you would get more widening participation premium, you'd get funded in exactly the same way that a research-led university would for research but you might have less of it because you do less of it in a fundable way. So actually my answer would be that the rhetoric is followed through into funding but in terms of debate, issues are not necessarily understood or as, you know, sympathetically viewed, so I think there are differences there. So going on to the question about funding cuts that depends on how HEFCE and Universities UK... the government appears to want to match funding (a) against its objectives and higher ambitions (b) against... the government also occasionally, sorry this is DBIS, always throw back to Vice Chancellors the option well you could be funded against quality criteria; and this will lead to tensions within the sector where you might have a university like York which has got a very ambitious growth plan which may be undermined by cut backs in higher education which would leave it terribly exposed, beginning to argue publically that funding should be against quality and that if there is to be growth in the sector it should be around... it should be around those institutions which can demonstrate good quality. Then there comes the question well how do you define quality and if you define it by graduate employability scores or sorry graduate employability outcomes or NSS scores then the government might as well put in a benchmark for A level entry because although you can't literally read across from A-levels scores to NSS scores and so therefore it would have quite a challenge on its hands because it would effectively be saying that they are going to concentrate cuts in those universities which are primarily ... and with students who come from particular backgrounds which is traditionally labour-supported. Quite interesting times really. And what you could find too, is you could find if there was a cut in the research budget that the research budget was skewed to favour research-led universities. You could find that widening participation premiums were reduced. You could find... I'd probably mention for example so you know the first requirement for him was to look at front line teaching and to protect that over and against the special funds so that could kind

Dawn 6/10/12 17:37

Comment [15]: 1 There is some equality (after all)!

Dawn 11/10/12 12:12

Comment [16]: 1/8 Or not?? More inequality

of.. undermine that kind of output. But I don't know I mean apparently HEFCE will get their letter today so we shall find out. *(As an institutions do you think that given your forward planning and dependent upon where the cuts come you are likely to be ok?)* Nope. No. I think we have ... finances are in a sufficiently good state for us to be able to absorb relatively high cuts in the short term but then going forward it depends on the shape of those cuts as to how we would be able to survive it. And we've got strategies in place for dealing with it but in terms of making the actual decisions, I would say that we would need to change tack in terms of our decision-making style. There are two issues which aren't being explored in public debate: one is if you are... if your income is cut and it's assumed your activity will be cut then its relatively easy to shrink income and shrink activity but if your incomeand for the academic part of the university your ability to make savings is spread over a three to four year period because when you admit a group of students you can't just...and your support structures to a certain extent have to marry up against the number of students you've got and any particular characteristics and you can't just...*(Do you think some institutions will be allowed to fail?)* It depends what failure means. There is a particular problem with allowing an institution to fail, which is that our borrowing is currently at very low interest rate because the banks all assume that the government is the guarantor of last resort. So if an institution fails that will actually cost the sector a lot of money and indirectly that will cost the government money because they would have to find the money from somewhere to cover the additional costs of borrowing so actually it might be cheaper for governments not to let institutions fail than it would be to let them fail, despite all the rhetoric. *(Do you think there is more likely to be forced mergers etc?)* Well, I mean again lets come back to what is meant by failure so if you took a new university, one that's opened in the last five years which had a core of provision which was sustainable but where it would be 30% smaller than in current years then the institution might be managed down where it would lose 30 % of its activity and just focus on 70% and then again the key question is whether or not it continues to be big enough to be called a university so you get questions like that. With institutions like, of our size could we fail, well London Metropolitans a pretty good example and we don't know yet whether that

Dawn 6/10/12 17:41

Comment [17]: 2 (Finance)

Dawn 6/10/12 17:41

Comment [18]: 3 (Business-language)

Dawn 6/10/12 17:42

Comment [19]: 5 & 8 Future challenges?

will survive so I don't know but it's not something that keeps me awake at night, because I don't think we are in that position but I might get a shock in three years time.

Dawn 6/10/12 17:44

Comment [20]: 1 & 8 – future of the sector/implications for the present

Question 4

Much has been written about the need for institutions in the higher education marketplace to diversify in order (i) to better satisfy the needs of the market and (ii) to survive in an increasingly globalised sector. Can I assume that you are familiar with the work of Dr Marilyn Wedgwood, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University, and her search for a 'Workable Third Mission Model'?

- (a) Could you comment on the usefulness or validity of her teaching/research matrix (Please see Flash Card 1)?
- (b) Where (and why) would you position your institution on the research /teaching quadrant?
- (c) Can you tell me what constitutes your local community and over what scale your institutional plan is active?

Answer 4

(a) Well, we fall into three quadrants, this one, this one and that one so we don't fall into that one and so (*Not bottom right*)Marilyn might not have included delivering excellence and teaching and learning because she's got that down as academic, that's too big a widening participation, professional excellence and delivering excellence and teaching and learning aren't sufficiently... there are not as strongly differentiated as that would suggest but that's why I would put us there And that's why I would include that and that and that in many places is related strongly to that so therefore that distinction is too hard and you might find that Warwick would claim to excel in all four. The Warwick model would suggest that they engage in all of four. I don't think we could claim to excel in that area but that if

post graduate means post graduate teaching as opposed to post graduate taught programs as opposed to PhD then I would say you could put us in that quadrant, which is probably what XXX would say as well.

Dawn 6/10/12 17:45

Comment [21]: 1 useful information re differentiation

(c) Most of our students come from within about thirty miles of XXX so therefore from the student recruitment point of view....that overlaps to a certain extent with the city/region so in terms of nursing students, midwifery students, students from the Faculty of Health, we would expect.. schools and colleges networks they are all located within that same thirty mile area. In terms of technology transfer and knowledge exchange defined broadly, it's probably the same area but that doesn't mean to say that there aren't significant activities that are broader than that. So student recruitment ok 50 % come from within that area 50 % don't, but they don't come from(XXX?)...Well actually probably some do but in very small numbers and what you will find is that outside of the 50 % core, 50% come from almost anywhere but in small numbers with a concentration probably to our west and north.. probably.. yeah and going to fifty/sixty miles rather than 200 and we will have interactions with the knowledge exchange communities a bit broader than that but not much... so I would say thirty miles.

Dawn 11/10/12 12:13

Comment [22]: Importance of place – add to 8/Other. Emergence of place

Question 5

With specific reference to your institution's current vision (please see Flash Card 2) can you explain (1) how and when the final vision was arrived at (i.e. was it by a process of collaboration, internally or externally (consultant) led (2) how it has changed from previous statements (i.e. how much has been driven by recent government policies, competition in the sector etc) and (3) how it has been disseminated across your organization?

Answer 5

I don't think this is it, by the way...oh, no, no no, this one's, I think, right. Yes, that's right. Pretty much through an away-day, I think, all part of an away-day for the

Dawn 11/10/12 12:13

Comment [23]: 1. Suggests VC is not quite as au fait with mission statement as one might have expected!

Executive Group. (*Was it very much driven by yourself?*) To a certain extent, I would say that my predecessor put an exemplar in innovation, applied research and knowledge transfer in front of excellence of learning and teaching and quality of the student experience so therefore in so far as this reverses the previous assumptions then yes, so far as the phrasing or particular phrasing of the words are concerned I'm not sure ..can't remember. (*So it is the same although the significance of the order has changed? What has driven that change – competition in the sector, government policies or internally?*) Yes. It's what happens when a new Vice-Chancellor comes in and says what is this institution is like? And then I say it's like that. (*The first 100 days?*) No. Interview. You get asked the question in the interview what is your vision for the university in five or ten year's time. So you come up with a sort-of, well you know it's like this and then you get the job or you don't, so it's not a first 100 day thing it's actually..well it's also informed by the fact that I was a PVC at XXX and a DVC at XXX and I would say that there was a blurring of the kind of university we were by my predecessor who had aspirations for it to be a Durham or a Sheffield and therefore in my view misunderstood the nature of the he sector, which is also true of many other VCs in this part of the sector.

Dawn 6/10/12 17:52

Comment [24]: 1.Surely this undermines previous mission statement and purpose of mission statements?

Dawn 6/10/12 17:53

Comment [25]: If you can't, who can???

Dawn 6/10/12 17:55

Comment [26]: 1.So mission statements are formed by someone who hasn't even got the job – how can you understand the institution before you are part of it???

Dawn 6/10/12 17:55

Comment [27]: 8. sector is misunderstood, both externally and internally!!

Question 6

In much of your institution's literature the university is described as one of the 'UK's most XXX and XXX universities.' What does that mean to you? Other institutions like the University of XXX have been quite vocal in describing their institution as 'business-facing' and 'business-like' (a term suggested by the government). Why did you choose not to use the term (business-facing) and why do you think others have chosen to adopt it so liberally?

Answer 6

That's come from my predecessor. (*What does it actually mean?*) It doesn't actually mean anything to me because if you put the reverse, I am not sure what it would

mean, no-one would want to be a reactionary, backward-looking institution so to state that you'd like to be a XXX XXX XXX institution is sort of marketing speak and it doesn't mean that much to me and actually it doesn't also define the university accurately. I would say that ...I wouldn't describe us as that. I would describe us as having escaped the crystallis of a public sector polytechnic/polytechnic sector institution. *(Do you think that marketing and mission statements etc matter?)* Yes, I do. Getting the identity of the university right is important in terms of shaping academic agendas, shaping institutional agendas and the university getting an understanding of where it fits. *(Do you think distinctiveness matters?)* Not in my view. No. I think that we need to describe ourselves as a type of institution and then to try and be distinctive within that type is almost foolish. *(What do you think of the business-facing nomenclature?)* Well, XXX once said to me welcome to the business-facing university, which captures a bit of what we do, but XXX defines business incredibly broadly as did my predecessor to include the professions, voluntary sector, what could be called the third sector, the community and it's got a very, very, broad definition so therefore we can claim to be business-facing. *(Some people have suggested to me that the phrase is disenfranchising?)* Yes, exactly, so many of our staff locate themselves on the sort of left of politics, they've got philanthropic values, they've got strong social conscience, they're aligned to their sense of community, they're very attached to the notion of themselves as practical and applied academics but wouldn't necessarily see themselves as aligned with business where business meant you know plc's and companies so I mean I regard that..the term business-facing as an attempt to define the type of university that we are as problematic. Having said that we've created a Business School and the Business School is meant to be externally-facing and I would say that our three other faculties are externally-facing so I would describe ourselves as an external facing university but then again one could say that of XXX as well. But I also think its divisive because it is used to distinguish us from a university like XXX which is problematic given XXX's got 5 Roll Royce centre's, a Boeing Institute, another Roll Royce's Institute, and it's got massive engagement with business and probably more than we have and so it's a nice twist on the modern university but I am not sure it's one that captures all of

Dawn 6/10/12 18:00

Comment [28]: 3. Suggests a dislike/distrust of marketing speak/business language – points at wider tension in sector.

Dawn 6/10/12 18:00

Comment [29]: 8. Found this quite bizarre but very honest and insightful.VC unequivocally distancing him/her self from previous statements (still on website currently). Raises questions over purpose of such statements??

Dawn 6/10/12 19:37

Comment [30]: 1. And yet marketing matters?

Dawn 6/10/12 19:38

Comment [31]: 1. Questions the virtue of distinctiveness.

Dawn 6/10/12 19:43

Comment [32]: 3. definition of business-facing

Dawn 6/10/12 19:43

Comment [33]: 3. problems of business-facing label

what we do or indeed which captures our identity. (Someone suggested it might even be libelous...). Yeah, well... was that from a pre-92? (No, a post-92). Really, why...? (I think that they felt the claim would be difficult to substantiate. Felt that their institution might be more business-facing). Right, but they wouldn't call their's business facing? (I think they do refer to the term somewhere in their institutional literature but not as a strap line etc. I think XXX may have got their first). Yes, exactly and I think it is also fair to say in terms of XXX ownership of XXX, a lot goes on around the university which is not directly the work of the university itself, so you know it is XXX, its XXX, both owned by the XXX or you know the kind of overlapping interest so that means that the engagement is actually a little bit deeper than just the university... (What do you think about university's that have branded themselves as comprehensive universities?) I would describe ourselves in the same way. (And what does that actually mean?) Well, it means... (It doesn't mean being all things to all men, does it?) Not to me. But it is a problem, because I think XXX University have described themselves as comprehensive as well. So comprehensive to me would be defined horizontally and vertically. Horizontally would mean that we are active in a wide range of subjects but we are not a teacher training college or a theological college which has had bits tacked on, which is how you define the University of St John's, of York, St John which is an ...grown out of that but not that much, or Edge Hill, which is essentially a teacher training institution which has got bits tacked on, so you know are active across the full spectrum of subjects is the way I would define it and it also means horizontally that you've got strong relationships with colleges and schools, that you've got the three levels of programme undergraduate, post-graduate and taught and post-graduate research, that you work with a broad span of institutions which comes back to horizontally again but describing it in a different way. So I think that's a reasonable term but.... That's how I would define it.... I wouldn't use... Well, XXX would describe it slightly differently. XXX would describe it as a Modern Civic and by Modern Civic he is meaning a university which engages with its community in a way that XXX would with its community. Given he was the PVC at XXX that would give that sense of that and I think that he would also want the university to be underpinned by a sense of academic excellence and that

Dawn 6/10/12 19:45

Comment [34]: 3. potential issues of business-facing label

Dawn 6/10/12 19:47

Comment [35]: 1. definition of a comprehensive university

would be reflected in the appointments they've made or what he would like to think. But I think I mean again I wouldn't use it, it's not one we've used. But... I think..., the problem with the university as a lawyer I would say it's a cluster concept which means it's got a number of elements in it like for example, well, providing a high quality environment and a challenging learning experience and undertaking research innovation which has got a real world impact, being a catalyst in economic and social transformation those actually came from the previous corporate plan but I actually thought they expressed it reasonably well and we've got a cluster of activities to get there and to try and condense those into very simple words is really hard. Because actually we are a... variously could be described as a teaching-led or student-led institution because you know adopting some phrase it's just a bit silly.... . *(I think I've already asked you this, sorry to repeat myself, but you do think that branding and marketing are important?)* Yeah, I do but not in terms...I mean I think Mission statements are useful in characterizing the type of institution so we are a university of a particular type.. *(I heard an anecdote that at a meeting some 26 odd Mission statements were pinned on a wall and only one VC was able to identify their own statement).* Yes, it was at the Alliance meeting which I went to, and I could identify ours, it just wasn't the right one, so it might be me. I think that was the problem with that meeting, that quite a few of them were out of date, their web sites weren't kept up to date and so I think they are kind of useful but not that they're incredibly useful and they're useful for staff in staff having the sense that their VC knows what he is talking about or she is talking about. Because it is quite easy to start to think well this person doesn't understand this institution, which I would say was true of my predecessor, so it's important for them that they think I understand what place we inhabit. *(Yes, I didn't realize (naive of me I suppose) until I interviewed two members of the Senior Management at another institution that members of the SMT can be at institutions for some considerable time where-as VCs tenures tend to be considerably shorter).* It can, I mean a new VC coming in can be destabilizing for an institution because somebody comes in with completely different vision, they there for four or five years, they spend a lot of money and reshape the top of the institution to correspond with that vision, then they go, somebody else comes in and says what the

Dawn 6/10/12 19:50
Comment [36]: 8. definition of a university

Dawn 6/10/12 19:50
Comment [37]: 1 and 3 seems to deride business ideas/language

Dawn 30/3/13 20:19
Comment [38]: Additional question to try and really understand this point of view - where does he/she stand in respect of marketing etc?

Dawn 6/10/12 19:52
Comment [39]: 1. Cross reference to anecdote made by OVC 9

Dawn 6/10/12 19:53
Comment [40]: 8 & 1 Another statement about the sector/institution being misunderstood

heck are they going on about and the other dimension there is Boards because Boards of lay members frequently have no direct experience of the institution and therefore they need ways of it being described to them in ways which for them make sense and you can get Boards that have got completely the wrong, which have got a complete misunderstanding of where the university is and where it could go, what kind of university it could be, completely unrealistic sense of...one VC was appointed recently, same time as me, the unsuccessful candidate said to me the reason that he got it was he said that he could move them up into the top thirty of the League table, which she said was complete nonsense, you just couldn't do it...currently about 80 something. And so they're under the apprehension they've got that kind of Manchester City sense of the world, we can buy our way up the League Table, complete nonsense... It's a completely different thing because in a football club you are talking about the support of thirty / forty players and a coaching team, in a university you are talking about five and half thousand staff or you know thirty thousand students and institutional structures so Sheikh Mansour couldn't have created XXX university out of this place, which isn't to say what we do isn't good and worthwhile it's just that you couldn't get to that , you couldn't make that step change in institutional profile. So I think it's important characterizing the profile and marketing is also important because you have a selling job to do about the institution...(So you'll be painting your walls blue next?) Laughter...That's right. No, red.

Dawn 6/10/12 19:55
Comment [41]: 6 Impact of VCs

Dawn 6/10/12 19:56
Comment [42]: 8 Governance issues – sector misunderstood at Board level

Dawn 11/10/12 12:13
Comment [43]: 1.
Interesting football analogy - money can't buy everything!

Dawn 6/10/12 19:59
Comment [44]: 1. Impossibility of step change – importance of marketing...

Question 7

What changes have you personally driven across the organization?

Answer 7

For me it's about framing a set of questions, providing explanation of events and you know tones of voice. Those are the things that I add. And I would say that unlike

Dawn 6/10/12 20:00
Comment [45]: 6. VCs role

XXX and unlike XXX I inherited an institution which had already been radically re-shaped two years before I arrived with approach to the faculties so some quite big things were done in ways which were regarded as traumatic by the institution and therefore my own sense has been of the Senior Management Team and the Board of the Institution is the last thing they wanted is somebody to come here and rip up what had been done before. So I felt that my freedom of movement of the operation has been quite limited. So it's not a failing institution which needed to be transformed and I think both XXX and XXX would say that they arrived in what was perceived as failing institutions which needed you know a radical twist and both of them have done that in different ways. So what I am going to be doing is yet to happen, all I'd say. (*I've noticed that you moved support staff into the City centre and you seem to be spending money on your estate, is that something you have initiated?*) Ok,... some of the things I've had to do have been driven by context, so the context in which I arrived was that we had increased student numbers, significantly and continue to do so two years after I was here for pretty good reasons, not always as a result of conscious decision making, and that meant that the estate was a problem, because we simply didn't have enough space to cope with the number of students we had unless we moved not just to become the most efficient institution in the sector in terms of the utilization of the estate but so far ahead of the rest that to be unsustainable, and the NSS was telling us students were more dissatisfied with us about their timetabling and the organization of teaching than any other institution therefore we had to do things about the estate and we had to do them quite quickly which is why I moved the administration out to one eleven which was pretty much of a bargain and it was an opportunist decision which will lead to the creation of more teaching space I think. So things like that you have to do to help..to just make the institution survive. I wouldn't say they're going to be my legacy. I would say those are pragmatic decisions that you make when you are a Chief Executive and I would say my legacy will be putting in place two things (1) a collaborative partnership with the XXX and (2) and which I was putting in place anyway because we have got a very ineffective administration and we need to do something about that, we are doing something about it, so the second thing that I would probably say is or the third is that I've put in place a review

Dawn 11/10/12 12:14

Comment [46]: 1.3.8.
Talking about survival &
things that VCs have
to do (choice?)

Dawn 6/10/12 20:04

Comment [47]: 3. Academic institution
concerned about ineffective
administration

called the professional services review which will make the administration much more efficient and effective. (So you are actually looking at your systems?) Yes, as much as the academic program. Well, I suppose the first thing I would say we have done is we have instituted a form of academic planning that the institution just hadn't had. So there will be an academic planning process, which should be pretty much embedded by the end of this year. (Is the competitive environment forcing universities to become more business-like?) I went into Senior Management in universities in 1998, which is why I was asking about the salience in the 1992 thing, maybe it was '97, '97/98 and I would say that we perceived of ourselves as a business in '97/'98, so nothing has changed in those ten years, and I would say that when I went to XXX, XXX had more of a traditional feel to it but it was run along business lines. We had proper accounting systems both on a macro level and micro level and we were conscious of different incomes streams, different expenditure costs and all that. So it's new, but it precedes my engagement in higher education so therefore before '97/'98. (Would you agree that the HE sector is becoming more professional?) Yes, you used two words, one was commercial and one was professional and I would say it has become more professional rather than commercial. I would still say that we are not very commercial in the way we work. I would still say....(Because of the nature of a university?) Yeah. I would say we are more, we are becoming more professionalized but I would say we are less professional here than either XXX or XXX and I would say there is a popular misconception that new-universities are better managed and more managerial than pre-92's. They're wrong; I would say that the pressure to generate income to cover the costs of research leads to a much more entrepreneurial and professional ...

Dawn 6/10/12 20:04

Comment [48]: 3. Obviously considered an important issue

Dawn 6/10/12 20:05

Comment [49]: 3. on a par with academic program.

Dawn 6/10/12 20:06

Comment [50]: 3. This is not a new phenomenon

Dawn 6/10/12 20:07

Comment [51]: 3. More traditional universities more business-like?

Dawn 6/10/12 20:10

Comment [52]: Note for me: This particular VC has experience of both sectors, which is quite rare – interesting to see how his views compared to other VCs interviewed

Dawn 6/10/12 20:08

Comment [53]: 3 & 1 differentiation between pre and post 1992

Question 8

Could you describe the nature and function of your institution's relationships with the following: (I am interested in links at both the national and local level).

- (1) Other Universities
- (2) FE Colleges

(3) International Franchises & Collaborations

(4) Schools

Answer 8

Well I would say most of our relationships are divided around strategy and recruitment so therefore 80 schools and colleges part of a partnership and so that a kind of big stakeholder group. Another group would be hospitals , yeah hospitals and the health centre, another one would be schools quite a lot of teacher education, another one would be the housing estates, professional community because of our estates programmes and then I would say, you know, we have got relatively strong international partners, primarily again around student recruitment and then we have some quite strong relationships with companies but both national PLCs and small medium sized enterprises around the enterprise agenda broadly. Plus we have got the biggest number of placements in the country therefore we have got massive interaction with business from the point of view of student placements, so bigger than XXX. *(Can you expand on the subject of international franchises?)* Not a lot, we've got about four or five. *(Is that an area you see growing?)* Not significantly. *(Because of quality issues /quality concerns?)* No. You don't just generate much money out of it. I think there are quality issues so we probably could generate more money but not without sacrificing quality. But in neither XXX, XXX nor here have I been able to see how international franchises generate sufficient money to cover their costs. The only way in which they cover their costs is if you get a student who spends more than a year here and many of our programme students don't spend a year here, they spend a term and they generate a little bit of income but we have modeled significantly increasing overseas students income and if you do that in terms of the cost of recruitment it clearly makes money but if you do it against the cost of having to teach them it doesn't make money. *(On a slight tangent we have started to see private providers encroaching into the HE market, how do you feel about working with private providers?)* No, XXX has got a strong relationship with Kaplan, it's also got a relationship with XXX University, if I'd have been here we'd have had a relationship

Dawn 6/10/12 20:11

Comment [54]: 8. partnerships driven by strategy and recruitment

Dawn 6/10/12 20:12

Comment [55]: 8.. Partnerships

Dawn 6/10/12 20:12

Comment [56]: 2. International partnerships- don't make much money

with Kaplan. So, I think that in terms of pre-university education which is what Kaplan provides then you collaborate with them. In terms of university education as such they offer a cheap alternative which is attractive to overseas students, particularly from Africa. I'm not certain that it's going to rival home-based universities for home based students. I think they want to go to uni, and uni is a set of experiences it's not just getting a degree and what they offer is a degree. *(Do you think that institutional size will affect how they view competition from private providers?)* Don't know. It would depend on subject mix. *And I don't have a concern that they will take away students from the XXX Business School I don't think that's where the competition will be (because of the quality of your provision?)* Yeah, because of the quality of the student experience as a whole, where students can come to a university, they don't want to go into an office block and go into a teaching... *(Do you think that some institutions in the sector will be allowed/encouraged to go private?)* Depends what private means, if private means... No I think the alternative private and public is too strong. They will remain private and public mixed institutions but the dependence on private fee income might get higher. And if I was a policy maker I would say to Oxford stop whingeing about the cost of one-one tutorials just recruit rich American students and do what other institutions do which is replace/substitute high fee paying overseas students for low fee paying English students and let the system sort itself out.

Dawn 6/10/12 20:14

Comment [57]: 7. Relationship with Kaplan. Different experience than domestic university

Dawn 6/10/12 20:15

Comment [58]: 7. quality of domestic degree provision

Question 9

Can you describe the nature and function of your role /relationships with the following:

- (1) Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE); Quality Assessment Learning and Teaching Committee and Business and Community Committee.
- (2) Local Regional Development Agency
- (3) Confederation of British Industry

- (4) Learning and Skills Councils
- (5) UUK
- (6) University Alliance

Is your institution exceptional in its level of involvement with local/regional/national agencies?

Answer 9

Oh, the most important is HEFCE, by a long, long way. The RDA is peripherally important, and particularly important in the third stream area, but HEFCE is way, way...*(Do you think going forward the RDA will become less important?)* Yes, and what were the other ones, UUK?.....UUK is important because it's the dominant lobby group, although it has been undermined by the dominance of two Mission groups. Million Plus *(Is a think tank?)* It's a Mission Group. If it's a think tank then they ought not to be represented on UUK. *(Do you think University Alliance is less important than UUK?)* Yeah. *(And going forward do you see the Mission Groups strengthening?)* I hope not..compared with UUK because I think obviously then that would reflect increasing division within the sector as opposed to increasing diversity. And the Alliance group would only become stronger if the fee differential became so big that the Russell group so no need to stick to UUK actually what it would mean probably is student fee income would make up a much bigger proportion of our income at which point lobbying *(So the national agenda is more important than the regional agenda?)* Yeah, definitely. Way more important. *(And you see that continuing?)* Yeah. Yeah. National in the sense that it frames the agenda, sets the price and things like that. Yeah.

Question 10

Looking to the future, if we were to see a change in the ruling political party, current opposition parties have suggested that they would review the (as they see it high)

Dawn 6/10/12 20:16

Comment [59]: 1. This answer tends to vary dependent upon location of HEI

Dawn 6/10/12 20:18

Comment [60]: 1, Mission Groups represent division rather than diversity

number of quangos (i.e. Business link, HEFCE, QAA, Sector Skills Council etc) that exist in the sector. I know that this issue is topical, so how do you think this would impact upon the university sector as a whole and upon your institution specifically?

Answer 10

I don't think it will have any impact 'cause I don't think they will get rid of HEFCE. But what they might do is they might change the relationship with HEFCE, that's when things will get a bit spicy... (*Do you think they need to change the relationship?*) No. But that's not to say they won't. QAA's a bit different. QAA could get stronger with the resurgent concerns about quality. Sector Skills Councils I suspect they might do something with them....

Question 11

- (a) I have started to develop a knowledge map (see Flash Card 3) and would welcome your comments on its usefulness and any elements that might be missing. Could you elaborate upon your view between research and consultancy i.e. do you think this map is valid?
 - (b) Where (and why) do you think your institution fits on the attached knowledge map?
-

Answer 11

Yes (*I think we cover all four blobs*). I think broadly they're right. But if you take our Materials, Engineering and Research Institute they do all four and they would see themselves as aligned against these. And I would say that our research, our C3RI which is our Communications and Design and Art would see that as well, they would say that they are on all those.

Dawn 6/10/12 20:21

Comment [61]: Need to think about divisions between knowledge types and how some activities cover some or all blobs.

Question 12

What do you think about the notion of the knowledge economy? What do you understand by the notion of the knowledge economy? Do you concur with the stance taken by the government that universities have a central role to play in the knowledge economy?

Answer 12

I think the knowledge economy,... the knowledge economy defines a world in which...which recognizes the value of intellectual constructs, sees the economic value of intellectual constructs and the role that knowledge plays in creating new products so the Ipod, the Iphone, all sorts of stuff, though whether or not universities, I mean universities have got a clear role to play in what's describes as the knowledge economy, in the sense that they produce graduates, they produce concepts and so on, so yes we are knowledge economy institutions and vulnerable because our society realizes that the knowledge economy hasn't been what's driving the economy over the last fifteen years. They've yet to say well why do we need to spend so much on it. One of the big questions for me how it was that universities which patently weren't making money out of their investment in the knowledge economy were generating an economy which appeared to be booming but which actually was booming because it was fuelled by debt rather than by knowledge. Having said that if you look at manufacturing in this area, look at the steel production, that is part of the knowledge economy because you have to be a computer operator to run a steel mill, you can't do it, it no longer works without technology so society's function is determined massively by technologies which are knowledge-driven but the knowledgeNot the party line and I think they are wrong. (*You are the only one to openly admit it. Other VCs wouldn't admit what they really felt*). But I'm not sure they do. I think they are living in a...I think they believe the story. I think that they actually believe, they really believe it. Yeah, yeah. To me it just doesn't add up. I mean there is clearly

Dawn 6/10/12 20:22

Comment [62]: 4. definition of knowledge economy

Dawn 6/10/12 20:24

Comment [63]: 4. recognizes the role of universities to produce graduates

Dawn 6/10/12 20:26

Comment [64]: 4. VC openly questions KE and role of universities in it?

Dawn 6/10/12 20:27

Comment [65]: 4. Questions definition of knowledge economy?

a relationship between the knowledge produced by the universities, and actually the best paper on this is the one that was commissioned by the government on commercialization of research by the guy who was Head of...., they commissioned six papers and then they commissioned a seventh which was on commercialization of research and it was from a.. somebody who ran one of the intermediary bodies name I .. he might have been a medic or something and he said that the universities biggest contribution to the knowledge economy was graduates being produced full stop, once you then go down and look at spin-out companies and all that it's just trivial. (*Is that why spin-out companies seem to have fallen by the way side?*). I think spin-out companies have fallen by the way side just because there is no longer venture capital around therefore there isn't such a big incentive to be creative. (*But at one time they were the big hot potato?*) They were. They seem to have disappeared from the kind of public discourse about higher education and the exploitation of knowledge and certainly when I went to XXX and I was in charge of third stream activities it was my view that universities role in the knowledge economy was to attract knowledge-based companies to the region because we had good graduates and good post-graduates and they could recruit them, not that they would come and take advantage of our technologies and the spin-out culture which is all one of taking our technologies and spinning them out and selling them off and a huge amount of work for very little income. And the first report on spin-out companies which Gareth Roberts was involved in producing said if you look at the American record no American university expects to make money out of spin-outs and despite the fact that that report came out the *CBCP* about 1997/98 there was a period for about 6 or 7 years where that was almost the sole emphasis and its gone but I'm not quite sure why. Part of it is, is that universities like XXX did deals with Fusion, I think it was Fusion, where they've sold off their IP because again one of the kind of assumptions around spin-outs is you have one technology, you have a company that depends upon one technology so in the case of Lord Drayson that was the things that could inject you without injecting, without having a needle, he had a powder thing where you inject with powder rather than inserting a needle into the skin, you know made a huge amount of money on that, the number of companies that can survive on one technology is tiny, because

Dawn 6/10/12 20:29

Comment [66]: 4. Questions nature of knowledge economy and orthodoxy, as well as other VCs?

Dawn 6/10/12 20:30

Comment [67]: 3. spin-out companies/government initiative

most companies have lots of technologies and so if you look at a pharma they have a whole load of research chemists who will be looking at what's going on across all universities in their biology and chemistry departments and saying we'll have a bit of that, a bit of that and a bit of that to create this new thing. So the knowledge transfer process is much more complex than the kind of the spin-out company metaphor suggests. I am quite worried that the masses of money that...see Lord Sainsbury had this kind of extraordinary idea that pure research would lead to spin-outs which would lead to commercial growth and all that and there is just no evidence that it has done. So it won't take long before the Treasury say and I'm sure they have said hang on we are putting all this money in when is it going to come out and I was involved in creating the STEM Cell Institute in the XXX and if you look at STEM cell research the financial outcomes of Stem cell research are likely to come in ten years time and so putting £10 million.... you'd be better off buying lottery tickets. Except that mathematically that's an illiterate statement because you know it doesn't matter how many you buy, your chances are still the same, but in terms of generating wealth you could put it anywhere.. you could probably put it in a hole because it's just a bet that it will happen and it's a bet based on reasonably good evidence but there's equally good evidence to suggest that nothing will come of it soI'm probably the most skeptical VC that you will come across in thisMost VCs I know have got a kind of line which is almost the orthodoxy about higher education and they kind of think within that framework and they don't think outside of it. There's an orthodoxy and it's a kind of UUK orthodoxy, and it's got a whole set of things around autonomous universities and so on and autonomous universities will lead to dot, dot, dot but you know if you pluck out the strands you then have to say well show me

Dawn 6/10/12 20:34

Comment [68]: 2. Knowledge transfers/spin outs

Dawn 6/10/12 20:34

Comment [69]: 2. questions current policy

Dawn 6/10/12 20:35

Comment [70]: 2. Love this statement!!

Dawn 6/10/12 20:35

Comment [71]: 6. Change agent

Dawn 6/10/12 20:36

Comment [72]: 6. Questions nature of VCs – willing to go along with orthodoxy regardless....

Question 13

Given your exceptional personal situation and standing within the higher education sector do you think I have wasted this opportunity and are there any areas you think I could expand or introduce for any future interviews, or analysis in my thesis.

Answer 13

The first thing is around widening participation and excellence and there is an interesting question around competition and price obviously the market is fragmented around A-level tariff points, so we say we are a widening participation institution, what that means is our average A-level entry is around 300 points, as far as I am concerned it means nothing more than that, it doesn't mean that we have chosen to recruit students with 300 points it means that's what we can sell our courses for, so up the road they can sell their courses for 400 points, it's probably not 400 but 350 or what-ever it is, so that's their price and they engage in widening participation activities designed to get more students with those points to come from places where our students typically come from but because most of the students who come from places that ours come from get around 300 points or else go off to other institutions across the country its quite hard for XXX university to expand its student pool from the region so effectively its engaging in pro bono work. But there will be a number of VCs who say they have a value set which is based on widening participation and they engage in a set of activities which is related to widening participation as though it was a choice, but it's not a choice it's a function of where they are in the market place and you know it's, you are in danger of kidding yourself about what you are doing. So again in terms of departing from orthodoxy I think we are functioning in a competitive market, we sell courses to students who have got certain A level points to which we exchange a set of processes but I ask the question ...50 % of our computer science students are defined by HEFCE as at risk i.e. their A-level points and other contextual factors mean that there is a high chance that they won't progress through three years. I think that's a problem. I think that what we are doing then is selling students an offer, which we can't deliver which is we will take you in and we'll give you a degree, the reality is that 50 % of them struggle really, really hard, have retakes, they take out years, they go part time and having been a student at polytechnic myself where I had a one in nine chance of getting through a 3 year degree without failing and re-sitting something and I was one of the nine that didn't I know what it was like

Dawn 6/10/12 20:39

Comment [73]: 8 consider widening participation and excellence as additional themes – social agenda?

Dawn 6/10/12 20:40

Comment [74]: 1. Differentiation?

Dawn 6/10/12 20:42

Comment [75]: 1 & 5. is this because of the changes in HE or just being magnified because of student numbers?

both to be the one and to be the other nine and for the other nine it was kind of a sense of inadequacy and failure as they went through this and for me it was competitive survival, you know how on earth do I get through without failing anything and I don't think that's necessarily a very positive learning environment. Whereas I know other VCs would say well you know the kind of support we provide blah, blah, blah,... you know I worry about that. And I'm just not sure that I agree with XX (*VC at XXX*). Having,...he didn't go to that, he went to Imperial, I went to Polytechnic Central London. (*I think that VC's have to work with what they have got to a certain extent though, don't you?*) That's exactly right, so what you have to do as a VC is you have to sail the ship that you've been given, but you've then got to make sure that you don't necessarily buy into a script because if you do, you can actually be sailing into rocky waters, because you don't fully understand the context within which you are working because you aren't able to see it the way other people see it, which I am afraid to say is true of many of my colleagues. Well some of them you know some of them who have got institutes with exactly the same profile as this believe that they can take their institution into the other half of the sector, they can't. (*It has been quite interesting as I have been doing these interviews to understand where and who institutions perceive their competition to be*).

Right, well again they shouldn't confuse competition for students with perception in the marketplace, because they may well be competing for students with XXX in their estates programmes, they won't be competing with XXX in their Chemistry programmes or their Arts programme. The Oxford name gives you a long way, but XXX is an outline (*because of the Oxford brand?*) Northumbria is an interesting case in point, because I think Northumbria thinks that they can move into the '94 group and it can't. (*Looking at institutions that have taken a similar path to your institution, who would you liken yourselves to?*) No, XXX has got...yeah, we are broadly similar to XXX, but I would say we are much more similar to XXX and XXX, particularly XXX and XXX, we are..all four of us are broadly similar and XXX and XXX with no hesitation, and certainly with XXX, XXX has got more engineering than we've got because of their marine engineering, XXX too same reasons...

Dawn 6/10/12 20:43

Comment [76]: 6. inability to make changes?

Dawn 6/10/12 20:44

Comment [77]: 1. misunderstanding of sector by insiders.

Dawn 6/10/12 20:46

Comment [78]: 1. marketplace

Dawn 6/10/12 20:46

Comment [79]: 8. importance of place