Introduction

The academic profession in the UK consists of a diverse range of academic staff both in their demographic profile and in the roles they undertake. Often treated as a homogeneous entity, individual academics are positioned, within much of the existing literature on governance and management in the UK, as rational actors, performing largely similar roles and operating on the basis of a core of common academic and collegial values. As we have argued elsewhere (Locke and Bennion, 2010 forthcoming), adopting such an approach can be problematic in explaining changes in the academy. It has also generated a dominant discourse about academics which is preoccupied with loss, alienation and the retreat of ‘the profession’. In this discourse, academics have been proletarianised, their work industrialized, their autonomy eroded and they, themselves have been de-skilled. The result, according to this discourse, is that the profession is demoralised and disaffected, and disengaged – or worse, excluded – from institutional decision-making.

In an attempt to move beyond this dominant discourse, we have analyzed the UK CAP dataset according to a number of different variables including institutional type, age, gender, professional grade and mode of employment (Locke and Bennion, 2009). We have argued that academics differ in their responses to the changes and new influences in higher education – whether this takes the form of active support, compliance, resistance or subversion – and that this might be partly explained by differences in status within academic and institutional hierarchies, subject characteristics and generational differences (Locke, 2008). This initial analysis indicated particular differences between academic staff at different stages of their career and with different career trajectories. With the expansion of the UK higher education system there has not only been an increase in the number of young people entering the profession via the traditional route direct from formal education, including a PhD and perhaps postdoctoral study, but also in the numbers of staff entering the profession at a later stage in their working lives, having already pursued a career in another profession. In this paper we focus on these two groups and compare them with their more established
counters who entered the profession via the traditional route.

Background: The UK context and key management challenges

For our purposes, the main contextual factors in the UK are:

**The legal independence of higher education institutions (HEIs), albeit in a highly regulated environment:** UK HEIs are free to employ and dismiss academic staff, set salaries, decide on academic structure and course content, spend their budgets to achieve their objectives and own and dispose of their buildings and equipment. Within certain parameters, they can also decide on the size of student enrolment and borrow money. In England and Northern Ireland, from 2006, HEIs were able to determine the level of tuition fees for full-time undergraduate home and European Union (EU) students up to a maximum ‘cap’. Tuition fees for part-time, postgraduate and international (non-EU) students are not regulated. However, despite this legal independence bolstered by increasing levels of private expenditure on higher education, the governments of the UK still exercise a considerable degree of influence over HEIs, through the allocation of funding and the conditions attached to this, and the regulation and evaluation of their activities.

**Increased vulnerability to the market and the privatisation of activities:** Expansion in the numbers of students in the UK has been accompanied by the gradual privatisation of a mass higher education system which, nevertheless, continues to be dominated by an enduring status hierarchy of institutions. Some HEIs with sufficient resources and expertise have responded to incremental changes in government policies with entrepreneurial zeal, but less prestigious institutions, often with more socially-orientated missions, have struggled to compete in attracting students, staff and resources. Students and their parents, employers and research users have been encouraged to act like consumers. Yet, they are hampered by limited information about the value added by specific education and research provision which is all too often obscured by prestige and status (Locke, 2010 forthcoming).

**Increased competition for highly skilled professionals from other knowledge-based industries:** As knowledge economies expand and integrate through globalisation, the demand for highly educated and skilled personnel from outside higher education has grown. Universities compete for staff with schools and colleges, the health sector and other professions such as Law and Accountancy, business in general and the expanding biosciences and creative industries in particular. The UK is also increasingly reliant on international academic recruits, particularly for those on research contracts. The current economic crisis is likely to cause shifts in these patterns of recruitment, as some employment sectors (such as financial
services) contract and others (such as environmental enterprises) potentially expand as economies emerge from the recession.

**Greater diversity, including in the terms and conditions of employment of academics and other professional staff:** UK academics are employees of the institution where they work. All HEIs are free to draw up their own standard employment contracts, employ and dismiss academic staff, set their criteria for appointment and promotion and determine the balance between different grades, modes of employment and lengths of contract. The UK academic profession is becoming increasingly differentiated, even stratified (Locke, 2008). The main fault lines are between:

- academics in different types of institution, particularly those that were universities before the abolition of the binary line with polytechnics in 1992;
- those working full- and part-time;
- those on permanent and fixed-term contracts;
- those on traditional teaching-research-service contracts (52 per cent) and those who are required only to teach (25 per cent) or research (23 per cent);
- senior (professors and senior lecturers / researchers) and those on junior grades;
- the different academic disciplines and fields and, particularly, between science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and other subjects.

**Enduring inequalities in employment conditions and career prospects (especially gender and race):** The more senior the grade, the greater the majority of males and those on permanent contracts. The academic profession in England is an ageing profession with the proportion aged over 50 having risen from 34 per cent to 41 per cent in the last ten years. The proportion of professors over the age of 50 has risen from 59 per cent to 66 per cent (HEFCE, 2006: 12-13). However, the academic profession in England is not as old as its counterparts in other English-speaking countries. Across the UK, 40 per cent of academics are female and more than a quarter of these work part-time, compared with 16 per cent of male academics, and they are more likely to be on fixed-term contracts. On average full-time female academics earn 86 per cent of the pay of their male colleagues (AUT, 2005). While female academics hold 41 per cent of all full-time posts in UK HEIs, the proportion of females holding professorial posts is only 16 per cent and senior lecturers and researchers 31 per cent (HESA, 2005). 10.5 per cent of academics are from black and ethnic minority (BME) groups, which is similar to the population of BME postgraduates in the UK population as a whole. However, they tend to be concentrated in particular institutions (Ramsden, 2006) and those with UK nationality are seriously under-represented. BME academics earn 88 per cent of the pay of their white colleagues, although this gap narrows for those of UK nationality (AUT, 2005). Only 4.9 per cent of senior academics are from BME groups (HESA, 2006).

Within this context, the **key management challenges** for UK institutions include:
Leadership and governance: (re-)engaging academics in strategic decision-making
The shifts in the balance of governance in UK universities have been well documented by Middlehurst (2004), Shattock (2001, 2002, 2006) and others. Increasingly ‘business-like’ management styles have tended to go hand-in-hand with more corporate-style governance arrangements in HEIs, with a reduction in the size of governing bodies which now feature a majority of external members drawn largely from business sectors. In parallel, academic self-governance has been weakened, the influence of academic senates has declined and the academic community seemingly marginalized. Whether this has brought about a crisis in the governance and management of HEIs in which the collegial tradition of dualistic or shared decision-making between academics and other stakeholders has largely been replaced by managerialist corporatism, is open to debate (Locke and Bennion, 2010 forthcoming). What is increasingly difficult to deny, however, is that many academics themselves feel disengaged from the governance and management of their institutions and alienated from their leadership (Macfarlane, 2005, 2006; McNay 2008).

Managing diversity in the workforce and in the activities of the academic enterprise
The external pressures on academics and their work are becoming more intense and complex with the continuing expansion of higher education, the increasing demands laid on it by government, students, employers and others, and the relative reduction in public funding available per student and staff member. In particular, there are pressures on academics to attract research income and generate publications and citations in high status academic journals; to recruit, teach and graduate an increasingly diverse range of students; and to maximise the commercial and reputational value of both these core activities. Evidence suggests these external pressures impact differently on particular types of institution, and in different ways on academics at various stages in their careers and with different kinds of contracts of employment. Institutions have to respond to these increasing and intensifying external pressures in more rapid and flexible ways, often restructuring schools and faculties and introducing senior tiers of academic management who work horizontally across the institution as well as vertically managing the faculty (Locke and Bennion, 2010 forthcoming).

Attracting and developing talent: introducing flexibility in employment without creating unfairness
A new framework for modernising pay and conditions for HE staff, including the majority of academics (but not professors) was introduced in 2004. This was mainly a response to HEIs’ increased liability to expensive legal battles over equal pay for work of equal value as a result of European Union directives on discrimination in 2000. While this introduced a common pay scale and greater transparency through local job evaluation and role analysis, it also gave impetus to the use of premiums for recruitment and retention where labour market conditions warrant these, and pay increases related to individual contributions as part of performance management. There is evidence of the development of several markets for different
categories of academic staff, reflecting the areas of most intensive competition between HEIs for resources and reputation. These include researchers, academics in professional disciplines, entrepreneurs, fund raisers, those with overall responsibility for overseas student recruitment, academic managers and institutional leaders (Locke and Botas, 2009). There are dangers that these developments will further fracture the academic profession between those areas where there is scope for entrepreneurism and commercialisation and those where there is not, introducing further inequity and risking injustice.

Methodology

This paper is based on analysis of the CAP international dataset. As the paper aims to focus on the ‘attractiveness’ of the profession, particularly in relation to management issues, the analysis focuses on questions relating to: satisfaction; influence; institutional management; involvement; support for academic work; and changing working conditions. For the purpose of this paper, academic respondents have been categorized as either: Young (Y); Mature, recent (MR) or Older, established (OE). The first group represents respondents under the age of 40, the majority of whom have entered the profession via the traditional route direct from formal education, including a PhD and perhaps postdoctoral study. The second group encompasses academics who are over the age of 40 and have entered the profession within the last 10 years. Many of these academics have had a previous career in another profession. The third group represents academics over the age of 40 who have been in the academic profession for over 10 years. Although this paper focuses on UK academics, comparisons are made with two other Commonwealth countries; Australia and Canada. The US is also included in these discussions to illustrate the poignancy of such analysis in other countries included in the international study.

Figure 1: Overview of academics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young (Y)</th>
<th>Mature, recent (MR)</th>
<th>Older, established (OE)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td>421 (36%)</td>
<td>380 (32%)</td>
<td>373 (32%)</td>
<td>1174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td>293 (30%)</td>
<td>369 (38%)</td>
<td>319 (33%)</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US</strong></td>
<td>204 (18%)</td>
<td>401 (36%)</td>
<td>525 (46%)</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td>277 (29%)</td>
<td>252 (27%)</td>
<td>413 (44%)</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 These figures are less than the total respondents for each country, as they exclude those who did not provide information about their age or length of time in the academic profession.
Attitudes to the Academic career

It has been documented elsewhere (Locke, 2008) that, compared with other countries participating in the CAP study, job satisfaction amongst UK academics appears to be low, with only 45% of respondents describing their overall satisfaction with their current job as high or very high. Responses to statements about the academic career support these findings, with respondents from the UK more likely than those from other countries to agree with assertions that: ‘This is a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career in my field’, ‘If I had to do it over again, I would not become an academic’ and ‘My job is a source of considerable personal strain’ (Figure 3). However, amongst the profession there seems to be considerable variation. Commentators in the UK contend that there are variations between different groups of academic staff: research-only and teaching staff (Bryson, 2004); pre-1992 and post-1992 university staff (Casey, 1997) and junior and senior staff (Martin, 1999). The data presented here helps to refine our understanding, illustrating a complex and diverse picture of satisfaction amongst the profession. As illustrated in Figure 2, Young academics appear to be the most satisfied (51%) and the least dissatisfied (14%), whilst the group of Older, established academics appear to be the least satisfied (42%) and the most dissatisfied (21%) [the highest proportions have been highlighted].

Interestingly, this doesn’t appear to be the case for the other countries reported on here. In Australia, there appears to be little variance amongst these groups of academics. In direct contrast with the situation described in the UK, Older, established academics in Canada and the US appear to be the most satisfied with their current job situation.

Figure 2: Overall satisfaction with current job, % satisfied or highly satisfied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mature, recent</th>
<th></th>
<th>Older, established</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the group of Older, established academics in the UK were more likely to agree with the statements included in Figure 3. In Canada the reverse was true, with a higher proportion of ‘Young’ academics agreeing with these statements.
Figure 3: Attitudes to the academic career, % agreeing or strongly agreeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career in my field</td>
<td>47% 48% 59%</td>
<td>40% 46% 52%</td>
<td>38% 31% 36%</td>
<td>22% 19% 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had to do it over again, I would not become an academic</td>
<td>17% 24% 28%</td>
<td>26% 18% 20%</td>
<td>14% 11% 11%</td>
<td>10% 10% 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My job is a source of considerable strain</td>
<td>52% 60% 64%</td>
<td>49% 49% 53%</td>
<td>48% 41% 40%</td>
<td>34% 39% 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional Management

According to the CAP survey, UK academics perceive themselves as having little personal influence in helping shape key academic policies. This seems to mirror the findings of the other countries featured in this paper. Somewhat unsurprisingly, young academics appear to perceive themselves as having the least personal influence at all three levels of department, faculty and institution. This is likely to be because they are generally employed at a lower grade compared with their mature counterparts (HESA, 2009). For those working on lower grade contracts, involvement in committee work is usually minimal with their main focus being on research and/or teaching responsibilities. Young academics working in Australia perceived their personal influence at departmental or faculty level to be even lower than those working in the UK. Academics at every career stage reported a higher rate of influence in Canada and the US when compared with the responses of those working in the UK and Australia.

Respondents were asked about their views on the management of their own institution (Figure 5). Older, established academics in the UK tended to agree most strongly with the following characterizations of their institutions:

- ‘A cumbersome administrative process’ (82%)
- ‘A top-down management system’ (82%)
- A strong performance orientation’ (75%)
- ‘Professional development for administrative/management duties for individual faculty’ (46%)

This parallels findings from Australia whose Older, established academics most strongly
agreed with the above statements as well as:

‘A strong emphasis on the institution’s mission’ (67%)
‘A supportive attitude of administrative staff towards teaching activities’ (40%)
‘A supportive attitude of administrative staff towards research activities’ (40%)

A smaller proportion of academics working in the US and Canada agreed with the two more negative statements included in this question: ‘A cumbersome administrative process’ and ‘A top-down management style’.

The CAP survey asked respondents their views on the administration and faculty involvement in their own institution. The percentage of those in agreement was generally low across all four countries and fairly consistent across all three categories of respondent. In the UK, Mature, recent academics agreed most strongly with two of the three positive statements; ‘Top-level administrators are providing competent leadership’; and ‘I am kept informed about what is going on at this institution’. This group of academics also most strongly agreed that ‘Students should have a stronger voice in determining policy that affects them’. A higher proportion of Older, established academics agreed that ‘Lack of faculty involvement is a real problem’ and ‘The administration supports academic freedom’. This mirrors findings from the US survey. In Australia ‘Young academics’ were the most likely group to agree with all three positive statements.
Support for academic work
The CAP survey asked academics to evaluate different aspects of their working conditions. Overall, libraries and telecommunications are viewed very positively by academics in all four countries presented in Figure 7. Academics from the UK were the least likely to regard features of their work conditions as excellent or very good. Young academics viewed their working conditions most positively in the UK, with the exception of ‘your office space’ and libraries. The picture was rather more mixed in the other three countries, although research equipment, secretarial support and research funding were all viewed most positively by young academics.

Figure 6: Views on administration and faculty involvement, % agreeing or strongly agreeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-level administrators are providing competent leadership</td>
<td>25% 28% 24%</td>
<td>32% 31% 32%</td>
<td>32% 42% 41%</td>
<td>43% 46% 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am kept informed about what is going on at this institution</td>
<td>41% 43% 35%</td>
<td>46% 39% 37%</td>
<td>41% 52% 44%</td>
<td>41% 45% 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should have a stronger voice in determining policy that affects them</td>
<td>30% 33% 27%</td>
<td>35% 38% 33%</td>
<td>27% 24% 22%</td>
<td>31% 26% 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of faculty involvement is a real problem</td>
<td>40% 40% 46%</td>
<td>31% 40% 43%</td>
<td>41% 38% 39%</td>
<td>30% 28% 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The administration supports academic freedom</td>
<td>40% 38% 42%</td>
<td>41% 37% 36%</td>
<td>58% 64% 62%</td>
<td>60% 60% 61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Evaluation of facilities, resources or personnel needed to support individual work, % stating excellent or very good.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research equipment</td>
<td>37% 32% 29%</td>
<td>50% 39% 40%</td>
<td>37% 36% 31%</td>
<td>41% 34% 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial support</td>
<td>40% 30% 27%</td>
<td>34% 25% 22%</td>
<td>50% 42% 44%</td>
<td>45% 41% 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research funding</td>
<td>17% 14% 13%</td>
<td>31% 19% 20%</td>
<td>24% 19% 20%</td>
<td>19% 18% 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratories</td>
<td>41% 36% 35%</td>
<td>47% 38% 42%</td>
<td>31% 33% 30%</td>
<td>44% 38% 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching support staff</td>
<td>39% 37% 33%</td>
<td>29% 29% 29%</td>
<td>34% 33% 32%</td>
<td>28% 30% 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology for teaching</td>
<td>44% 44% 34%</td>
<td>53% 53% 54%</td>
<td>68% 61% 59%</td>
<td>65% 60% 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>37% 32% 30%</td>
<td>46% 48% 50%</td>
<td>55% 50% 47%</td>
<td>53% 52% 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research support staff</td>
<td>35% 30% 26%</td>
<td>27% 28% 22%</td>
<td>27% 26% 27%</td>
<td>21% 19% 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>53% 49% 52%</td>
<td>68% 64% 70%</td>
<td>70% 69% 75%</td>
<td>72% 70% 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer facilities</td>
<td>47% 40% 45%</td>
<td>64% 59% 64%</td>
<td>51% 53% 59%</td>
<td>53% 59% 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your office space</td>
<td>46% 42% 48%</td>
<td>58% 60% 71%</td>
<td>65% 56% 64%</td>
<td>57% 53% 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library facilities</td>
<td>48% 46% 54%</td>
<td>77% 73% 76%</td>
<td>56% 64% 67%</td>
<td>46% 57% 63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8 presents the responses to a question which asked academics to state how they thought working conditions had changed. Although this question is only really relevant to the group of Older, established academics who have been in the profession for over ten years, it does highlight this group’s perception of deterioration. In all the countries featured in this report, a higher proportion of Older, established respondents believe working conditions in higher education had deteriorated (Figure 8). In the UK and Australia, these percentages were relatively high (80%, 78%) when compared with Canada (46%) and the US (28%). However, in the US, more Older, established academics believe working conditions had improved (42%) than had deteriorated (28%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young</th>
<th>Mature, recent</th>
<th>Older, established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td>Improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary and Discussion**

In summary:

- The UK and Australia have lower levels of satisfaction and higher levels of dissatisfaction than the US, and especially Canada.
- Of these countries, the UK is unusual among English-speaking countries in the variation in levels of satisfaction between academics at different stages and trajectories of career with, in particular, young academics being more satisfied and less dissatisfied than those over 40 years.
- UK – and particularly Australian – academics perceive themselves as having little personal influence in helping shape key academic policies. By contrast, Canadian – and particularly US – respondents feel much more empowered.
- In the UK, Older, established respondents are more critical of their institution’s management and administration than their counterparts. However, they and their Mature, recent colleagues are more aware of professional development opportunities for individual academics than younger staff. Australian respondents in general are more critical, and those from Canada and the US less critical than their UK colleagues.
- US respondents are generally more supportive of the administration of their institution than those from the other three countries.
- Much higher proportions of respondents in the UK and Australia feel that working conditions have deteriorated than those from Canada and the US. Although this was more pronounced among the Older, established academics, substantial proportions of younger academics in these two countries also believe this.
The variations in responses between categories of academics in the UK may arise from differences of expectation, focus and aspiration, and in levels of understanding of the demands of an academic career (Henkel, 2000). Younger academics, recent mature recruits and established respondents may be (and have been) attracted by different aspects of the profession, and they certainly experience different levels of job security. Although young academics in the UK generally appear to be the most satisfied group, how is this going to be maintained if HEIs wish to sustain the academic profession? In particular, how can they be encouraged to consider academic management and leadership as a desirable career option, as distinct from building a reputation for high quality research (or teaching)?

It has long been recognised that UK higher education is experiencing the ‘reluctant manager’ syndrome (Knight and Trowler 2001; Parker 2004) and the findings from the UK CAP survey support this. Academics are at best ambivalent about adopting management roles or declaring themselves to be potential leaders. Universities increasingly report a shortage of ‘volunteers’ for department head, programme leader, associate dean and even professorial appointments. New reasons for this reluctance keep emerging. An ageing population of academics is facing renewed resource pressures, amid increasing demands for research productivity, knowledge transfer and e-learning, growing international competition, diverse and consumer-savvy students, and demanding employers. Furthermore, employment patterns are complex, with a high proportion of staff on fractional and fixed-term contracts for whom ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ roles may be unattainable. Yet the dynamic and increasingly competitive environment for HEIs makes effective management and leadership ever more vital at all levels. Academic managers and leaders also need to be able to communicate with diverse audiences and manage partnerships for a variety of purposes.

Many HEIs are restructuring their faculties, schools and departments to create large and complex divisions whose managers are called upon to ‘lead’ communities with which they may have little affinity. As the CAP study has already highlighted (Locke 2008), discipline allegiances remain paramount, leading to potential tensions within and between departments and institutions. While over three-quarters of UK CAP respondents recently considering making a major job change (including leaving HE altogether), a mere 13 per cent considered staying in higher education and taking on a management role – a change that only 8 per cent had actually tried to make. What is special about this minority group? Indeed, why would anyone want to try to lead their colleagues through the morass of change and uncertainty that is largely not of their making?

Clearly HEIs need to engage and enthuse more academics to embrace management and leadership roles. However, compared with commercial organisations, they are constrained in

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2 The following discussion has been informed by a contribution from Dr Jacky Holloway of the Open University Business School, UK.
the incentives they can offer; and professionals are motivated by a complex blend of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Management and leadership learning is a social process influenced by a potent mix of internal and external factors. It seems likely that these influences affect whether individuals perceive themselves as (actual or potential) managers or leaders, their willingness to consider adopting an explicit leadership role, and how they enact their understanding of leadership.

Conclusions and implications for policy and practice

The findings presented in this paper further underline the need to consider academics as a heterogeneous collection of groupings structured by a series of interrelated characteristics. They begin to illuminate our understanding of: the variegated attractiveness of the profession to a range of groups; different individuals’ motivations, expectations and ambitions; the implications for institutional management; and the prospects of recruiting and promoting the next generation of academics and academic managers. Much of the existing literature predominantly ignores this differentiation between academics and this detracts from our understanding of the ways in which changes are taking place throughout the profession. Analyses by career stage and trajectory need to be complemented by an understanding of the differences between institution size, type and mission, terms and conditions of employment, discipline or field of study, grade, gender and race. Together these perspectives offer a more complete picture of these complex changes and different academics’ responses to these.

This differentiated approach can inform both policy and practice, in addressing the key management challenges identified earlier in this paper:

Leadership and governance: re-engaging academics in strategic decision-making
For example:
• finding effective forms of communication with different groupings of academics;
• ensuring information flow to and from academic units and within larger academic divisions;
• involving academic and other groupings in relevant kinds of strategic decisions and at appropriate points in the decision-making process;
• minimising the administrative burden on academic and other professional staff; and
• providing the encouragement, support and professional development required by academics who wish to take up a role in management or leadership.

Managing diversity in the workforce and in the activities of the academic enterprise
For example:
• appreciating the different working conditions, roles and experiences of various academic
groupings, within the same institution and even department;
• providing each with appropriate opportunities for career and personal development, progression and promotion;
• reducing and abolishing inequalities in the pay and conditions of those who undertake work – and make a contribution – of equal value; and
• supporting different activities (teaching, research, knowledge exchange, outreach etc) in equitable ways, in accordance with an institution’s mission.

Attracting and developing talent: introducing flexibility in employment without creating unfairness
For example:
• offering reward and recognition for a range of contributions, and not just for recruitment purposes and exclusively in the most competitive academic labour markets;
• encouraging and supporting transfer from other professional and knowledge-based occupations to academic roles from within as well as outside the institution;
• ensuring that flexibility benefits both the individual and the institution and, where possible, both simultaneously;
• enabling individual faculty to move between different modes and conditions of employment during their periods of service.

These challenges are significant and far-reaching, but the policies and practices designed to address them should be informed by evidence, including the findings of the international study of the Changing Academic Profession.

References


Knight P. & Trowler P.R. (2001) *Departmental leadership in higher education*. Buckingham: SRHE/OUP.


