



# HUMANE

Heads of University Management & Administration Network in Europe  
[www.humane.eu](http://www.humane.eu)

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Management Culture: defined by  
history, mission or personality?

*Jane Hopkinson*

# What might define university culture

- History
- Structures
- Environment
- Focus and mission
- People

# History

- Wide variety of UK institutions
  - Oxbridge
  - Federal institutions
  - Civic (red brick) universities
  - Former university colleges
  - Robbins Report and new universities in the 1960s
  - Former polytechnics
  - University Colleges

# Structures: management and governance

- Many models even within the UK
- Link with constitutional documents:
  - Royal Charters
  - Instrument and Articles of Government
  - Companies limited by guarantee
- Centralised/unitary/devolved

# Compare and contrast

## **Oxford and Cambridge**

- Collegial democracy based on communities of scholars
- Academic governance
- More and larger representative committees
- Consensual leadership: limited authority of Vice-Chancellor

## **Post 1992 universities**

- Executive model
- Independent governors
- Smaller boards/committees with specified management representation
- Vice-Chancellor as Chief Executive

# Environment

- International: global competition
- Government; regional and local agencies
- Funders
- Regulation

# Focus and mission

- Research intensive
- Widening participation
- Links with employers
- Small, specialist

Culture is crucially  
about people and  
leadership



# University of Plymouth

- Long educational history: 150 years
- Post-1992 university: was previously a Polytechnic
- Mergers with dispersed colleges in places up to 50 miles away
- Wide range of subject disciplines
- Historic focus on teaching and learning



# University of Plymouth 1992

- Existing head of institution took the title Vice-Chancellor: an economist
- Leadership style
  - knew people by name
  - attention to detail
  - allowed different cultures across different sites to continue
  - widening participation links with colleges
  - appearance of open decision-making
- Not trying to be the same: did not apply for coat of arms...



# University of Plymouth 2002

- New Vice-Chancellor : a medic from a London university
- Leadership style
  - autocratic
  - big picture
- Focus on research plus move to a single campus
- Coat of arms



University of Plymouth 2008

New Vice- Chancellor

The **enterprise** university



# Leadership style

- Dynamic
- Focus on external relationships
- Best of the old with the best of the new

The **enterprise** university



# What has happened

- New mission and strategic plan
- Strategic Review
- New corporate style

The **enterprise** university



# Key factors

- Building on heritage
- New team
- Strengthening local and regional links
- Communication strategies

The **enterprise** university



# Has it worked?

The **enterprise** university



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## Conclusions

Culture is:

complex

influenced by many factors

difficult but not impossible to change

A leadership challenge