

**Universities and Community Engagement:
Learning/Teaching/Training for Social Entrepreneurship**

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Preamble

Western universities in their current form of governance have for over 800 years always shaped, been shaped by, and/or have mirrored the societies in which they were founded and served. It may be argued that in general they have engaged their local (regional) communities. Equally, it may also be argued that individual scholars, rather than the university as organization, have connected with groups and individuals within communities. That contemporary universities are now seeking relationships with their communities may be observed in the evidence collected through government sponsored research surveys and public forums. In one such forum, the *Inside-Out Conference on Higher Education* in mid-2001 organized by The University of Queensland (Ipswich), one witnessed an unholy rush by universities throughout Australia to accept the invitation to tell their stories about how they engaged with their communities. The stories were diverse, and varied in content and approach to the idea of engagement, and to the idea of community. It is not the purpose of this discussion paper however to recite their litany of practices and examples. I want to avoid the tendency to cite good examples of practice without unpacking the idea-engines (disrespectfully called 'theory' by some!) 'driving' these practices. Nevertheless, it will be necessary in this forum to list practices and examples of entrepreneurship by/with universities, but also to agree on the meaning(s) of community, engagement and social entrepreneurship if we are to communicate in the same language.

The topic of the session is: *Learning/Teaching/Training for Social Entrepreneurship: Universities and Community Engagement*. The overarching question addressed is:

How can universities, inherently hierarchical in their knowledge systems, produce active social entrepreneurs, susceptible to the creation of real social and material wealth through their innovation, dynamism and flexibility?

In commencing the discussion, I want to note upfront that social entrepreneurship is only one of several means, manifestations or strategies that universities may use to engage their communities. In addition, it is necessary perhaps to confront the current hotly debated issue within universities themselves, namely, what are their current and future purposes. There are many forms and purposes of social entrepreneurship; and there are many purposes of the contemporary 'traditional' university as it struggles to reconstruct itself to meet the impact of a rapidly changing external environment.

In this presentation, I want to confine myself to a number of questions directly related to the session topic, questions that provoke further issues and questions to be addressed; and questions that tend to focus on the 'bigger picture' issues. I shall leave the citation of exemplary practices to my colleagues and to conversations in plenary and workshops.

The questions I want to raise albeit briefly and incompletely are:

- What are the macro economic and social pressures for change in Australia?
- What is the current 'policy' framework recommended by governments to universities in relation to community engagement?
- Why should universities engage in the social and economic development of their (regional) communities?
- What are the strengths of universities that suggest they engage communities including the teaching of social entrepreneurship?
- What do we mean by social entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship) and what kinds of social entrepreneurship should universities engage?

- What are the ‘frames’ that govern and constrain the implementation of community engagement programs involving the work or scholarship of universities?
- What do universities need to do to effectively implement community engagement initiatives including social entrepreneurship programs?

The list is incomplete and selective but aims to provide a contextual framework for plenary and workshop discussions.

Macro-Economic and Social Pressures for Change in Australia

It is important to recognise the macro-pressures for change in the Australian culture as a broader framework for the development of social entrepreneurship programs and projects. As a general statement, these pressures will be located within a broader framework of change involving globalisation, centralisation, denationalisation and digitalisation.

It is also important to acknowledge that pressures observed in this country are different in many respects from those observed in other cultures. And they will shape the rise of the social entrepreneur in Australia perhaps in quite different ways. The influence of the Community Action Network and other groups, so important in giving added impetus to the development of social entrepreneurship projects in Australia needs to be acknowledged. But the Australian cultural context differs from developments that have occurred through for example, the Community Action Network (CAN) in the UK. The construct “social capital”, Putnam’s (2000) proposed “glue” that will bind fragmenting and disappearing communities may have relevance for an egalitarian US, but its application and interpretation in Australia needs careful consideration.

But what are some of the macro-economic and political pressures that have been governing and constraining in all cultures? These include: the formation of trading blocks (for example, the EEC), the establishment of unified markets in Europe, North America and to a lesser extent the Far East, policies of convergence (probably best witnessed in Australia through policies of corporate federalism (Bartlett et al.), technological change that has expedited the flow and immediacy of information and in turn allow capital to settle (centrally) where conditions are optimal, and others.

The consequences of these pressures are evident in everyday life. They include; a massive increase in global trade, rationalisation of production and distribution processes, closure of redundant plants and stripping of labour, protectionism in the interest of nation states, a shift from management control towards innovation, and from production to enterprise, and the emergence of the business entrepreneur in the private sector.

All these influences have had an impact on the nation-state and its capacity to provide for the common public social good. The costs of economic restructuring (often undertaken without regard for the social good) have led to a demand for higher benefits, poorer health, and alienation and crime to mention but a few dysfunctional residuals. Existing services to communities have been pared or deleted, rationed or withdrawn. One consequence is the breakdown of any existing ‘social capital’ or trust, and breakdown in communication between users and service providers including government agencies. The search for solutions has barely begun. The public sector is unable to provide and the private sector will not or apparently at this time, hardly knows how to respond.

The public presence of the civic and social entrepreneur seems imminent. But that presence needs to be constructed in a context of macro ‘frames’ that influence the

emergence of social entrepreneurship practices in Australia. And the place of the university in these processes needs to be recognized.

The Australian ‘Policy’ Context for University Engagement with Communities

Universities globally are turning to their local regional communities in a bid for relevance, and for moral, social and political support from stakeholders such as industry and to a lesser extent their communities. These kinds of initiatives are occurring in an historical context of recognition that universities have long demonstrated the existence if not relevance of their teaching and service roles. In addition, contemporary universities have taken on a number of other roles and functions including the generation and application of knowledge through discovery (research) despite the fact that much research in universities is not demand-driven. It is not surprising then that the claim or notion that universities have long served their local communities through discovery and the application of knowledge has always been a reality. But the contemporary press for universities to refocus on the needs of local regional communities (where ‘regional’ means rural and metropolitan) has heightened in recent times. The ‘new’ context and condition is not unrelated to the economic plight of universities that now exist in a policy environment of economic rationalism, and a condition of scarcity of resources. The mainly government authors of such policy then place political demands on universities for greater value for the dollar, and on productivity and performance.

A second policy theme that has also emerged is the idea of innovation. Innovation and creativity have also characterised the ‘life-world’ of universities and their activities. Historically, universities have been the benchmarks and prominent ‘drivers’ for change in society and communities. With the relatively recent (historical) shift to a research focus in universities, the advent of globalisation with its consequent immediacy of information flows, and the impact of information and communications technology, universities have again come under pressure from government and business to change. In a context of ‘free-market’ and ‘free-choice’ based on neo-liberal bureaucratic democracy, Australian universities are being pressured to align their research energies and academic provision to the needs of their regional communities. Demands are now being placed on them to serve ‘the national interest’ in a globalising world economy where the boundaries to the nation state are “dissolving”.

These are two policy emphases currently impacting on Australian universities. And the incumbent Federal Government and the Opposition (both perhaps for different reasons and with differing policy agendas) promote and support a focus on regional communities and innovation.

At a policy level, governments tend to refer to regional communities as being located in rural areas (largely due to political pressures from rural constituencies). As was noted above however, the word regional applies equally to metropolitan and urban regions. The significance of urban regions and outer urban/metropolitan (fringe) areas to government support during the Hansonite regime is noted; as is the importance of these same areas as the initial entry to greater wealth creation (social and economic) advocated by Botsman and Latham (2001). Botsman’s advocacy for a ‘learning movement’ (adopted by SEN) is premised on the creation of social wealth through social entrepreneurship processes. That his current work is located in outer western Sydney and emanates from his work in a university environment is noted for its relevance in discussions in this forum.

Rationale for the Social and Economic Engagement of Contemporary Universities with their Regional Communities

Universities have their origins within communities over eight hundred years ago when we consider universities in their present form of governance. In relation to the move to a more

entrepreneurial positioning of universities (see later discussion), there is a broader or more comprehensive rationale for contemporary universities to engage their communities. This rationale may include:

- Recent writings about universities and their regions have focussed on the ideas of “learning regions/communities”, “learning culture”, “knowledge communities”, “learning towns” and other similarly related concepts.
- These ideas emphasise a) the function of the university as educator in its region; and b) the role of “outreach” in a university with respect to its regional community.
- The press for this new emphasis has less to do with internal pressures from within the university (although quality, efficiency of resources use, depleted public sector funding, the need for a more diversified funding base, relevant academic provision, massification of Higher Education and others can be viewed as ‘cause’ and effect), and more to do with concerns of Government to ensure that rural regions are not ‘left behind’ in addressing the surge toward globalisation.; and to address the tension between ‘local’ and ‘global’.
- Governments are moving to a policy position that will *require* universities to relate to their regions. The level of public sector funding will be assessed on a university’s capacity to deliver productively in its region.
- Communities are also putting pressure on universities to be more responsive to local needs
- Hence, universities are viewed as catalysts in shaping and supporting the future of a region.
- ‘Community engagement’ is seen to be the means for creating ‘social capital’, and community capacity as a platform for regional economic growth. The recent formation of the Division of Community Engagement with the Office of the Premier and Cabinet (Queensland) is one example.
- Regional economic development in the context of regional community development through community engagement processes will be a defining strategic attribute of regional universities in the future.
- To enhance regional engagement universities are being encouraged to: identify regional stakeholder needs; re-orient goals of the university to those of the community; view internal mechanisms for such things as research grants and promotion (to reward those ‘serving’ the region); and, develop the skills and competencies of staff so that they become *animateurs* that is, people capable of creative and productive interaction with the broader community.

Strengths of the Australian Higher Education System in Engaging Their Communities

There are a number of identifiable features of the Australian higher education ‘system’ that makes it *potentially* amenable to engaging communities through the provision of social entrepreneurship initiatives. A select (and indicative only) few features include

- **Increased diverse sources of funding.** Currently, the public sector contributes approximately 45-50% of the total funding for universities. The balance consists of income generation through internationalisation provision, commercialisation, benevolence and sponsorship, and other sources.
- **Openness to the creation of new sub-disciplines of knowledge** (despite a residual hierarchical system of knowledge reproduction that still characterises many universities).
- **Increasing student access** with more flexible admission and exit policies.
- **An emerging understanding of corporate social responsibility** and tradition of philanthropy buttressed by federal fiscal policy.

- **A willingness** (sometimes with flawed motives such as the ‘for-profit’ university motive) to **‘experiment with the nature of the idea of university as a public-private sector institution.**
- **The willingness of governments especially state governments** to support and/or provide funds/resources (albeit inadequately) **for enterprise development in universities** (Cf. cooperative research centres).
- Access to **site-based and resource problem-based learning resources** within the university and in communities.
- Potential for creation of **flexible pathways for accredited learning** programs and short courses for community members. These programs and courses may have multiple entry and exit points and be career oriented in terms of the skill-base required for a region.
- The adoption of **flexible modes of delivery**, appropriate to community member needs, counterbalanced by the inflexibility and turgidity of current approval structures in most Australian universities; and the homogenisation of a standards framework in the TAFE sector.
- Potential **opportunities for partnering and alliances** with a wide range of economic and cultural development industries.
- The **diversity of skills and experiences** (sometimes of a non-experiential ‘real world’ kind) to support community engagement.
- Existing or potential generation of a **knowledge base** to support community needs, for example, in cooperative entrepreneurship initiatives, particularly in niche knowledge areas, in applied research, capital raising, political lobbying and others.
- **Leadership** roles (that are horizontal rather than vertical) in cultural enterprise including festivals, fairs, shows, heritage events and others.

The potential for universities to support entrepreneurship initiatives is limitless (and needs to be made strategic for specific contexts). While we may identify the potential for universities to engage their communities, a more fundamental question needs to be asked: What kind of social entrepreneurship with its defined purposes and meaning needs to be engaged in this community? Not every initiative will transform society and should not attempt to do so. Not every initiative may involve the whole of the university organization but might contribute to a joint understanding of how it relates to both university and community strategic interests and directions.

It is to the meanings of social entrepreneurship (within a community engagement framework notion) that we now turn. The need to do so is predicated on the assumption that there are endless opportunities for universities to engage their communities in and through multiple domains of meanings of the term social entrepreneurship, and through effective implementation of its practices.

The Need for Universities to Define the Meanings Purposes of Social Entrepreneurship

This concept of entrepreneurship has been adopted in its various phenotypes in many universities. There are several discourses (defined here in its simplest sense as a way of thinking/speaking) associated with the term entrepreneurship (See Appendix 1). One however that offers a more comprehensive meaning is provided by Jeffrey Timmons from Babson College. He says that:

Enterprise/entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build something from practically nothing. It is initiating, doing, achieving and building an organisation, rather than just watching, analysing or describing one. It is the knack of sensing an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion. It is the ability to

build a “founding team” to complement your own skills and talents. It is the know-how to find, marshal and control resources (often owned by others) and to make sure you don’t run out of money when you need it most. Finally, it is the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial, and then do everything possible to get the odds in your favour.

The statement refers specifically to financial entrepreneurship but its relevance for social entrepreneurship seems evident.

In another example, the Ashoka Foundation (2000) declares that its mission is to pursue “ideas for *leading social change* in education and youth development, health and environment, human rights, access to technology, and economic development”. It sees its task “to recognize when *part of a society* is stuck and to [undertake] new ways to get it unstuck”. Its work involves “identifying and solving *large-scale social problems*”. It also aspires to “transform the lives of millions” and to “transform an entire system”.

All of the above ideas focus on the creation of social wealth. However there is a range of meanings inherent in the above statements when they are applied to the concept of social entrepreneurship. Alvord, Brown and Letts (2002) unpack some of these ideas in their recent paper. The authors focus on three domains of meaning of the concept. They suggest that social entrepreneurship may be seen as **combining commercial enterprises with social impacts**. In their paper they state, “In this perspective, entrepreneurs have used business skills and knowledge to create enterprises that accomplish social purposes in addition to being commercially viable. Not-for-profit organizations may create commercial subsidiaries and use them to generate employment or revenue that serves their social purposes, or for-profit organizations may donate some of their profits or organize their activities to serve social goals”. Hence any initiatives in this category use resources generated from successful commercial activities to advance and sustain their social activities. The social impact may be an end-on but intentional consequence of engaging in a social activity. This domain appears to differ from the meaning of social entrepreneurship as the creation of social wealth *through* economic processes, that is, social wealth is created through *doing* financial wealth creation. This latter interpretation recognizes the inextricable links between cultural and economic processes in any entrepreneurial activity (which business/commercial tends not to do).

Social entrepreneurship, according to the authors, may also be seen as **innovating for social impact**. In this perspective, the focus is on innovations and social arrangements that have consequences for social problems, often with relatively little attention to economic viability.

Finally, the primary purpose for social entrepreneurship may be seen as a **catalyst for social transformation** well beyond the solution of the social problems that are the initial focus of concern. Immediate problems are understood and addressed but within a view of change of the larger social system and its interconnections. Sustainable social transformations include *both* the innovations for social impacts and the concern for ongoing streams of resources that characterize the other two perspectives on social entrepreneurship – and they also lead to major shifts in the social context within which the original problem is embedded and sustained.

Now it may be recognised that all of the above domains of meanings associated with the word ‘social entrepreneurship’ exist in the above examples. The point of labouring these domain name definitional meanings is to emphasis the *need for universities to decide what kind of entrepreneurship is most appropriate and relevant to them and for their communities*. From anecdotal evidence, it may be suggested that universities are barely considering these issues; and that their best provision is focussed on financial entrepreneurship emanating from initiatives in Business and Management Faculties. My former university is regarded as ‘entrepreneurial’. Its principal intent however, as reflected in its practices, is to create the ‘for-

profit' university. For example, the latter interprets international education as export-education (the winning of International Export Awards based on the number of dollars earned in a year) to the exclusion of the more transformative aspects of aid-education.

Again, while many university personnel might argue that the primary role of a university is to act as a *catalyst for social transformation*, it is difficult to see that this is the state of affairs at this time. And yet the very poverty of current understanding and conceptualisation of the ideas, community engagement and social entrepreneurship, demand those universities pursue in a scholarly and applied research how these ideas can be made more public and explicit. It remains to be seen as to what kind of social entrepreneurship is best pursued by universities.

Hence, even though universities may not engage their communities in ways that are now needed they have all the intellectual resources to make explicit (together with community groups and members) a better understanding of the knowledge base underpinning social entrepreneurship practice. This knowledge base may appeal to creative knowledge, technical knowledge (business/commercial), personal knowledge, and professional knowledge.

Universities and the Effective Implementation of Community Engagement Initiatives

If it can be cogently argued that universities need to understand the nature and purposes of their social entrepreneurship activities, it may also be argued that they need to identify what is required for them to engage communities. This refers to the entrepreneurial flair or intuition of individual scholars but more particularly to the whole of the organization; to the establishment of an enterprising community engagement culture.

In beginning to address this issue, an appeal is made to Clark's (1998) research on enterprising universities. Clark argues that there are five elements that apply to a University that aims to become entrepreneurial. The elements are:

- ***A Strengthened Steering Core/Capacity:*** The presence of this element allows universities to be self-directed, more flexible, more quick in responding to changes in the external environment, and more focussed in their reactions to these external demands. A strong steering core means a strong Senior Executive linked (in various ways) to units (not necessarily Faculties) in the University. Steering also implies that steering will include reconciliation between new managerial values and academic values.
- ***Outreach*** functions that spread across the whole University: This outreach function that focuses on community engagement may be called an '**expanded development periphery**'. The development periphery may be supported by centres that act as mediating sites between the university and industry-community; that is, a centre may mediate between units and social enterprise cells and with the outside world. Centres offer support and participatory operations with a self-directed cell (team) of enterprise workers in a particular field of endeavour (See, for example, a (part) proposal for the establishment of such a centre in Appendix 2).
- ***A Diversified Funding Base:*** This is a further necessary condition for the promotion of community engagement. Enterprise institutions that are considered effective develop funding sources that are diversified in scope (range of sources) and scale (size – large grants/small grants). There are generally three streams of income in a university, 1. Recurrent funds from Governments; 2. Funds gained from government (research) agencies; and 3. Other sources of funds. It is in this latter source of funding, the magnitude of which distinguishes the enterprising university from the more 'traditional' university, in which a university and its centres will need to excel.

Sources of income may vary from industry, foundation, local or regional/state/national government departments. Student fees, endowment income, joint ventures and alliances etc. Universities will need to identify strategic sources of funding as core funding, and a range of opportunities that are more opportunistic in attracting a funding base.

- ***A Stimulated Academic Heartland:*** Academic units that are *vibrant academic enterprise cells* will be necessary for the effective operations of a socially entrepreneurial and engaged university. Ideally, all sections of the University might act as these kinds of cells. But the forms of practice that may be characterised as ‘traditional’ (where the virtues of the ‘traditional’ are not denied here, but they are contested in contexts of seamless global environments external to a university) tend to reproduce these same practices. They also reflect a particular view of academic autonomy and academic values. The academic heartland of the University, those academic units within Faculties, may need to blend ‘traditional’ values with a view based on ideas of entrepreneurialism. New managerial structures (for example, horizontal rather than vertical integration structures) may need to be tested and tried in the implementation of non-traditional entities that support university social entrepreneurialism and entrepreneurialism generally.
- ***An Integrated Culture for Community Engagement*** is the product of implementation of the above four elements. Strong cultures are rooted in strong practices and this suggests the need for professional development of staff in a university.

Of all the above five elements the expanded development periphery is of particular importance. Clark notes:

The developmental peripheries...move a university toward a dual structure of basic units in which traditional departments are supplemented by centres linked to the outside world.....with tenured staff mainly in the departments and non-tenured and part time staff often predominating in the out-reach centres, the more temporary units of the periphery are more readily disbanded. Since units of a development periphery extend, cross and blur boundaries, they can decisively shape the long-run character of a university. They can develop new competencies close to useful problem solving. They can generate income that helps to diversify funding. They answer the call for interdisciplinary efforts. But if not judged by academic values as well as managerial and budgetary interests for their appropriateness in a university they can move an institution toward the character of a shopping mall. (Clark, 1998, pp. 138-139).

Clark’s schema (summarised in Figure 1) may be useful in understanding and describing what is needed for the development of a socially entrepreneurial and community engaged university.

There are three further points that are relevant to the above discussion. The first refers to ideas raised in a recent paper by Gallagher (2000) where, as a result of an analysis of the leading practices of Australian universities, he identified the following characteristics and their management of their various commercial activities. The three areas are more recommendations or principles for implementation and are:

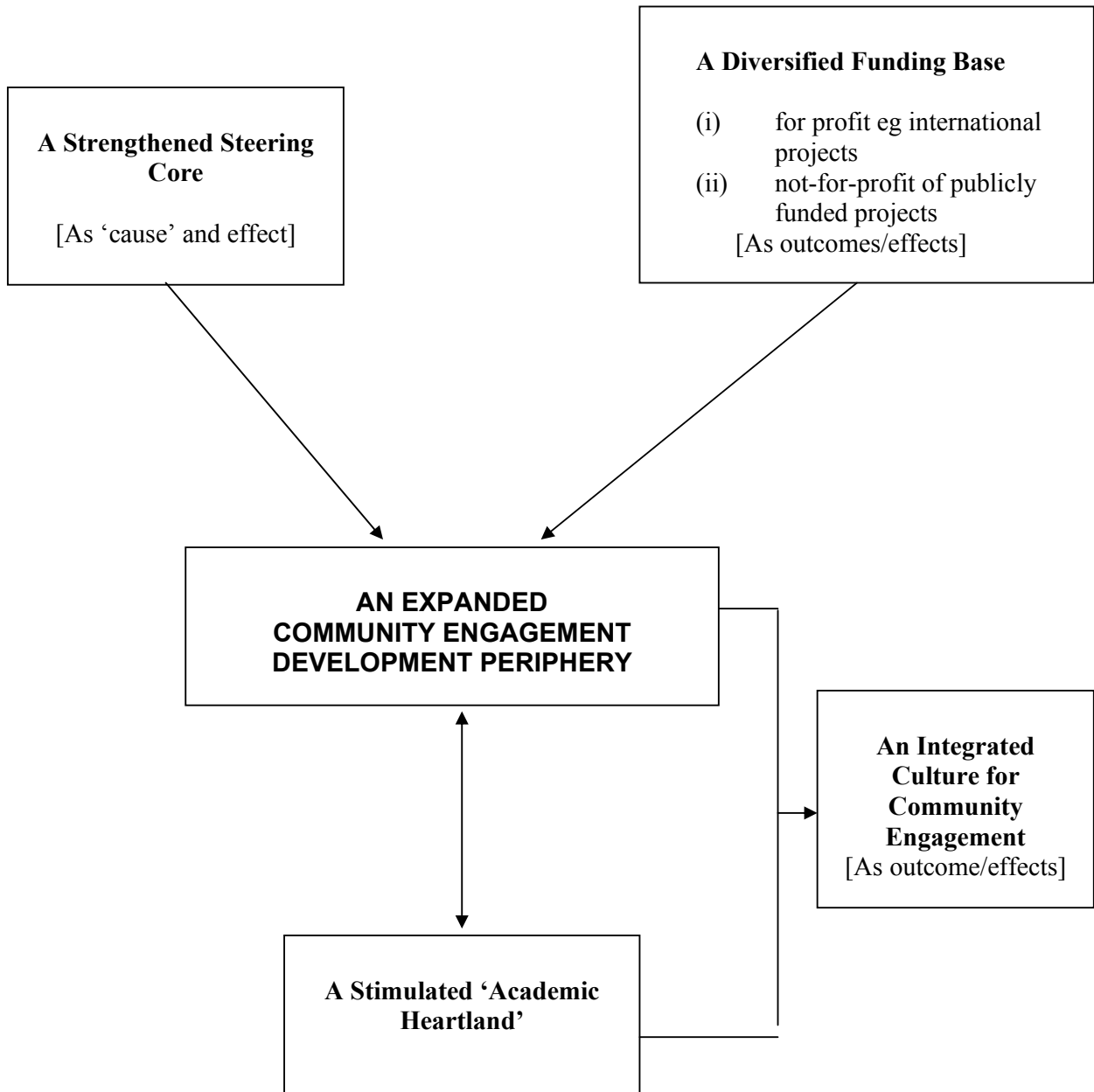


Figure 1. Schema of intersecting relationships across five thematic elements or attributes for the development of a community engagement culture (including social entrepreneurship initiatives such as education and training provision) in universities (Adapted from Clark, 1998).

- A sharp **focus**: the university needs to focus on tightly focussed objectives, on its competitive advantages and its strengths.
- **Transparency**: staff will have access to the financial position of the university.
- Internal financial incentives through **performance-based resource allocation**: this is a more complex area involving rewards for agreed goals, policy for charging university overheads, policies for IP ownership and accounting principles in the University.

The second point refers to the kinds of relationships universities will need to establish with their communities for effective engagement. The topic of partnerships is a long debated topic in universities and has many phenotypes in practice. But universities to date may well be unstrategic in the implementation of these partnering practices. In a current review of its partnership arrangements at the Community Service and Research Centre at The University of Queensland (Ipswich), (where after three years many partnership arrangements had been agreed), the nature of partnering is being systematically and strategically aligned to include a range of internal-external and vertical-horizontal arrangements. In effect, there are three concepts ‘driving’ the planned engagement of communities; *integration* (vertical to horizontal), *geographic space* (regional to global), and *environment* (internal and external). The intersecting relations and tensions among these concepts will result in an effective approach to engagement, one that embraces social entrepreneurship initiatives along with other elements of engagement.

Finally, there is the issue of what processes for development are most appropriate and relevant for universities in engaging their communities. A major challenge for any organization is not only to engage its community but also to ‘win’ its allegiances to the extent that it will not permit the organization to ‘go away’. To achieve this status, there are several recognized processes for the development of binding relationships. These will involve several phases such as:

- *Community consultation* (observation, comment, auditing...)
- *Community engagement* (attitudes and cultural understanding as the basis for future action)
- *Building partnerships and coalitions.*
- *Cross-sectoral coalition building*
- *Establishment of a regional enterprise organization.*

No one would expect that these ‘phases’ to be linear, and indeed be anything other than quite fragmented in the development process. It is the latter that may cause many universities to come ‘unstuck’ especially in community environments unreceptive or antipathetic to them.

‘Frames’ that Govern and Constrain Universities in Engaging their Communities

There are as many ‘frames’ on universities as there are views of what constitutes community engagement (A google search will reveal that the term throws up 14,500 references on community engagement of which 6,500 are directly referenced to universities!). Only a few propositions are suggested here.

1. Policies and practices that fail to embrace a *whole-of-university strategic approach* to the implementation of community engagement and social entrepreneurship initiatives.
2. The uneven allocation of *rewards and incentives* for engagement with community where other forms of scholarship (discovery-research) are more highly valued. Where these incentives are present, academic personnel as a group at this time,

- appear to be willing to experiment but have less will-formation to enact good ideas in an environment external to the safe haven of academia.
3. *Structural inefficiencies* in universities where protocols for approval are tightly enthroned within traditional structures (administrative, academic and legal); and where a melding with a fourth structure that focuses on entrepreneurialism-quality is neglected in a reinvented notion of a contemporary university.
 4. The current *discourse of conservatism* and low morale among personnel largely induced by scarcity of resources (or their uneven allocation and management) and the restrictive vigilance of management. This kind of culture displaces long-term planning for engagement for short-term (financial/commercial) gains. This kind of conservatism also inhibits the growth and practice of entrepreneurship and the experimentation with ideas-in-action. If 9 out of 10 business ideas fail to be able to find a workable one, it is unlikely that universities will be able to maximise their creative output. It is unlikely that university personnel in their current environments of work will be able to practice as ‘counterintuitive’ *serial entrepreneurs* (Sutton, 2002), those who demonstrate a capacity for continuous uptake of opportunities.
 5. Academic provision of programs that do not recognize the value of *work-based and site-based educational practices and contemporary practice* that fuses knowledge disciplines in community initiatives.
 6. Program designs that do not acknowledge the place of non-accredited *enterprise qualifications* and to work in partnership with those who legitimately offer same. (This issue goes to the heart of the idea of university where the right to accredit is the one and only ‘commodity’ that distinguishes the contemporary university from other (higher) educational providers).
 7. The *response of communities* especially in rural and inner metropolitan areas where education is unvalued or undervalued (but where the economic – cash cow - returns of the university’s presence is widely sought). It is noteworthy that in recent research (GEM at the London School of Business), Australia rated as one of the highest nations of business start-ups (9% of the population) by ‘opportunity entrepreneurs’ (as opposed to ‘necessity entrepreneurs’). However, Australia also rated last of 29 countries in community perceptions of the legitimacy of the practice of entrepreneurship. While these perceptions relate to commercial entrepreneurship and a cultural propensity to deny the legitimacy of success in business, it may also have transfer effects for the implementation and legitimation of social entrepreneurship initiatives.
 8. The transient nature of *executive management* and ignorance of university leaders especially in rural regions where short term leadership by upwardly mobile managers leads to chronic revisionism, a demand for immediate results, the inculcation of a for-profit culture, and a failure to understand the cultural milieu of the region, the latter with sometimes very unwanted consequences.

The list is as long as the above items may be contentious. What is evident is that there are many universities and their personnel who are being pressured and squeezed by governments. That is, they are suffocating the consequences of restructuring as far back as 1997, and their personnel are struggling under adverse work conditions that make community engagement and social entrepreneurship difficult to practice.

Conclusion

There is much evidence that Australian universities are engaging their local communities although perhaps through ad hoc practices and plans that lack strategy. Some, such as the Graduate School of Entrepreneurship at RMIT (ranked second of 311 international universities in a survey of entrepreneurship programs (Vesper and Gartner (1997) *Journal of Business Venturing*)) have captured an international reputation for their entrepreneurship programs and activities. Most descriptions of entrepreneurialism in universities however, are confined to teaching of programs and the commercialisation of research, international education, and delivery of fee-paying courses. Others climb aboard the entrepreneurial wagon with the adoption of sloganish approaches to community engagement such as broadcasting the intent to create 'learning regions'.

Most Australian universities do not appear to adopt a whole-of-organization approach to community engagement, and rely instead on those entrepreneurial academic personnel who have the will-formation to link with individuals and groups in their community (defined as local or global). There are few to no universities that explicitly teach social entrepreneurship as part of their community engagement plan. No centre such as the School for Social Entrepreneurs founded by Michael Young may yet be witnessed in Australia. All this amounts to a rather bleak picture. And while universities are funded little more than 45+% from the public sector, and while the culture of corporate and foundation sponsorship in Australia is not well developed, and the demand on universities to engage in only those community initiatives that are 'for-profit', the task of implementing engagement informed by social entrepreneurship ideas will be difficult.

It is unlikely that Australian universities can implement with any great ease an effective, strategic and whole-of-university plan for community engagement and social entrepreneurship in the foreseeable future without some macro-change in the conditions of work of universities, and the recognition of communities of the purposes of the university as reflected in their choice of policies of elected governments. Since the implementation of the so-called 'unified national system' in 1997, universities both pre and post Dawkins have struggled to find a balance between those academic personnel who generate knowledge and ideas, and how this knowledge is connected with industry, community and the external environment. The pre-Dawkins universities and sandstones (for example, Universitas 21 and the Australian Technology Network group) have been confronted with reduced resources for what they do/have done best, engage in the scholarships of discovery and application. The newer universities, mostly rural regional, have been plagued by declining resources for what they do/did best, namely engage their communities principally through the scholarship of teaching and service. The homogenisation of colleges/institutes with established universities has led to a general malaise and suffocation of resources for all. Until this macro-policy context is addressed, universities will probably linger along with fractured approaches to communities; and the newer especially rural universities will continue to be denied perhaps the opportunity to implement what they can potentially do best, that is, to engage communities and teach through social entrepreneurship initiatives. In addition it may well be that social entrepreneurs who tend to be 'non-conformists' and 'insufferable innovators' will not be valued in majority of rule/procedural bound universities for some time.

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Appendix 1

There are several underlying discourses (more simply defined as a way of thinking/speaking) associated with the terms enterprise and entrepreneurship. They are:

- An **ideology**; for example, the implementation of enterprise projects in the UK from the early 1980's under the Thatcher government, clearly conceived of enterprise as the more aggressive business concept of entrepreneurship. It was a reflection of 'free-enterprise' and the notion that market forces unhindered will lead to maximum productivity and profit.
- An **amalgam of attitudes and skills**: This interpretation reflects the more technical view of use of the word. It is seen particularly in programs that are designed on the premise that if the skills of 'commerce and business' are taught and instilled in people then they will be or become entrepreneurial. That this technical capacity is a necessary condition of doing entrepreneurship is not in dispute. Whether possessing attitudes and skills makes the entrepreneur or enterprise worker is (in dispute).
- A **management discourse**: this view of enterprise and or entrepreneurship is the meaning most frequently encountered in higher education. Universities almost exclusively use the terms especially entrepreneurship to describe their academic provision of courses and programs especially at postgraduate levels (MBA and Executive MBAs).
- **Learning principles**: Many enterprise projects emphasise the need for enterprising learning in enterprising people. Hence, 'new' emphasis on life-long learning, just-in-time, customised learning, flexible on-line learning and so on. The emphasis appears to be on identifying new ways of learning that are adequate and appropriate for new environments and changing technologies.

- A culture such as **enterprise culture**. This term is least frequently used but is assumed under the umbrella terms attitudes and skills, enterprise learning, ideology.
- **Career opportunity**. The purposes of enterprise and entrepreneurship centres and their related activities especially educational program provision are many and varied perhaps accounting for the difficulty and indifference in attempting to define the concepts at all levels of education. (This does not excuse any exponent of entrepreneurship from making more explicit the assumptive ‘theory’ and ‘theorising’ underlying such activity.
There is a strong emphasis on job creation and job extension in many programs (excluding university programs which are generally not based on contemporary business practice). Many focus on business start-ups for the disadvantaged There is also a strong theme of entrepreneurship and enterprise education for all as a basic life-skill for all young and elderly entering or continuing to aspire to quality living.

Appendix 2

Name of the Proposed Centre

The name of the proposed Centre will be: *Centre for Enterprise Development and Research (CEDAR)*

In the absence of guidelines in the University for the establishment of centres or units (other than those designated as research centres), it is proposed that the name of proposed enterprise entity reflect a notion of enterprise which emphasises:

- A focus on development through entrepreneurial and enterprise activities such as identification of opportunities, networking and sponsorship. These activities will constitute a strong out-reach function of the proposed Centre.
- Activities that lead to the identification and securing of resources for funding of enterprise cells will be a primary consideration.
- Education and training for enterprise that involves both an in-reach and out-reach functions.

The way in which these in-reach and out-reach functions relate will be a critical factor for long term effectiveness of the proposed Centre.

The proposed entity will be:

- A mediating site located on an ‘expanded periphery’ between the University with its core business, and the external environment;
- A site that is visibly identifiable with the strategic directions and intent of the University aligned with its community;
- An entity located within the organisational structures aligned with the corporate (commercial and social) development of the University.

The proposed centre will be self-funding.

The proposed Centre will:

- Conduct enterprise work that reflects an identity of entrepreneurialism and enterprise.
- Confirm and align the nature of its activities with similar initiatives within the University.
- Be seen as ‘outside’ of the University’s core business but be related to other structures (centres, units...) within the university.

- Reflect a multiplicity of projects within a 'coherent' framework of enterprise that will characterise its work.
- Work in creative partnership and association with the emerging peak economic development body (Rockhampton Enterprise Ltd) in the region to the advantage of the University.
- Establish a platform for better understanding and relationships between the University and its external environment.
- Operate with a degree of independence but with full accountability.
- Act with maximum degree of flexibility.
- Operate across selected and agreed cost units in the University where appropriate.
- Assume a 'neutral' territory of operations; that is to act as a mediating linking university industry/community.
- Work with individual staff in cost units within the University in agreed in-reach activities.
- Act as a self-funded and independent entity (within agreed fiscal and administrative accountability requirements) agreed with senior executive within the University.
- Mediate between the whole of the university and its external environment.
- Ensure effective implementation based on learnings from the establishment of similar centres established in other universities (Strathclyde, Warwick etc).
- Maintain a capacity to identify enterprise opportunities.
- Provide cross-academic unit advice.
- Report directly to the university CEO or his/her nominee (Vice-President (Corporate Development.) where central 'control' will be a fundamentally important factor in the supervision of the proposed centre's performance).
- Provide for an 'internal market' for course electives within award programs in the University.
- Ensure high quality enterprise work in/through a central location.