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Changing academic identity as a result of policy actions[1]

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Abstract

In the context of a dynamic New Zealand tertiary environment, this paper examines the policy that has restructured the research funding regime and the consequent impacts of these changes upon academic identity/identities. As institutions strategise to meet increased competition and changed expectations for funding (academic staff have had to modify their role (Ashcroft, 2005; Middleton, 2005). We refer to our research project (Billot & Smith, 2007, 2008; Smith & Billot, 2007) whose aim was to map the research environments in two emerging applied institutions one a relatively new university and the other a leading polytechnic in order answer the research question of how the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) has affected staff roles and responsibilities and also the academic 'identities' of staff. The qualitative study involved case studies of both institutions, focusing on the disciplines of Education, Design and Nursing. We outline the research methodology and methods including an online survey and interviews. Furthermore, we present the *preliminary* findings, which illustrate the complexity of aligning institutional strategy and staff performance. The actual project whilst completed has quite a rich set of data which has yet to be fully analysed and reported upon. We argue that academics need to work within a supportive research culture, it is essential for institutional health (Hazelkorn, 2005) and that to be effective it needs to be embedded into the institutional environment. We believe that our small study provides the opportunity for identifying initiatives that could enhance both collective and individualised objectives and also for building research teams and capacities.

Keywords: higher education; educational policy; academic identity; research culture

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[2] At the time of data collection neither of the authors was employed by their current institutions, Jennie was in the Postgraduate Studies division of Unitec, Auckland, New Zealand and Richard was at the School of Education, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand

Introduction

In the last two decades New Zealand has experienced a changing funding regime for institutions in the tertiary sector. The policy directives that have led this change have caused re-evaluation of what constitutes research and an internal re-structuring of the organisations to meet the expected performance criteria. This significant external pressure on the funding of higher education has impacted upon the role of the academic individual who faces challenges to adapt and refocus. This paper identifies the tertiary policy that has recently altered the funding regime for research in higher education institutions (HEIs) across New Zealand and links the resultant institutional reactions to the changing academic identity of staff. We begin by outlining the more recent changes to the tertiary environment and in particular the policy that has re-shaped the research context. Secondly, we identify how institutions have moved to perform their expected functions, while competing within the sector.

We refer to the preliminary findings of a research project undertaken in two applied institutions within New Zealand, to describe and give space for staff members to explain the potential conflicts they may face and the support that they receive during institutional change. Within this changing academic environment, academic identity remains a dynamic and slippery construct, so our final intention is to encourage further discourse on the alignment between institutional and academic staff expectations in the context of policy directives.

We offer our tentative research findings at a time when the academic's sense of self is under-researched even though it is acknowledged that identity affects one's "sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness" (Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons, 2006, p. 601). Academic identities are disparate and lack homogeneity and compromises in the tertiary workplace are becoming more commonplace and inevitable (Churchman, 2006). Academic work has developed a revised meaning and staff co-operation between and within departments affects the nature of interaction between hierarchical levels within the institution. In order to produce a positive environment for effective teaching and research, acknowledgement of multiple and disparate academic identities is needed. Based on our preliminary findings, we believe that an organisational culture needs to be developed that procures sustained educational outcomes whilst providing supportive and enabling working conditions for academic staff.

New Zealand's tertiary research context

The evolving tertiary environment has been subject to numerous changes including changes in government funding (Marginson, 2000), and pressures on institutional funding are emerging from revised government priorities and expectations (Gordon, 2005). Over the last two decades, New Zealand has experienced many such changes within its tertiary sector, with some of the issues arising from sector restructuring showing international similarity. Whilst aiming to provide tertiary education for increasing numbers in financially viable and capable units (Sjolund, 2002), state policies in the UK and Europe have had a major impact on institutional focus, affecting not only the way in which institutions now function, but also the role and responsibilities of those who work within them. On a smaller scale, this is also apparent in New Zealand, where there are currently only eight universities, 20 polytechnics or institutes of technology (ITPs), three wānanga (Māori tertiary institutions)[3], and a host of private higher education (HE) institutions called PTEs (private training establishments)

The market driven education sector, which was propelled by the economic policies of the Labour government in the 1980s and supported by the actions of the National Government of the 1990s, has allowed New Zealand tertiary institutions to compete and diversify (see Strathdee, 2006). Non-universities are now able to deliver degree courses due to increased institutional autonomy (Codling & Meek, 2003), and this has encouraged polytechnics and newer universities to emerge as stronger tertiary providers (Pratt, 1999). However, they do so within an environment where older, established universities move to assert their sector dominance.

The New Zealand government has separated higher education funding between teaching and research activities, with the latter being contested among institutions that conduct research. Research funding from Government sources is based on the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF), whereby institutions receive income reflecting the PBRF graded status of their individual members. This is in contrast to the UK where departments within an institution are allocated a grade for funding (Blackmore & Wright, 2006; Lucas, 2006; Yates, 2006). The PBRF is effectively an outcomes-based model, where achievements rather than research

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[3] Māori are the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The literal Pākeha (New Zealand, mostly English people of European origin) translation of Te Whare Wānanga is the house of higher learning – or Māori Universities. However, the term 'university' is a contested notion which has been enshrined in legislation and the Vice Chancellors' Committee amongst other groups has challenged the right of the wānanga to use the term 'university' in their name or for advertising purposes (see Jesson & Smith, 2007).

inputs and related activities are recognised. Research funding via the PBRF mechanism is being progressively introduced from 2004 to 2008.

New Zealand academics have now experienced two rounds of the PBRF the first in 2003 (covering a six-year period 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2002) and reported as the document *Evaluating Research Excellence the 2003 Assessment* (Tertiary Education Commission, 2004), or less formally the '2003 Quality Evaluation' throughout the TEC's report. In total there were over 8,000 (8,013) PBRF 'eligible' academic staff and of these 5,771 were assessed (TEC, 2004). Only 22 of the 45 eligible TEO's entered staff for assessment in the first round. Of the 41 subject areas assessed Education, Design and Nursing had the lowest rankings with Education at 39, Design at 40 and Nursing at 41. The second round was a 'partial' round in 2006 (covering a six-year period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2005) and reported as the document *Evaluating Research Excellence the 2006 Assessment* (Tertiary Education Commission, 2007). In the 2006 round nearly 8,700 (8,671) academic staff were PBRF 'eligible', however, nearly 3,000 (2,996) had their 2003 quality categories assigned in 2003 'carried over' to the 2006 .assessment. In 2006 31 of the 46 eligible TEO's entered the second round. Of the 42 subject areas assessed in 2006 Education, Design and Nursing again shared the same lowest rankings from 2003.

Following Australia's example, New Zealand has adopted the Germanic model of 'integrating research into universities rather than separate institutes' (Grant & Edgar, 2003, p. 319). This integration aimed at increased coordination of academic research, provides the primary influence for the research agenda. There has been a natural impact on how tertiary institutions manage their teaching and research environments to meet the expectations of these changing policy domains, with resultant consequences for the roles of academic staff.

More recently, the governmental support arrangements that have been implemented, differentiate between older established universities and newer polytechnics and institutes of technology. In particular, the PBRF, by assessing research outcomes, has altered institutional expectations and accountabilities (Ashcroft, 2005). This policy has influenced the way institutions are funded, creating tensions between supporting research and the demands of teaching and learning. For some universities the focus has remained on being a research-led university but for others, particularly those newly created as universities, or those in the process of applying for university status, prioritising institutional functions has been more

problematic. This has led to a more obvious inequality across the sector, as the various types of tertiary providers will have differing capacities to reframe their structural responses to policy directives and consequences.

There have been range of studies on the effects of the PBRF especially in the discipline of Education (and other practice/professional based disciplines, see Ashcroft, 2005; 2006; Hall, Morris Matthews & Sawicka, 2004; Hall & Morris Matthews, 2006; Middleton, 2005; 2006[4] and Smith & Jesson, 2005) and more generalised accounts of the negative effects (see Codd, 2005; 2006a; 2006b). The aim here is not to review each of these studies but to acknowledge them, and to provide a context in which to outline the current research project. There is currently little Aotearoa/New Zealand empirical data on the effects in of the PBRF in 'new' institutions to compare and contrast the findings of these previous studies. Therefore, this study's aim was to provide this new data and to fill this gap in the literature.

The research study

In light of the issues affecting academics in the tertiary sector, we initiated a research project within two Auckland tertiary institutions, one a polytechnic (Institute of Technology) aiming for university of technology status, and the other, a more recently designated university. We worked as academic staff members within these institutions which are examples of tertiary providers aspiring to increased status. The project's aim was to examine the impact of the newly implemented funding regime, the PBRF, on the professional identity of academic staff. The primary intention was to focus on perceptions of the staff themselves and identify how they experience a working research culture. Three case studies were selected for the project's sample, namely the Schools of Education, Design and Nursing; these permit a comparison across differing disciplines and between the two higher education institutions.

As the source of the data was the academic staff, a qualitative approach was adopted, with the research design including convergent interviewing (Dick, 1990). The two institutional heads of research were interviewed, followed by a survey of all staff in the sample (about 240), using an online questionnaire through Survey Monkey. (A similar survey coincidentally occurred at the University of Auckland, see Waayer & Hattie, 2007). Semi-structured

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[4] The Ashcroft studies were conducted at the University of Otago, the Hall et al., ones at Victoria University of Wellington, and the Middleton ones mostly at the Universities of Waikato and those in Auckland.

interviews with about 30 staff across both institutions provided further in-depth data for the findings. Preliminary analysis suggests that for *some* staff in *both* institutions and across all three disciplines (Design, Education and Nursing), the imposition of the PBRF and internal drivers to undertake research and to publish are resulting in a significant shift in academic roles and responsibilities. Aspects of the paper have been presented at earlier conferences (see Billot & Smith, 2007; Smith & Billot, 2007; and Smith, Billot, Todd, Jiao & Kumar, 2008).

The following comment indicates some of the staff views on how they re-prioritised their work. "*I think the PBRF has made me more aware that there needs to be some outputs and I need to play the game to a certain extent, but I am careful not to let it override my other commitments.*" (RC10).

Further comments illustrate how there has been an increased awareness of staff accountability. "*Before I really understood PBRF, I would just be following research paths that really interested me … and now I have a, now there's a second kind of decision making process that goes on that says well is this useful to, you know, to my PBRF rating.*" (RC11). "*I am mindful that that whole structure has enormous authority within our existence now and because of that you can't ignore it, you can't say well it doesn't matter. It's the driving force behind our funding and all that.*" (NA01). The following response indicated a negative reaction to the PBRF:

> *I don't see that the PBRF ends up with a solution that measures the quality of research. I don't think it measures research culture. I think it's a mechanism for the distribution of funds rather than the enhancement of educational research and so I'm disappointed and so I won't play the game.* (E04).

These participant comments and associated project findings provide further insight into other areas of academic identity and some of these are related to the way in which their employing institution has reacted to policy directives.

Institutional reactions to policy directives

Internationally, where countries such as the UK have implemented newer funding regimes, institutions have had to strategise to meet the revised expectations. This is no less the case in New Zealand where, since the implementation of the PBRF, tertiary providers have re-evaluated their contribution to the sector and realigned their priorities. Hazelkorn (2005) has

observed that alongside the governmental restructuring of the tertiary sector through policy revision and institutional funding, it is both the quality and quantity of HE research that determines the status and prestige of individual institutions. New Zealand institutions are recognising the need to reinforce their position in the changing sector and, as we have observed in our own institutions, to do this involves strengthening their research capacity and capability. This institutional focus has been seen as crucial for the survival of some tertiary providers in the restructured environment (Hazelkorn, 2005).

Our research study identified certain institutional strategies for improving research outcomes and in some cases these were effectively facilitated through departments. However this was not always the case and academic staff offered diverse perceptions on their degree of success. In some cases staff were not even aware of research requirements, whilst in other departments there was an obvious co-operation amongst staff members to support the extension of research outputs. Excerpts from interviews with project participants illustrate some of these differences. One participant identified their school as having limited support mechanisms for newer researchers. "*I guess our school isn't very good at seeing the potential in people and encouraging them to become engaged in research that they're not already engaged in.*" (RC11). Another noted the institutional support that is available. "*We also have a Research Office which is well staffed to assist researchers of all stages with things like proposals and project costs and all of those things, so we also get that expert advice which is available to people.*" (RC05)

Another staff member felt that there was a lack of clarity about support for research. "*Research support….it's very unclear how (the School funds are) determined and spent. It's kind of like an exercise in perseverance in order to get the funding*" (RC10). One academic did point out that they had a responsibility to request support: "*I think the support from our school really varies depending on how much you ask for. I don't think my particular school is particularly forthcoming in offering support, but if you seek it, you will get it*" (RC11). Another staff member linked leadership to the support of research:

> *People in formal roles of leadership need to ensure that people who have a responsibility for doing any type of research, they need to remove the obstacles that prevent those people from doing research. Now I think one of the biggest obstacles is time, but then you need to turn that around the other way and say how can we also help those people manage their time really effectively. It's a two way thing.* (RC09)

In certain departments, cohesive strategies included the development of research committees, research fora and mentoring research relationships. In one school there were both structural and informal mechanisms for support: *"We've had a writing group here that we meet every couple of months and it's sort of supported in trying to think what can we write or who's going to be submitting to a journal."* (RC07). In another school, staff supported each other. *"We're now beginning to publish in pairs or threes as well. So that's an interesting change and it is in direct response to trying to reduce the load a little and yet still get the publications."* (NA04).

> *The Research Committee does things ... we try and do things that will encourage kind of a research culture, like we try and have breakfast events or lunchtime events where people talk about their PhD's or their current research projects that they're involved in and I really try and encourage people to come along to those.* (RC11)

Where academic staff worked alongside each other, there was an enhanced positive perception of shared responsibilities.

> *I've had a lot of mentoring around ... because I was being mentored by people who have already travelled that journey and what they learnt or what maybe they didn't experience, they're actually making sure that I've experienced it and now I'm passing it on to other new staff who have come in, you know, into our area as well.* (RC09)

In other cases, top-down efforts to ensure increased staff performance only created a psychological wedge between levels in the hierarchy. Staff were vocal on this issue as illustrated below:

> *I get really frustrated that there is a one size fits all approach when it comes to research and let me explain that. I've sat in enough academic, senior academic meetings and management meetings where people say every staff member has to have a 'C' rating, every staff member has to have at least two published refereed outputs per year, there is no excuse, but these are the same people who only have 10 or 12 contact hours a week and they don't have the pressures of practice on top of that…*(RC07)

Frustration is evidenced by these two comments: *"At the end of the day research is part of the way in which they judge your promotion, it's true, but it seems to be pretty hard."* (RC06).

What I value in a humane and critical education is not counting of numbers. I don't see that the PBRF ends up with a solution that measures the quality of research. I don't think it measures research culture. I think it's a mechanism for the distribution of funds rather than the enhancement of educational research and so I'm disappointed and so I won't play the game. (E04)

A further comment identifies the conflict between expectations:

Well I actually think the expectations of both the school and the institution are entirely unrealistic…My understanding is that the programme, the undergraduate programme I teach in, is one of the few highly viable programmes in the whole outfit and the only reason it's highly viable is because we have large classes and a very heavy workload and yet the expectation of us in terms of producing research outputs doesn't change at all and there's no extra support in terms of teaching for us, which would then enable our research outputs to increase. So I am an entirely frustrated active researcher to the point where I'm practically inactive. (RC14)

This latter example serves to illustrate that management "intrudes into academic identities' particularly when selective research funding determines which research focus and outputs are worthwhile" (Deem & Lucas, 2007, p. 119).

Academic identity/indentities

People's lives are multifaceted causing challenging conflicts between professional and personal identities (Day et al., 2006). Identity itself is an unstable concept as changing contexts, including those of work-based policy changes, impact on the individual's notion of their relationship with the social and economic environment. Change poses both "threats and opportunities" to academic staff whose "academic identities, including identities as researchers, are forged, rehearsed and remade in local sites of practice" (Lee & Boyd, 2003, p. 188). The course which an academic's identity takes, is influenced by the institutional context, although the individual has the ability to negotiate their roles and responsibilities through the process of prioritising.

Identity is a social construction that develops over time and Churchman (2006) believes that identity is a vehicle for the way one wants "to interact with the rest of the world" (p. 6). Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark and Warne refer to this dynamic as the academic of today "mobilising a complex of occasional identities in response to shifting contexts" (2002, p. 117). Such shifting roles cause academic staff to "struggle to define their identity and those of their colleagues" (Churchman, 2006, p. 5). This fluid sense of self indicates how challenging it is to define identity.

In the context of changed governmental policy regarding what constitutes research and how research activities are publicly funded, Gordon (2003) points to managerial reactions which have tended to emphasise tasks and productivity rather than academic roles and career paths. This has caused employer-employee relationships to become stretched and not always aligned. Academics in turn also face reconciling their career development in a more corporatised environment (Churchman, 2006). Consequently, linking institutional objectives to those of individuals remains an issue for those leading organisational change.

Changes to the current tertiary environment have led research to become the 'normal' work of an academic (Lee & Boyd, 2003, p. 189). Our project indicates that there has been little preparation for role changes, with the result that there is tension as individuals re-assess their responsibilities and develop new ways of working. Lee and Boyd also point to the challenges that staff face in the increasingly competitive environment, especially with the introduction of performance-based funding. Individuals may encounter greater self-questioning and experience more fear and anxiety. Thus the identity of an academic emerges from the "nuances and complexities of the concept of the career life cycle" of being a researcher (Gordon, 2005, p. 40). The "fluidity and fragmentation of many research fields" (Gordon, 2005) causes individual academics to constantly re-assess their position within their own discipline (see also Lee, 2007).

Churchman (2006) alludes to the way in which academic staff can have multiple and different interpretations of who they are. The changing tertiary environment and character of the institution in which they work, cause "contradictions" and "compromises" as their roles and responsibilities transform (2006, p. 13). Our project findings have suggested that further research is needed on the interactions between employer (institution) and employee (academic staff member) if institutional objectives are to be achieved. It also becomes essential that academics develop their identities in alignment with the institutional direction (Harris, 2005).

Implications

The early analysis of our research project has resonance with the view of Stronach et al. that the academic's "professional self and its disparate allegiances (is) a series of contradictions and dilemmas that frame the identity of the professional as an implementer of policy" (2002, p. 109). The New Zealand example of a newly introduced funding regime indicates the far-

reaching results of economic policy. As well as achieving a fiscally monitored and evaluated tertiary sector, the procedure will also impact on human agency and identity. Thus, policy imperatives will have a series of intended and unintended consequences, the latter being those emerging from reactions to the overt directives in play. So, as professionals, academics develop ways of addressing or redressing the dilemmas and challenges that affect their role. In so doing, they "re-story themselves in and against the audit culture" (Stronach et al., 2002, p. 130). There is a current concern that policy is now leading and structuring research, with the result that an academic's research identity is constructed to achieve governmental and managerial aims rather than educational objectives.

Brunetto and Wharton (2005) when studying the response of Australian academics to the implementation of new policy, have referred to a crucial aspect of managing a changed policy regime; that is to align workplace practices with official organisational policy and the values embedded within the institutional culture. Employees' reactions to a changed policy affect the degree to which new policy implementation is successful, so senior management need a heightened awareness of factors that influence such reactions. Brunetto and Wharton (2005) discovered that leadership, organisational culture, resourcing and reward practices were the main issues that affected academic response. In addition, as educational institutions conventionally use a "process approach to manage systems and structures and implement incremental changes" (Brunetto & Wharton 2005, p. 174), it remains essential that employees feel valued as part of those processes.

Since the academic role is multi-functional we need to re-examine the relationship between those functions. Teaching, research and administration are entwined and impact on the prioritising of each. Robertson and Bond in their study of the teaching-research relationship at the University of Canterbury (New Zealand), ascertained that the relationship is "enacted through the transmission of research findings, through the modelling of a research approach to learning and by engaging students as active participants in the inquiry process" (2005, p. 530). The core element here is the modelling of the research/teaching relation and for that to occur, academic staff benefit from being actively involved in both.

Since institutional staff will be those who enact changed institutional objectives, Lee and Boyd (2003) suggest that they need to feel supported in a time of change, through an environment which enhances and enables effective performance. As lesser attention has been

given to how the *research* potential of academic staff can be developed, these authors believe that alongside the need to increase such capacity, comes a focus on the renewal and change to academic identities. Attention to these issues is necessary in the current "normative and performative environment" (Lee & Boyd, 2003, p. 188) in which individuals and departments are positioned. Ball's research into academic research leadership indicates that institutional "overt and clear strategies" are paramount for effective research outcomes (2007, p. 475).

Research cultures have become recognised as significant components of an academic environment in which staff can effectively contribute to institutional objectives, particularly in policy directed funding regimes such as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in the UK (Deem & Lucas, 2007). Sikes (2006) outlined a study of the differential 'effects' of the RAE of academics working in 'new' universities Her findings are congruent with our own in the New Zealand context as both institutional sites were applied institutions and in one case a relatively 'new' university having gained this status in January 2000.

"Seminars, bulletins, research groups, internal sabbaticals and other research funding, research mentors, teaching buy-outs" (Deem & Lucas, 2007, p. 126) are all significant in the formation of effective research cultures and the increase of staff capacity. Professional development is just one element of building research capability and capacity, and, in conjunction with research training and a supportive research environment, institutions can develop research cultures that are flexible enough to adjust to changing policy expectations. These can be designed for the specific institutional context, for as Lee and Boyd assert, workplaces are "atypical" (2003, p. 199) and need contextualised practice.

Educational leadership plays a significant role in enhancing academic participation in institutional change. Whilst staff will turn to informal research leaders in the absence of formal leadership (Ball, 2007), Harris (2005) points to the professoriate's leadership role to "safeguard and promote spaces for academics and intellectual debate, creativity and risk taking, both individually and collectively" (p. 430). Another level of institutional leadership is both the 'faculty' as well as the 'departmental' culture and each has an influence (see Lee, 2007).

From our small study's findings, it appears that as current policy factors are restructuring academic research in New Zealand, academic identity is also being challenged. Academic

identity is "affected by external (policy) and internal (organisational) and personal experiences past and present, and so is not always stable" (Day et al., 2006, p. 610) and can be viewed as "occasional identities in response to shifting contexts" (Stronach et al., 2002, p. 117). How an individual makes sense of their own practice and gains a sense of being a professional, is often through evaluating "disciplinary and professional orientations" (Clegg & Bradley, 2006, p. 72). However our study illustrated that this is not always a simple aim to achieve, as the PBRF rewards specific outputs. One participant summed it up thus:

> *I am not convinced that the PBRF process accurately reflects what is needed for the profession even though we need that for the institution, we need the income. I'm not convinced that that's the best way. I think there may be another way.* (RC07)

An institution that shows strategic foresight will move to harness the motivation and capacity of academic staff to achieve funding objectives. Ball recently noted that "research and teaching are usually considered complementary in a university's raison d'etre but they may be in conflict as time spent may be at the expense of the other" (2007, p. 451). One academic in our study stated her frustration at this conflict: "*I want Heads of Schools and people within institutions to recognise teaching, but at the same time that sounds ridiculous when, you know, we now get our funding based on research outputs.*" (RC10)

Another participant put it this way:

> *(I will) probably get a less PBRF rating or I wouldn't have as many outputs because I also value and have to spend some of my time doing the other things that I believe are important. I won't let the focus of individual quality-assured outputs dominate my decisions to be involved with people.* (RC10)

This role 'tension' is but one example of the dilemmas facing academic staff within a funding regime based on research outputs. Quality outcomes for both institution and the individual are more likely to occur when all parties feel that they have a voice, are supported and work in concert. This is not easily achievable from staff perspectives as indicated by this comments. *"Well theoretically we're offered time but our workloads don't allow that to happen so it's there in paper but it can't be there in practice because the students needs must come first."* (RC08)

Conclusions

We have presented here a selected 'slice' of some of the respondents' stories about their academic identity and the ways in which they are transforming in order to meet the increasing demands upon their workloads.

We believe that our study identifies some of the differences between institutional and academic staff expectations and performance, and offers avenues for future research into strategies that could address any inconsistencies and enhance quality outcomes. It seems axiomatic that government policies, particularly those that assess research outputs for institutional funding, will engender institutional competition and an environment that uses performance measures for driving academic staff. We affirm our belief that rather than using research as a mechanism to provide required outputs and meet certain assessment criteria for funding, we need to safeguard the role of research for informing teaching and acting to substantiate the identity of those academics who work in higher education institutions. There is still much data to be 'mined' from this project and it is our aim to collaborate and publish the findings from the various disciplines of Education, Nursing and Design with some of the key personnel in these areas from our institutions as well as with the team of researchers involved in this project.

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