
Achieving internationally recognised academic standards of quality

Pamela A. Norman

Abstract

This article examines the quest of a university in Papua New Guinea (PNG) for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards, for example, comparable to academic standards of Australian universities. With courage and determination the University initiated an external academic audit to have its performance assessed. Such an action is a response to globalisation and internationalism trends which have created an increasing focus on accountability and performance of higher education throughout the world. The Commonwealth of Australia has embraced formal quality assurance processes regulated by its Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). One issue is whether the TEQSA standards are reasonable expectations for a PNG university which cannot compare with the resource richness (human, financial and physical) of Australian universities. The findings of the investigations underpinning this article indicate that the PNG University has started the journey to satisfy TEQSA-type standards for the kind of international recognition it is seeking, with major implications for management.

Key words: quality assurance, higher education, standards, globalisation, internationalism, management, change process, Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA)

Introduction

This article aims to juxtapose Divine Word University's (DWU) quest for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards, for example, with Australian standards for universities, in response to driving forces from international and national trends that affect higher education generally. DWU's quest for internationally recognised standards is derived from its current Strategic Plan (Divine Word University, 2012) which states that, 'We anticipate that by 2016 DWU should be able to acquire academic standards that are comparable to international standards, thus it could be comparable to universities in Australia and New Zealand' (p. 5). A significant link is made in this article with criteria to qualify for recognition in the 'overseas university category' by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) (2011, p. 12). The focus is not only on standards of academic programs but also on an institution's structures, processes and resources to support academic outcomes. The underpinning thesis is one of ensuring standards of quality in response to globalisation and internationalism. The article begins by providing a brief description of the DWU context, then exploring the nature of international and national trends in higher education

that impact on DWU, and ends by proposing strategies for management to manage the change process.

Divine Word University

Divine Word University is a multi-campus national university in Papua New Guinea (PNG), open to all, serving society through quality of teaching, learning, research and community engagement in a Christian environment. DWU offers programs in full-time and part-time studies through its five faculties: Arts, Business and Informatics, Education, Health Sciences and Theology. DWU places high priority on quality assurance and (voluntarily) initiated an external audit in 2011 to have its academic performance assessed. The audit was conducted using similar processes to those used for audits of Australian universities in the past decade. It was a fitness for purpose audit against the University's own vision and objectives, which also took into account the quality assurance standards of the PNG Commission for Higher Education (National Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee, 2003). The ensuing Audit Report (DWU External Audit Panel, 2011) contained confirmations, affirmations and recommendations which guided activities for improved performance in the following years. An external post-audit review was conducted in November 2013 to advise whether the progress made by DWU in implementing the recommendations was going in the right direction towards DWU's objective of acquiring international standards by 2016. The Report of the external post-audit review was not yet received at the time of writing this article.

I would like to present an analogy used by the DWU President to illustrate our quest for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards. The analogy consists of a sailboat on a trip across the ocean to reach the horizon, with the sailboat representing DWU and a point on the horizon representing our goal for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards. Our course is bound by our core values so that we know that we are going in the right direction, but the journey is neither smooth nor straightforward and our course results in a bumpy zigzag forward movement. We may never reach the horizon, but the vision drives us on, motivated by the expectation that the quality of DWU's performance will improve along the journey.

Globalisation

The quest for comparable international standards is driven by and a response to globalisation. Globalisation may be defined as 'the process through which an increasingly free flow of ideas, people, goods, services and capital leads to the integration of economies and societies' (International Monetary Fund, 2002). No higher education institution can escape the impact of globalisation and the flow of information, technologies, people, services and goods that result from the integration of world economies. Despite being in a developing country, DWU has embraced Information Communication Technology (ICT) with all staff and students having computers and internet connectivity to access

knowledge as others do in other parts of the world. Information Communication Technologies have brought the world to our doorstep and we can learn from international policies and practices with greater ease than ever before.

In a knowledge-based global economy, globalisation increases interdependence and exerts influence between countries and between human communities on a global level which shape educational policies and practices which are fast becoming international rather than local. Trends in pressures on higher education institutions include the 'rampaging' growth of knowledge itself, mass education, many more and different kinds of students, constraints on public funding, pressure to generate non-government sources of income, postgraduate demand for work-related specialist training, the emergence of new private providers, greater employer demand for suitably skilled graduates, and the growth of international markets for tertiary study (Kerr, 1998; Marginson, 2008; Santiago, Trenblay, Basri and Arna, 2008).

Santiago, et al. (2008, pp. 14-15) argue that one of the most significant drivers in higher education world-wide in the past few decades is the 'increasing focus on accountability and performance' and the development of formal quality assurance systems to judge the appropriateness of a provider's approach. The impact of this on DWU is seen in its quest for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards.

Internationalism

Internationalism may be thought of as ways institutions reorient their policies and practices in response to the challenges posed by globalisation. Developing countries have been pressured to ensure and assure quality of higher education at a nationally comparable and internationally acceptable standard (Marginson, 2008; Santiago, et al., 2008). In 2010, an independent review was conducted of the PNG university system. An outcome of the recommendations of the Garnaut–Namaliu Report (Garnaut & Namaliu, 2010) was an increased focus on quality assurance in PNG, drawing on quality assurance processes of the former Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

Being part of a global economy, no higher education institution in PNG can escape the influence of internationalism. It affects overseas aid for education, access to technical advisers, internationalization of staff, students, programs and research activities, mobility of both staff and graduates, and collaboration between PNG and overseas institutions. The quest by universities to have international recognition reflects Marginson's (2008) view of modern universities being 'globally networked and globally referenced' institutions. In order to gain international recognition, there needs to be measurable standards and accepted quality assurance systems.

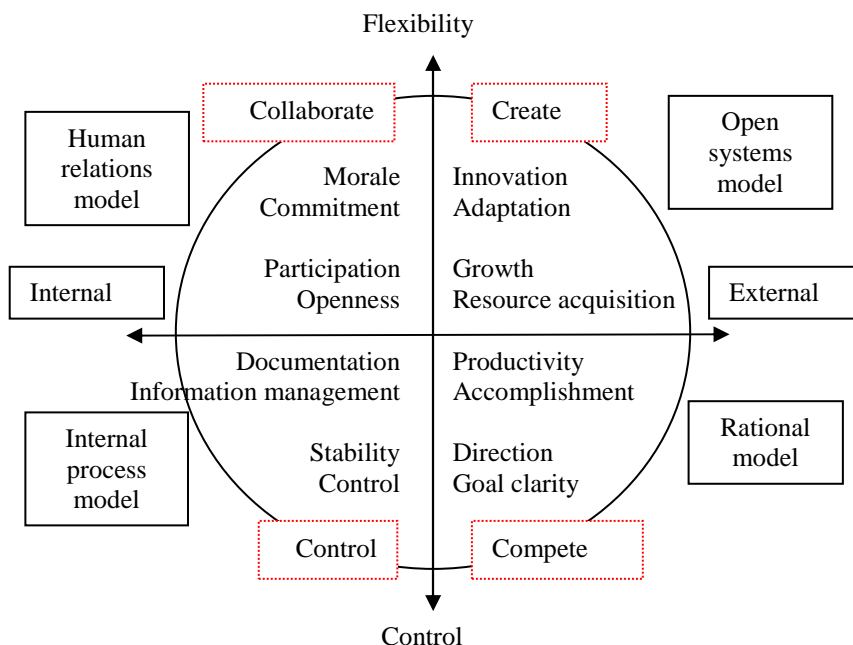
Quality assurance

Quality assurance is concerned with the ways in which organisations make sure that the quality they desire to achieve is actually achieved (Baird, 2013). In the *Assuring and Improving Quality* chapter of the OECD report, (Santiago et al., 2008b), the authors suggest that the explosive growth in quality assurance systems is a response to a confluence of global trends mentioned earlier.

Two approaches to quality assurance are quality assurance for accountability and quality assurance for improvement (Sachs, 1994). Quality assurance can be both internal (formative) and external (summative). In the modern world, universities need to be as much externally focused as internally focused (Sharrock, 2012a). Internal quality assurance is concerned with an institution's arrangements to assure the quality of its inputs, processes and outputs aligned with its strategic priorities and objectives. This includes such things as having qualified staff and well-prepared students; data collection e.g. on retention and completion rates; benchmarking curricula, policies and processes with other universities; and gaining feedback from students and stakeholders.

External quality assurance is where external experts assess activities of an institution against a set of standards. This approach is favoured by the Australian government as a way to improve performance through recommendations. DWU adopted this approach when it initiated an external academic audit in 2011. Quality assessments of universities in Australia are made against a set of standards. The Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) is the regulatory agency which aims to 'create a smarter future for Australia by upholding standards for students' (TEQSA, 2013). TEQSA has created a higher education standards framework (TEQSA, 2011), with a category for recognizing 'overseas universities', which would be applicable for DWU.

Institutions are challenged by quality assurance approaches to clearly and explicitly state what they do and provide evidence that demonstrates how well it was done. But with educational institutions, the dilemma is that there are always underpinning competing values for people, policies, programs and organizations, as indicated by Quinn (1988) in the four models of his competing values framework (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Quinn's competing values framework

After Quinn, 1988, p. 15

Pros and cons of standards

External quality assurance approaches belong in the rational goal model in the lower right-hand quadrant of Quinn's framework. External quality assurance audits seek evidence of productivity and accomplishment and provide direction and goal clarity for possible improvements, thereby increasing an institution's competitiveness for attracting students. Accomplishments are judged by standards which provide a benchmarking measure to assess the quality of an institution's arrangements. Standards are clearly defined statements about expectations of an institution's performance.

There are both advantages and disadvantages about using a standards approach for quality assurance. Advantages of TEQSA's (2011) higher education standards framework are that it provides the same set of expectations for institutions with similar missions and criteria by which they are judged. There is an understanding that, by judging the standards of an institution, stakeholders can judge what is going well and where improvements can be made and this should contribute to ongoing continuous improvement. The disadvantage of having set standards is that it promotes 'sameness' about institutions which may stifle creativity and innovation. Also, preparation for, conduct of, and responding to, internal or external assessment of standards involves high level input in terms of time and resources and impacts on levels of anxiety and stress.

To answer the question, ‘Are external quality assurance checks a burden or an asset?’ it seems that they can be both. Certainly they are time-consuming and stressful to prepare for, but, on the other hand, there are benefits to be gained from getting an objective viewpoint on performance. Baird (2013) suggests that three risks with external audits are an over-dependence on being told where improvements are needed, differences between requirements for internal and external quality assurance checks and possible constraints on innovation.

Australia’s Higher Education Standards Framework

In 2011, the Commonwealth of Australia introduced the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act*. Under subsection 58(1), a higher education standards framework was presented. This covered ‘threshold standards’ for provider registration, provider categories, provider course accreditation and qualifications which are monitored by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Of particular interest in DWU’s quest for recognition of having academic standards comparable with Australian universities, are the requirements of the framework for recognition in the ‘overseas university’ category. The question is how well can we benchmark ourselves against TEQSA the requirements?

Section 5 ‘Overseas University’ Category

The higher education provider offers an overseas higher education award.

5.1 The higher education provider is recognised as a university by its home country registration or accreditation authority or equivalent governmental authority, the standing and standards of which are acceptable to TEQSA.

AND

5.2 The higher education provider meets criteria equivalent to those for the ‘Australian University’ Category.

(Commonwealth of Australia, 2011, p. 12)

In regard to point 5.1, DWU is recognised as a higher education provider in PNG and was established by an Act of Parliament in 1996. DWU abides by the standards of the PNG Commission of Higher Education which is the registration or accreditation authority in this country. The following section explores the extent to which those standards might be acceptable to TEQSA.

Papua New Guinea’s higher education standards framework

PNG has felt the impact of the global trend for an increasing focus on accountability and performance and the development of formal quality assurance systems. A response by the PNG National Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (2003) was to develop and approve policies and guidelines for higher education quality assurance in PNG. With nine standards, these have been used successfully by DWU to conduct audits of institutions which applied to have their programs accredited by DWU. With financial support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the PNG Commission for Higher Education received the services of

a technical adviser in 2013 to drive a focus on quality assurance across PNG universities and actively seek opportunities to build capacity. One of the outcomes was the publication of a *PNG Universities Quality Assessment Manual* (Commission of Higher Education, 2013) that defines thirteen standards which are expressed in a form that is 'internationally recognisable as a set of standards for institutional accreditation or quality assessment' (p. 6). These are now being used to conduct audits of universities across the nation. TEQSA's requirements for an overseas university, such as DWU, are for it to be guided by standards which are acceptable to TEQSA. Table 1 matches PNG's standards with Australia's TEQSA standards and the similarity is obvious. As a result one could reasonably assume that TESQA would accept PNG's standards as being of equivalence.

Table 1: Matching university standards by regulatory authorities in PNG and Australia

Australia-TEQSA 7 standards	PNG-CHE 13 standards
<p>1. Provider standing The higher education provider is reputable and accountable for the higher education it offers.</p>	<p>1. The university demonstrates honesty and integrity in all its operations, academic and financial, including its relations with students, employers and the public. 2. The university is guided by clearly stated purposes and defines its distinctive character and nature.</p>
<p>2. Financial viability and safeguards The higher education provider has the financial resources and financial management capacity to sustain higher education provision consistent with the Provider Registration Standards.</p>	<p>3. The university appropriately plans, and manages, its finances to achieve the educational objectives to which it is committed.</p>
<p>3. Corporate and academic governance The higher education provider shows sound corporate and academic governance of its higher education operations.</p>	<p>4. The university demonstrates sound corporate and academic governance of its educational operations.</p>
<p>4. Primacy of academic quality and integrity The higher education provider maintains academic quality and integrity in its higher education operations.</p>	<p>5. The university's operations are well-managed and make use of relevant data and evidence to improve educational outcomes for students.</p>
<p>5. Management and human resources The higher education provider's</p>	<p>6: The university's teaching and administrative personnel are appropriate in number, qualifications, experience and</p>

higher education operations are well-managed and human resources are appropriate.	skill.
<p>6. Responsibilities to students The higher education provider defines and meets its responsibilities to students, including the provision of information, support and equitable treatment.</p>	<p>7. The university's expected student learning outcomes for all programs are at the appropriate level for the PNG National Qualifications Framework (NQF), professional body requirements, employer needs and/or international benchmarks.</p> <p>8. The university's teaching and assessment practices are adequate to achieve the expected student learning outcomes.</p> <p>9. The university demonstrates effective student cohort managements to ensure good graduate outcomes.</p> <p>10. The university ensures that students have access to appropriate levels of social, welfare and academic support services.</p>
<p>7. Physical and electronic resources and infrastructure The higher education provider ensures there are well-maintained physical and electronic resources and infrastructure sufficient to enable the achievement of its higher education objectives, across all its locations in Australia and overseas.</p>	<p>11. The university has effective processes to provide, maintain and modernise learning resources, including ICT, and other physical resources.</p>
	<p>12. The university demonstrates a commitment to equity goals and strong engagement with stakeholders.</p>
	<p>13. The university demonstrates that it engages with advanced knowledge, conducts research ethically and objectively, and that its research and scholarship lead to the discovery and/or application of new knowledge for the benefit of society.</p>

If it so wished, DWU could seek approval from TEQSA under subsection 18(1) of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011) for meeting the standards for the overseas university category. This would be a strategy to gain recognition of having academic standards comparable to Australian universities. Criteria are set by which a higher education provider must supply evidence to demonstrate the

extent to which standards are met. In the overseas university category, point 5.2 indicates that the higher education provider must meet criteria equivalent to those for the 'Australian University' category. These are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Standards criteria for the 'Australian University' Category

The higher education provider offers an Australian [*equivalent*]/higher education award.

- 2.1 The higher education provider self-accredits and delivers undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study that meet the Qualification Standards across a range of broad fields of study (including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in at least three of the broad fields of study it offers).
- 2.2 The higher education provider has been authorised for at least the last five years to self-accredit at least 85% of its total courses of study, including Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) in at least three of the broad fields of study.
- 2.3 The higher education provider undertakes research that leads to the creation of new knowledge and original creative endeavour at least in those broad fields of study in which Masters Degrees (Research) and Doctoral Degrees (Research) are offered.
- 2.4 The higher education provider demonstrates the commitment of teachers, researchers, course designers and assessors to the systematic advancement and dissemination of knowledge.
- 2.5 The higher education provider demonstrates sustained scholarship that informs teaching and learning in all fields in which courses of study are offered.
- 2.6 The higher education provider identifies and implements good practices in student teaching and learning, including those that have the potential for wider dissemination nationally.
- 2.7 The higher education provider offers an extensive range of student services, including student academic and learning support, and extensive resources for student learning in all disciplines offered.
- 2.8 The higher education provider demonstrates engagement with its local and regional communities and demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility in its activities.
- 2.9 The higher education provider has systematic, mature internal processes for quality assurance and the maintenance of academic standards and academic integrity.
- 2.10 The higher education provider's application for registration has the support of the relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory government.

(Commonwealth of Australia, 2011, pp. 9-10)

It is the view of the author that DWU could provide evidence to demonstrate achievements for most of the criteria listed, as it has done in its 2011 external academic audit conducted by Australian academics and for the post-audit review in 2013. However, an identifiable gap is that DWU does not have many active researchers and currently does not offer any Masters by Research

programs (refer points 2.1 and 2.3 in Table 2). In fact, DWU cannot compete with Australian universities in virtually any aspect of research achievements and certainly has no world ranking in regard to research.

DWU is a comparatively young university and is gradually developing its research culture. Since 2004, it has published a refereed research journal twice each year, attracting articles locally, nationally and internationally and has full-text articles freely available to the public on its internet website. A doctoral program was launched in 2004 with graduates since then from Arts and Education disciplines, and one anticipated to graduate from the Business and Informatics discipline in 2014 and another to graduate from the Health Sciences discipline in 2015. The DWU 2006-2016 Strategic Plan indicates a focus on developing postgraduate program offerings and this is evidenced by more coursework masters programs which include a research methods unit and research project.

Further, following receipt of the recommendations of the 2011 External Academic Audit, a Vice President for Research and Postgraduate Studies was promptly appointed to drive a focus on research activity across the University and actively seek opportunities to build research capacity. Overseas consultants from Australia have conducted research workshops. The University Ethics Committee and Faculty Research Committees are active in promoting and reporting research activities. The number of staff with doctoral qualifications increases each year. Staff are involved in consultancy projects to conduct research for government and nongovernment agencies. The University initiates and hosts conferences. Faculties conduct forums and seminars at which research papers are presented and staff participate in conferences both nationally and internationally. In these ways the University demonstrates a developing research culture. The whole concept of staff being active researchers and the university having a dynamic research culture are evolving missions of the University.

Evolving missions and university strategies

DWU accepts the teaching-research nexus as part of its three-fold mission which is defined as:

- The acquisition of knowledge, which is the mission of research
- The transmission of knowledge, which is the mission of teaching
- The application of knowledge, which is the mission of community engagement.

(Divine Word University, 2013, p. 2)

Though it may be largely rhetoric at this time, the University cannot overlook the importance of developing a thriving research culture if it is to gain recognition internationally. The literature reveals that the concept of the mission of a university has varied over time. In Humbolt's time (1809, cited in the OECD 2008 report), the mission of a university was the co-existence of research and teaching with a focus on research-oriented teaching and the

transmission of knowledge from research outcomes. For Newman (1852), there was no teaching-research nexus as he viewed teaching and research as two distinct functions. It has long been accepted that all university academics, as well as teaching, are expected to undertake research and 'publish or perish'. The question of whether or not all university lecturers do or are capable of doing research is an issue? Newman saw teaching and transmission of knowledge as the prime function of a university with a focus on a liberal education which he distinguished from professional or vocational education. However, the Humboltian model gained greater acceptance in Europe and America and is more like the mission of universities today. Kerr (1963) viewed the university as a 'multiversity', combining teaching, research and technical training, needing to be many things to many people. With the advance of the internet and the open access to knowledge world-wide, Marginson (2008) describes the current mission of a university to be a 'globally networked globally referenced' institution.

Corporatisation, power shifts

Higher education has become corporatized as it has grown to become globally networked and globally-referenced trying to be many things to many people. Financing higher education has become an issue and the global trend is for universities to seek non-government sources of income (Meek & Davies, 2009). If a million dollar tag can be attached to the recurrent budget of a university, it is appropriate to think of universities as corporate entities. Consequently it is appropriate to think of universities becoming more commercial, creating a diversified funding base and an entrepreneurial culture that generates income. Sharrock (2012b) describes funding of Australian universities as a mixed bag of income streams consisting of public places for domestic students, private places for international students, research grants and attracting income from other sources wherever this may be found. Getting maximum benefit from the public purse is as powerful driver for Australian universities to acquiesce to the imposition of TEQSA regulations.

Divine Word University does not enjoy the degree of public funding provided to government universities in PNG, thus faces considerable challenges in obtaining the funding needed to pursue its goals. The Commission of Higher Education estimates the average cost of educating an undergraduate student in PNG is 30,000 Kina (PNG's currency) per annum, of which DWU students pay K8,500 of which K2,700 is covered by the public purse for those fortunate enough to get a scholarship. Only 375 (19.6%) of DWU's 1910 students received government scholarships in 2013. Less than one percent of its full-time student body are international students. Consequently DWU enters into business activities such as providing 'for-profit' flexible learning programs, a mini-mart, global travel agency, post office, hiring and renting of properties and consultancies, and attracting income from other sources wherever this may be found. Acknowledgement is given to AusAID for its strong support in financing infrastructure development.

The need for universities to be run by competent business managers has led to a power shift in higher education from academics to non-academic administrators, the need for Deans to be business managers, and the dilemma of balancing competing values. There are intrinsic rather than extrinsic drivers behind DWU's quest for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards as evidenced by its voluntary initiation of a TEQSA-style external academic audit in 2011. Certainly satisfying TEQSA standards is not driven by the hope of obtaining an increase in government funding but rather pride in achievements and a means of ongoing continuous improvement to provide quality services to the community it serves.

Professional autonomy or control

Under the Act of Parliament by which it was established, DWU has the power to self-accredit its programs. Though, to be eligible for government scholarships for a student quota determined by the Office of Higher Education, DWU submits its programs to the PNG Commission of Higher Education for accreditation. As mentioned earlier this benefits 20 per cent of DWU's full-time student population. Nevertheless, as a non-government university, DWU has considerable autonomy over its own affairs. This includes the autonomy to own its own buildings, borrow funds, spend budgets to achieve its objectives, set academic structures and course content, employ and dismiss staff, set salaries, decide size of student enrolment and decide level of tuition fees. However with autonomy comes great responsibility. The University is responsible for the quality of its teaching, learning, research and community engagement in a Christian environment and the extent to which it is a national university, open to all. The University is morally and ethically accountable to the people it serves to assure the quality of its programs and awards. Currently, DWU has 38 programs for which it offers awards at diploma, advanced diploma, bachelor, postgraduate, masters or doctoral levels. The appropriate criteria for the standard of each award are founded on the PNG National Qualifications Framework (Commission for Higher Education, 2010). For universities that are authorised to self-accredit their programs, TEQSA has a set of standards with detailed criteria to be considered as part of self-accreditation practices.

Standards for each higher education award

1. Course design is appropriate and meets the qualification standards.
2. Course resourcing and information is adequate.
3. Admission criteria are appropriate.
4. Teaching and learning are of high quality.
5. Assessment is effective and expected student learning outcomes are achieved.
6. Course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed.

Commonwealth of Australia, 2011, p. 13

Qualification standards

1. Higher education awards delivered meet the appropriate criteria.
2. Certification documentation issued is accurate and protects against fraudulent use.
3. Articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit arrangements meet the appropriate criteria

Commonwealth of Australia, 2011, p. 20

Internal control over the extent to which standards are met comes from quality assurance processes monitored by Academic Boards and University Councils. External influence comes from academic auditing processes or accreditation authorities. Providing evidence to justify claims about the extent of compliance rests with tertiary education management.

Tertiary education management

Leadership and management occurs at different levels and the task of university management in becoming ever more complex. Sharrock (2012a) likens management to a Rubik's cube with multiple moves, multiple risks and multiple outcomes. In considering the leadership challenge in the contemporary context of higher education, Ramsden (1998) advocates a number of strategies such as communicating clear goals, securing staff commitment to them, collaborative management especially involving deans, project planning with timeframes, managing performance and recognizing achievements, and optimizing technology for innovation in learning and teaching. The need to listen, link and lead aligns with concepts of Fullan and Scott (2009) and those of Clark (1998) for a stimulated academic heartland and an entrepreneurial culture. While democratic or pace-setting leadership styles may bring about desired results, Goleman (2000) advocates coercive, authoritative, affiliative and coaching leadership styles as having the best chance of getting results. The message is that managers need a repertoire of leadership styles and are able to choose an approach that is appropriate for a given situation.

While effective management at more senior levels is critical, it is equally so at the middle management level of deans and heads of departments, for it is here that strategy is translated into action. *Middle managers are expected to combine academic expertise with managerial competence.* They face incredible challenges in meeting the demands of an environment that is becoming increasingly more complex. Roles have become more demanding, more senior, more strategic, more complex and more managerial in nature. To illustrate variations in managerial roles and responsibilities, *de Boer & Goedegebuure (2009, p. 352)* argue that the core activities of today's dean include:

- strategic management, including participation in setting institutional strategies and responsibility for faculty strategy
- operational management, including resource allocation and support services
- human resource management, including performance evaluations

- academic management, including overseeing teaching and research programs and the faculty's relationship with its student
- external stakeholder relationship management.

DWU's voluntarily undertaking of an external academic audit, similar to those conducted in Australian universities in the past decade, demonstrated courage and fortitude. I do not think that anyone in management realised the time and work involved in preparing for the audit or the work that would be involved afterwards. However within the existing culture of DWU, staff engaged with the tasks, and the results attest to ongoing continuous improvement in the interest of total quality management. Burton Clark (1972) describes the culture as an organisational saga, 'a collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization, offering strong normative bonds within and outside the organization' (p. 178). He concluded that 'the organization possessing a saga is a place in which participants for a time at least happily accept their bond' (p. 183).

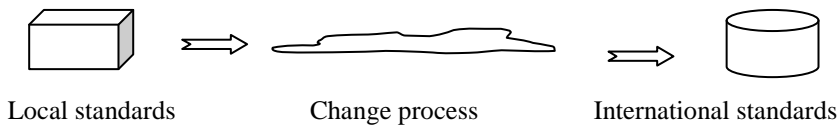
Implications for day-to-day management

Perhaps the most significant implication for day-to-day management in DWU's quest for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards, has been managing the change process. If we are to aspire to satisfy the TEQSA criteria and standards for the 'overseas category' of their framework, managers need to facilitate colleagues' understanding of what it means to perform and achieve at levels of internationally comparable standards. The 'change monster', to use a term of Jeanie Duck (2008), is to transform staff outlook from local and national needs to one that cares about the university's status internationally. This will be a process of professional development and growth of feelings and skills of individuals.

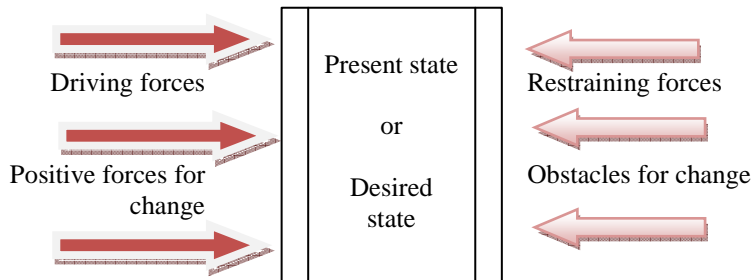
Hord (1987) identifies a number of underlying assumptions about change that need to be appreciated by management;

- Change is a process not an event. The process occurs over time.
- Change is made by individuals first.
- Change is a highly personal experience.
- Change is best understood in operational terms.
- Change facilitation must suit individual needs.
- Change efforts should focus on individuals, not innovations.

Given the nature of humans to resist change, the process of managing change is both essential and difficult. Lewin (1951) has a three stage model (Figure 2) to describe the process. First there is the shape of the existing mind set of individuals where the need to change is in 'hibernation'. Then there is the change process to 'unfreeze' people's 'mind sets'. There may be pressure for collegiality and consultation but this is not always productive so there is a delicate balance in knowing how hard to push when trying to bring about change. At different rates and, if one is successful, finally there is the changed shape of people's mind sets where the desired mind-set is achieved.

Figure 2: The change process

Globalisation and internationalism are positive driving forces that influenced DWU's goal to make changes needed for recognition of having internationally comparable academic standards. Restraining forces or obstacles include staff resistance to change, reluctance to change routines, the time and effort involved in preparing for audits, and the need to empower others to act on the vision for change. As viewed through Lewin's force field analysis (Figure 3), the challenge is for driving forces to be stronger than restraining forces.

Figure 3: Kurt Lewin's force field analysis

With three decades of experience in helping companies initiate change, Duck (2008, p. 1) gives the following advice to management: 'be bold, be utterly obvious, be careful what you promise, make commitments stick, forget happy, take culture seriously, be responsible, stay connected, provide interpretation and meaning, celebrate accomplishments'.

Another recognised author in the field of change management is John Kotter (1995). Kotter argues that eight things must happen for a big organizational change to be successful and these can be linked to Lewin's (1951) unfreezing and re-freezing concepts. Kotter's steps are: creating a sense of urgency, forming a guiding coalition, creating a vision, communicating the vision (unfreezing the present state), empowering others to act on the vision, creating quick wins, building on the change (making change happen), and institutionalizing the change (re-freezing the organization to the desired state).

Implications for management at DWU

Applied to the DWU context these eight steps are as follows.

1. A sense of urgency has been established to demonstrate standards of quality assurance.

2. A powerful coalition to guide change efforts exists at DWU with a team effort from the President, Vice Presidents and Director of Quality Assurance.
3. The vision of achieving internationally recognised academic standards for DWU has been stated in the 2006-2016 Strategic Plan and strategies to achieve the vision have been developed, including external academic audits, workshops with visiting academics from overseas and formal partnerships with a range of Australian universities.
4. Every possible medium is used to communicate the new vision and strategies and, through the process of implementing audit recommendations, new behaviours are being taught by the guiding coalition, for example, for strategic planning with key performance indicators, curriculum reviews with external input, data compilation and policy development.
5. Others are empowered to act on the vision and this occurs at all levels amongst academic and administrative staff; changing systems and structures where necessary to support vision achievement; and encouraging risk taking.
6. Short-term wins are planned and created with visible performance improvements celebrated, for example, through the 2013 external post-audit review only two years after the 2011 external academic audit.
7. The 2013 external post-audit review served to consolidate improvements and, when the report is received, will contribute towards producing still more change, reinvigorating the process with new projects.
8. By articulating the connections between new behaviours and corporate success, the new approaches are becoming institutionalised.

While there are implications for management in any change process, there are also implications for individual accountability. Personal activities towards achieving the vision include the following: Read widely; accessing the internet regularly; stay up-to-date with what is happening in your field world-wide; be a member of a relevant professional association; attend conferences, and read literature produced; network with overseas academics in a similar position to yourself; be interested and involved in professional development activities local, national and overseas; have a personal action plan with measurable indicators of your progress in having comparable international standards of performance, outputs and outcomes; and, listen to senior academics, ask questions, and try to understand the rationale for internationally comparable standards and implications for your own thoughts, feelings and practices.

Conclusion

Ships sail east and ships sail west
By the very same winds that blow,
It's the set of the sails, and not the gale
That determines the way they go.

The verse comes from a 100 years' old autograph book of my grandmother (now deceased). The verse captures the spirit that, while all universities are buffeted by the winds of globalisation and an increasing focus on accountability and performance, they are free to determine how they assure the quality of their performance. DWU has chosen to 'set its sails' in the direction of criteria and standards by which quality is assessed for the performance of Australian universities. The audit process has proven to be a catalyst for change with significant implications for managers in managing the change process.

The current policy debate focuses mainly on standards and this article has presented the criteria and standards set by the Commonwealth of Australia Tertiary Education Standards Quality Agency. While some may consider it impossible for DWU to reach Australian university standards, Arthur Clarke says, 'the only way of finding the limits of the possible is by going beyond them into the impossible' (Clarke, 1962). By having a team with shared values, DWU will continue to strive for comparable academic standards to those required of Australian universities in providing quality assurance of its programs and processes to the community it serves.

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Author

Pamela Norman is currently the Vice President Academic of Divine Word University in Papua New Guinea. She is accountable for oversight of academic policies and practices and is a member of the strategic planning executive of the University. Email: pnorman@dwu.ac.pg