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Change in Higher Education and its Impact on Academic Staff: The Case of the School of Business at University College Dublin.

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Change in Higher Education and its Impact on Academic Staff: The Case of the School of Business at University College Dublin.

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This Research Enquiry is Dedicated to the Memory of My Brother, Ronan.

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ABSTRACT

Change has become a much more prevalent feature of Higher Education (HE) with many trends apparent, including the focus on institutional management and leadership; changes in decision-making approaches; institutional re-structuring; and increased bureaucratisation. Yet, while the literature provides some understanding of how HE change is impacting upon institutions, the consequences of such change for the traditional values of academic life and work represents an under-researched aspect of HE in Ireland. To address this gap in understanding, a case study of the School of Business at University College Dublin (UCD), involving semi-structured interviews with academics and manager-academics, was undertaken. The aim of the research was to determine how, and to what extent, change in HE is impacting upon academic staff. The research explored the changing involvement of academics in decision-making and the impact of such change on traditional notions of collegiality; and examined the changes taking place in the role of the academic, including their academic freedom.

The research provides evidence of a period of sustained institutional change at UCD and draws attention to the considerable tension surrounding the top-down manner in which change was implemented and the lack of involvement of academics throughout the change process. The research has contributed to our understanding of the changing HE landscape in Ireland and highlights the increasing tension between the traditional values of academics and the changing shape of university life. While the research evidence acknowledges that the level of academic freedom has somewhat contracted, it draws attention to the substantial loss of involvement of academics in School decision-making; the decline in collegiality; the increase in routine administrative duties and greater work intensification; and the increased emphasis on research productivity.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades, change has become a much more prevalent feature across the Higher Education (HE) sector in Ireland, with increasing pressures emanating from globalisation, the increasing influence of supranational organisations, declining State funding for HE, and a more concerted effort to ensure greater efficiency and accountability across the sector. Such factors have been exerting considerable pressure on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) themselves and have been contributing to the increasing complexity associated with the leadership, management, governance and day-to-day operations of institutions.

The implications of this era of change for the management of HEIs have become increasingly apparent and a number of clear trends are now more discernible. Among these trends are the increased emphasis on institutional management and leadership; the increasing pervasiveness of marketisation, academic consumerism and entrepreneurial approaches; the re-structuring of institutions; a re-engineering of the roles of Vice-Chancellor and Dean; increasing bureaucratisation; and changes in the decision-making approaches adopted by HEIs. What have been less discernible are the implications of such change for traditional notions of academic life and work and the impact upon academics[1] themselves. Among the central characteristics of traditional academic life are the teaching, research and service functions of academics; the incorporation of academic freedom as a key element of academic life; the central role played by academics in institutional and faculty decision-making; and the tenured nature of academic positions. Understanding the extent to which HE change at global, national and institutional levels has impacted upon, and eroded, the traditional values of academic life, is key in understanding the changing HE landscape.

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[1] Brennan *et al* (2007) highlighted the difficulties encountered while conducting their research on the 'Changing Academic Profession' with respect to the terminology used to describe staff in the profession. For the purposes of this research enquiry, the term 'academic staff' will be taken to mean the permanent faculty members at Lecturer, College Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor grades.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

This research set out to address how, and to what extent, change in HE has impacted upon academic staff. To investigate this educational problem, the research was designed around the below sub-questions. These sub-questions set out to, firstly, explore the driving forces behind HE change and, secondly, how this change is impacting, not only on the core role and functions of the academic and the degree of academic freedom traditionally associated with this role, but also the scope of academics' involvement in institutional decision-making.

(i) Where has the impetus for HE reform emanated from?

It was necessary to address this question to gain insight into academics' understanding of the array of internal and external drivers of change. It was anticipated that an understanding of where change was emanating from would provide some insight into the kinds of changes being witnessed by academics.

(ii) What changes have been occurring in the decision-making approaches of HEIs and how have these changes impacted upon traditional notions of collegiality among academic staff?

(iii) How, and to what extent, has the role of the academic changed, how has HE change impacted upon academic autonomy and to what extent is the increasing control of academic staff becoming more evident in academic work and life?

1.3 Research Rationale

From a personal perspective, I have been working in the School of Business (hereafter referred to as 'the School') at University College Dublin (UCD) for fourteen years in a programme management capacity. Over the past six years, the

university has undergone extensive change with the aim of enabling it to better compete both nationally and internationally. A strategic planning dialogue began in 2004 and highlighted the need to align the institution's structures and activities with its overall strategy and direction. In embarking upon a strategic review, a series of challenges were identified, including the declining first preference course choices of school leavers (University College Dublin, 2004) and weaknesses in the governance, management decision-making and resource allocation processes within Irish HEIs (OECD, 2004a; University College Dublin, 2003/2004). In response to these challenges, large-scale change was instigated and has resulted in imposed changes in institutional structures, academic role and performance expectations, the involvement of academics in decision-making and the teaching and learning infrastructure surrounding a modular curriculum.

From a theoretical perspective, one might expect changes of the scale that have occurred at UCD to impact, in a substantial way, upon academic staff. From a review of the literature (see Chapter 2), it is clear that academics in other countries are witnessing considerable change with respect to many aspects of the HE environment and are responding to such change in a variety of ways. The literature presents considerable evidence to suggest that the traditional values of academic life are being compromised in many respects, for example, by institutional changes such as a move away from collegial and participative forms of decision-making towards more managerial approaches. From the perspective of the work and general life of the academic, the literature suggests that an increasing focus is also being placed on the pursuit of higher levels of performance and productivity on the part of academics. The literature also puts forward some consequences of the many institutional changes taking place, including greater work intensification, increased bureaucratisation, the requirement for greater accountability of academics, and a decline in the level of both academic freedom and trust between institutions and academics. Yet, many aspects of HE change in Ireland and their impact upon academics require greater theorisation and understanding. Among these under-researched aspects of HE change in Ireland are the extent to which academics are

experiencing widespread institutional change; the changing shape and character of the working lives of academics; and the extent to which the traditional values of academic life, such as academic freedom, collegiality and academics' influence in decision-making processes remain in place despite pervasive and discontinuous institutional change. While the literature does provide us with some insight into how, and to what extent, the issues highlighted in Chapter 2 are impacting upon academics, what is absent is a much more systematic treatment of this complex subject.

1.4 Research Methodology

The research was designed to investigate the impact of institutional change on traditional notions of academic life and work within the School. The research covered the period since the appointment of a new university President (Vice-Chancellor) in early 2004. A qualitative research design, with its foundations in the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm set out to explore the meanings and interpretations of academics with respect to the university's change programme. A case study was undertaken, the purpose of which was to gain a better understanding of the topic which formed the basis of the research question and of the particular case in question – i.e. what is generally referred to as an intrinsic case study. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken, with three interviews conducted during the pilot phase and twenty-five interviews conducted during the main research study. Academics across the School's six subject areas participated in the research, along with a number of manager-academics within the School. In addition, secondary data was drawn upon, including internal reports on the change programme. Chapter 3 presents a comprehensive discussion of, and rationale for, the methodological approach chosen.

1.5 Summary of Key Findings

The changes introduced have fundamentally altered how the university operates. At university and School level, some of the most notable changes that have taken place, from the perspective of academics, include the increased centralisation of power following the appointment of the current university President and an Executive Dean at School level; the re-structuring of Faculties and Departments and the abolition of autonomous Departments with statutory power; a greater emphasis on university performance and research activity; and the modularisation of the curriculum. The changes introduced have served to re-shape many aspects of the life and work of the academic. On the positive side, the development of the internal promotions scheme has been welcomed by many academics as it has served to give greater clarity with respect to promotional benchmarks. The introduction of a workload model was also seen as a positive development in ensuring greater transparency across and within subject areas. While academics, on the whole, acknowledge that their academic freedom has contracted very slightly, the majority of those interviewed suggest that they continue to have the same level of academic freedom with respect to their research agenda and with regard to how and what they teach. However, those interviewed highlighted some negative consequences of the change programme, including a substantial loss of influence and involvement by academics in School decision-making; a decline in the level of collegiality and interaction between staff; and the increase in routine administrative duties following the implementation of various teaching and learning processes, and the technological infrastructure surrounding the modular curriculum. Greater work intensification was also noted by academics, along with an increasing emphasis on research and the importance of research 'outputs' and performance. Perhaps, though, the most palpable legacy of the change programme is the loss of morale and reduced visibility of academics 'around the corridors' following the top-down manner in which change was implemented.

1.6 Conclusion

This enquiry has attempted to address the dearth of research on change in Irish HE, with a particular focus on the perspectives of academics. A number of theoretical implications of my research are evident. Firstly, the research has contributed to knowledge by providing insight, for the first time, into the dimensions of institutional change being witnessed in Ireland. Secondly, while the literature discussed in Chapter 2 provides considerable insight into the changing nature of international, national and institutional HE environments, it does not provide us with a sufficient and systematic understanding of how institutional change is impacting upon academics. This research has contributed to a much greater understanding of this aspect of Irish HE and has provided evidence to suggest that the manner in which academic work and life is being re-shaped in Ireland very much reflects the kinds of changes taking place internationally in this regard. Thirdly, the top-down manner in which change was implemented at the case study site and the consequent decline in the involvement of academics in institutional governance and decision-making has been put forward as a primary reason for the decline in the institutional commitment and goodwill of academics. This finding would suggest that the manner in which HE change is managed (i.e. the effectiveness and appropriateness of top-down versus bottom-up approaches) requires careful consideration when planning change. Finally, the research findings highlighted in Chapter 5 suggest that change in Irish HE will continue to gain pace and may have even greater impact on academics in the coming years with respect to performance and accountability. This may, therefore, call for a greater understanding of the general approach taken to the management of academic staff.

Before presenting a brief summary of each chapter, it is useful at this point to consider whether my research findings have, in any way, been tainted by the global and national economic crisis of recent years. Ireland entered a recession in late 2008 and my research was undertaken against a backdrop of reductions in public expenditure and State funding of universities. By the time my primary research was

conducted (June-September 2009), various Government levies had been implemented (a 1% income levy in January 2009 which was increased to 2% in May 2009, an average public sector pension levy of 7.5% in April 2009 and a doubling of the health levy to 4% in May 2009). These levies were followed by a minimum public sector pay reduction of 5% in December 2009. While these levies and pay reductions have clearly impacted upon disposable incomes, there is no evidence to suggest that the economic crisis has tainted my research findings and the remainder of this section will put forward an explanation for this contention. Firstly, the scale of Ireland's economic problems (in particular, its national debt and banking crisis) were, perhaps, not fully appreciated at the time of my primary research and the magnitude of the situation only began to emerge in late 2009 when one of the toughest national budgets for many years was announced. It was clear, however, during my research that some academics expected that the impact of State expenditure cuts was likely to have a much greater impact upon them in the future. Secondly, the impact of the national economic crisis, at an individual level, was not raised by the research participants and they overwhelmingly focused on the institutional context (as distinct from the national and global context) and the changes they have experienced there with regard to the scope of their role and their involvement in the management of the institution itself. Thirdly, it might also be argued that there is somewhat of an acceptance that academic salaries in Ireland are considerably higher than in other European countries (Von Prondynski, 2010).

The final section below provides a brief overview of the remaining chapters in this research enquiry.

1.7 Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2 provides an insight into the debates in the literature surrounding HE change. Traditional notions of academic life and work are outlined, followed by the various pressures impacting upon national systems of HE, including globalisation, the increasing influence of supranational organisations, the changing role of the

State, and the pursuit of efficiency and accountability across the HE sector. The implications of these pressures for the management of HEIs are then addressed, including the greater emphasis on the management and leadership of change, the growth of marketisation, academic consumerism and entrepreneurialism, moves to re-structure HEIs, and increasing bureaucratisation and managerialism. Finally, the changing nature of academic life and work are addressed, including the changing nature of the academic role, a weakening of collegial decision-making, a reduction in academic freedom and a tightening of control over academic work.

Chapter 3 presents the research design adopted for investigating this under-researched educational problem in the Irish context. The chapter provides an overview of the research approach and research methods selected, how access to the research site was arranged and how both primary and secondary data was collected. Details of the pilot study are outlined, along with some ethical considerations and the approach taken to data analysis. Finally, the criteria upon which this research can be evaluated and the strengths and weaknesses of the research approach are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the contextual backdrop for the research findings by providing an overview of Irish HE and the changes introduced across UCD and its School of Business.

Chapter 5 presents the research findings under a number of broad themes, including the changes introduced; the impetus for these changes, how the change programme was managed and implemented; and how academics have responded to the changes. The chapter also presents the perspectives of academics on their role in decision-making prior to, and since, the change programme; their perspectives on collegiality prior to, and since, the change programme; the traditional and changing role of academic staff and changes in their administrative duties and workload; and, finally, the traditional and changing notion of academic freedom.

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings in the context of the literature and presents the main conclusions of this research enquiry.

CHAPTER 2 –
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Traditionally, the workings of HE have been characterised by features such as the predominant teaching and research functions of academics, academic freedom, the central role of academics in institutional decision-making, and the tenured nature of academic posts. However, the HE sector has been impacted upon by change in its immediate environment (Gumport and Sporn, 1999). While change is not new to HEIs, what sets the current era of reform apart from previous periods of change is its scale (Nadler and Tushman cited by Taylor, 1999). HEIs can no longer avoid change (Mulford, 2002) and must deal with change of an increasingly complex nature (Wallace and McMahon, 1994). A multitude of pressures are now impacting upon national systems of HE, including globalisation, the increasing influence of supranational organisations, the changing role of the State, and pressures for greater efficiency. Such pressures and the multifaceted nature of HE reform have had considerable implications for the structures and practices of HEIs and those employed within them (Nixon *et al*, 2001). Also, there is evidence of increasing managerial power and the reform of organisational structures (Parker and Jary, cited by Barry *et al*, 2001); a decline in State funding for HE; and an increasing emphasis on accountability (Ramsden, 1998).

While Barnett (1994) suggests that the internal life of HEIs now lacks clarity, we need to scrutinise the components, shape and character of the lives of academics. There is a need to question whether Ramsden's (1998) assertion of the increasing 'disillusionment' of academic staff and Nixon *et al*'s (2001: p.228) suggestion of a 'fractured educational landscape' presents an accurate portrayal of the current HE climate. While Milliken and Colohan (2000) argue that curricular developments, such as modularisation, have led to the greatest changes in the internal functioning of HE, this literature review puts forward other changes that pose more fundamental challenges to HEIs and the life and work of the academic. Such changes include reform of decision-making structures (Henkel and Kogan, 1999); changes in teaching, assessment and curriculum approaches as a result of the growth in student

numbers (Nixon, 1996) and a move towards more closely managed institutions and away from collegial approaches (Bargh *et al*, 2000). An explanation of the extent, and manifestation, of the impact of these HE changes on academic staff requires further research and understanding.

The chapter will begin with a brief outline of the models of university, followed by an overview of traditional notions of academic life and work. The remainder of the chapter will address three themes: the changes impacting upon national systems of HE; the implications of these developments for the management of HEIs; and the changing character of academic life and work.

2.2 Models of University

Before considering the traditional notions of academic life and work, it is important to recognise that HE does not operate in a unitary manner and to draw attention to the complexity of the HE landscape and the different models of university found across Europe. Schimank and Winnes (2000: p.397) highlight 'three patterns of the relationship of teaching and research in European university systems'. These include: (i) the *Humboldtian* where teaching and research are integrated and where there is no demarcation between roles and resources with respect to both of these activities (e.g. Germany); (ii) the *post-Humboldtian* where there is some demarcation between roles and resources for both teaching and research (e.g. UK); and (iii) the *pre-Humboldtian* pattern where teaching represents the predominant activity (e.g. Ireland). Schimank and Winnes (2000) suggest that Irish universities have been moving towards the Humboldtian pattern and they cite Higgins who notes that Irish universities have strengthened their research activities in recent years. One might expect that academics employed within the different models of university would be affected to different degrees by the kinds of HE trends discussed throughout this research enquiry. Of particular importance, for example in the case of UCD, is an understanding of how a shift towards a Humboldtian model might impact upon academics.

2.3 Traditional Notions of Academic Life and Work

This section will present an overview of the key elements associated with traditional notions of academic life and work.

In general, academic work has traditionally incorporated teaching and research and a service dimension where academics engage, on a rotational basis, in additional service roles of department head, programme co-ordinator or Head of School (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). In the old, pre-1992 UK universities, academics were expected to devote a similar amount of time to both teaching and research (Shattock, 2000). Indeed, Cardinal Newman, in his work on the *Idea of the University*, suggested that professors should have time to pursue knowledge and learning and should not be weighed down with teaching duties (McCartney and O'Loughlin, 1990). In addition to considering the traditional role of academics, it is useful to consider the notion of academic identity. Taylor (1999: p.41) provides a useful framework for analysing such identity by characterising it on three levels: identity associated with the institution where the academic is employed; with his/her discipline; and one's overall identity of 'being an academic'. Within HEIs, the basic organisational units are predominantly faculties and academic departments (Bargh *et al*, 2000) and there is evidence to suggest that the identity and loyalty of academics is firmly embedded within their own department (Waring, 2007) and, in particular, within their own discipline rather than the wider institution (Becher cited by Taylor, 1999; Clegg, 2003; Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999; Thomas cited by Crebert, 2000). The attainment of a notion of identity among professional employees is important (Nixon, 1996). Clegg (2003) suggests that the loyalty of academics is captured within the bounds of their expertise and not with the institution. However, of critical importance to the notion of identity is the strong influence of the discipline on the culture of academia, including the work practices of academics (Clark cited by Bellamy *et al*, 2003). However, the features of a traditionally elite HE system, many of which are integral to the idea of the discipline as the cornerstone of academic identity, are being challenged and this has implications for the retention of

traditional ways of working among academics (Henkel, 1997). Academics are being increasingly encouraged to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the curriculum (Moore, 2003).

One of the cornerstones of HE is the notion of academic freedom (Anderson *et al*, 2002; Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999; Holley and Oliver, 2000; Watty *et al*, 2008), meaning that those in academic positions are free to teach and pursue research in line with their own interests (Anderson *et al*, 2002; Nixon *et al*, 2001). It has been advocated that notions of freedom and autonomy are central to the intrinsic values of academics (Altbach, 2000; Middlehurst, 1993), with Kekale (1999) noting that the freedom enjoyed by academics is one of the best features of working in the sector. Becher and Kogan (1992: p.188) determine that freedom to decide on the content and outcomes of academic work is a 'precondition of creativity' and that this may also be a necessary part of effective work in academia. Historically, academics have not been subjected to overt management (Ackroyd and Ackroyd, 1999) and have generally operated within a system of self-governance (Hellstrom, 2004; Watty *et al*, 2008). In addition, Altbach (2000) draws attention to the traditional lack of accountability pressures on academics and the inherent trust placed upon them to perform to a satisfactory level of output and competence.

The existence of an academic community has also been highlighted (Barnett, 1994; Bleiklie, 2001). In such a community, academics work together in a collegial manner (Deem, 1998), with being part of such a community at 'the heart of what it is to be an academic' (Watty *et al*, 2008: p.140). Aside from other important staff retention factors, such as autonomy and flexibility (Bellamy *et al*, 2003), the community dimension of academic life is considered critical in explaining why academics become, and indeed remain, academics (Watty *et al*, 2008). However, during times of declining resources within HE, increasing tension is placed upon the foundation of the academic community (Dill cited by Tierney, 1988), with the increasing pressures being exerted upon academics leading to a decline in the 'sense of community' among them (Altbach, 2000: p.13). The entrepreneurial and

managerial approaches described later in this chapter, while perhaps essential in a neo-liberal environment, may in fact challenge this notion of an academic community (Currie, 1998c) and such a management ethos may result in the distancing of the academic community from the institution (OECD, 2006).

Academics, employed on a full-time basis, have traditionally been at the heart of the university (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999) and the notion of academic tenure involves a lifetime employment guarantee (McGee and Block, 1991). Such tenure has traditionally facilitated the collective involvement of academics in decision-making (McPherson and Shapiro, 1999). Indeed, HEIs incomparable nature in terms of the role of academics in their governance and management has been advocated (Gornitzka *et al*, 1998). One of the fundamental values traditionally underpinning academic life is the notion of collegial decision-making and management (Sporn, 1999; Weil, 1994) and the participation of academic staff in institutional affairs (Farnham, 1999). Collegiality is based on principles of self-governance of academics and a process of collective decision-making (Anderson *et al*, 2002; Farnham, 1999). Such involvement in decision-making is seen as a process which creates cohesion among staff within a community (Bennett *et al*, 1992). Collegiality incorporates ideas of transparent flows of information, continuous feedback on the performance of the institution and decisions made within it and the involvement of academics on committees (Middlehurst and Elton, 1992). One of the forces encouraging collegiality is the notion that academics participating in decision-making display greater ownership of an initiative (Bennett *et al*, 1992; Waring, 2007). Indeed, traditionally, leaders of HEIs were elected by academic staff (Askling, 2001) and this represents another dimension of traditional approaches to collegiality. Inherent in a collegial approach is that power is diffused across the institution (Ackroyd and Ackroyd, 1999) and being a member of a community of academics, with common interests, allows this group a 'voice' in the affairs of the institution (Middlehurst, 1993: p.73). Research has highlighted the positive effect of high levels of participation in decision-making on the morale of academics (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002) and the positive impact such participation has on job

satisfaction (Lacy and Sheehan, 1997). However, the potential to present academia in the past as a 'golden era of collegiate scholarship' and the present as a 'vulgar, consumer-led enterprise' has been noted by Morley (1997: p.239).

Having described the traditional notions of academic life and work, the next section presents an overview of a changing HE landscape by first examining the pressures impacting upon national systems of HE.

2.4 Pressures Impacting upon National Systems of HE

Clark has highlighted the 'rising tide of complexity' in national systems of HE (1995: p.159), with a variety of global and national level factors contributing to this. The pressures impacting upon national systems of HE will now be discussed and these include globalisation; the increasing influence of supranational organisations and the changing role of the State and; the increasing pursuit of efficiency and accountability.

2.4.1 Globalisation

Globalisation has had a deep-seated impact upon education (Carnoy, 1999; Green, 2003), resulting in the need for change in HE (Bloom, 2002). Enders (2004) suggests that globalisation relates to the re-organisation of the nation State through a range of developments, including increased managerialism and marketisation in education. Indeed, the complex force of globalisation impacts upon all elements of education systems (Eggins, 2003), including 'policy-making, governance and organisation and academic work and identity' (Vaira, 2004: p.484). HEIs have become global actors whose influence extends beyond the nation State (Marginson and Rhoades, 2002) and analysis of the concept of globalisation is central to our understanding of HEIs and the changes taking place within them (Deem, 2007a; Scott, 2000). While there is an international trend towards convergence in the changes taking place in HE, 'global transformations are not identical by time and

place' and are the result of a combination of global, national and local forces (Marginson and Sawir (2005: p.289). The reorganisation of national priorities with the aim of becoming more competitive has been one of the more palpable effects of globalisation (Dale, 1999). The internationalisation of the sector has also become a central issue (Teichler, 2004), with the economic gains from such a strategy being emphasised at national policy level (Enders, 2004). Yet, while traditionally the HE sector has not been characterised by rivalry among institutions (Dill and Sporn, 1995a), the increasing incorporation of markets and international competition between HEIs has been noted (Marginson and Van der Wende, 2007). Indeed, the sector is now operating in an environment predominantly characterised by greater international competition, thus, contributing to the pressures on HEIs (Sporn, 1999). Furthermore, we have been witnessing the reform of the curriculum (Bocock and Watson, 1994), with such reform being increasingly driven by efforts at European level towards convergence of HE systems (Amaral and Maghalhaes, 2004).

2.4.2 The Increasing Influence of Supranational Organisations and the Changing Role of the State

One of the implications of globalisation is that nation states have become more 'porous', with supranational organisations playing a role in the globalisation of the HE sector (Taylor and Henry, 2007). The OECD has used globalisation rhetoric to encourage HEIs to enhance and reform their governance arrangements along neo-liberal lines to more adequately reflect the needs of the global economy (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006). The pervasiveness of such rhetoric and the forceful promotion of discourses surrounding marketisation, governance processes encompassing strategic planning, and notions of accountability and efficiency have also become increasingly evident (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006). Indeed, governments have been increasingly looking to supranational institutions for direction on educational reform (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006).

While acknowledging the increasingly influential role played by supranational organisations in HE, it has also been suggested that national governments aim to retain responsibility for the management of their national education systems (Green, 2003). However, the predominance of the State has been challenged (Enders, 2004), with globalisation advocating the idea that a national system of education would cease to be relevant (Green, 1997). While one might accept that the State has a reduced hold on HE (Beerkens, 2003), nonetheless, there remains little evidence that national systems are vanishing (Green, 2006). Indeed, Ozga and Lingard reject the 'powerless state' argument in favour of an acceptance of the important role the State continues to play (2007: p.66). A strong argument exists that it is not an either/or situation, with a need to consider both globalisation *and* the State (Olssen, 2006). Also, considering that HEIs have typically been formed for national purposes (Scott, 1998), the rationale behind HE reform has primarily been the drive to create greater coherence between HE and the objectives of the State (Mahony, 1990).

Aside from the increasing influence of supranational organisations, other factors influencing the changing role of the State are evident. For example, changes led by the State have been a key determinant of organisational change (Gellert, 1999), with legislation one of the means by which governments have sought to retain some control over HE (Beerkens, 2003). There is also increasing evidence of State devolvement of autonomy to institutions (Dill and Sporn, 1995a; Etzkowitz *et al*, 2000), including greater institutional responsibility for decision-making (Skilbeck, 2001).

The role of the State has also changed regarding its funding policy and this has significantly impacted upon all aspects of the operations of HEIs. Critically, governments are encountering increasing pressure to control expenditure growth (Carnoy and Rhoten, 2002). Consequently, we have been witnessing a decline in State funding per student (Lacy and Sheehan, 1997). Such control of government expenditure and reductions in State funding of HE reflect a neo-liberal approach to State spending (Lee, 2004; Orr, 1997). We have also been witnessing attempts by

governments to reduce their control of HE and to adopt performance-based approaches to funding (Hartley, 1995; Higher Education Authority, 2008a; Porter and Vidovich, 2000; Ramsden, 1998; Teichler, 2004). There has also been a move towards block-grants for HEIs (Williams cited by Gumport and Sporn, 1999; Jacobs and Van der Ploeg, 2006). These changes in funding policy have been driven by the need to link HE performance and national objectives (Higher Education Authority, 2008a). Such change has encouraged HEIs to become more independent and to generate income from diverse sources (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999; Eggins, 2003; Enders, 2004; Gumport and Sporn, 1999; Lee, 2004; Peterson, 1995; Skilbeck, 2001; Sporn, 1999; Vest, 1997). One outcome of these changes in funding policy is that education is increasingly becoming a profit-driven activity (Jacobs and Van der Ploeg, 2006; Lawn, 2001), with more widespread commercialisation of the activities of HEIs. Indeed, Anderson *et al* (2002) highlight the need for HEIs to adopt a more entrepreneurial approach to meet funding deficits.

2.4.3 Efficiency and Accountability

The final pressure being exerted upon national HE systems is the need 'to do more with less' (Gumport and Sporn, 1999: p.28) and this is particularly important in light of the discussion in the previous section on changes in funding policy. Such a quest for greater efficiency, coupled with the need to make HE more relevant in the context of national priorities, is becoming more evident, with the increasing prominence of such matters on institutional change agendas (Meek and Wood (1998). Undoubtedly, the efficiency agenda has been spurred on by tough economic conditions (Gumport, 2000), declining government resources for HE and increasing competition in the sector. Indeed, the emphasis within managerialism on efficiency and effectiveness (Morley, 1997) and the drive towards greater 'cost-effectiveness' in the HE sector have been noted (Crebert, 2000).

Furthermore, HEIs are increasingly being held accountable by governments (Taylor, 1999). Trow (1996: p.2) defines accountability as 'the obligation to report to others,

to explain, to justify, to answer questions about how resources have been used, and to what effect'. There has, for example, been much debate about the need to widen access and increase the participation of under-represented groups in HE. While Ireland underwent an eleven-fold increase in the number of students in HE in the period 1950 to 1990 (Clancy, 1995), this expansion has benefited different groups in society to varying degrees, with evidence suggesting the persistence of social class inequalities with respect to access (O'Connell *et al*, 2006).

To conclude this section, it might be expected that globalisation would have impacted upon the day-to-day work and life of the academic through the mounting research productivity pressures on academics as a result of the increasing competition between institutions and the emphasis placed on research output by the international university rankings. It might also be expected that changes in State funding policies and the consequences of this for institutions may result in increased pressure being placed on academics to generate greater research income and to engage in more entrepreneurial and commercial activities. While it has been argued that pressures for external accountability tend to focus primarily on HEIs themselves and not on academics (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999), the extent to which academics themselves are witnessing increasing accountability pressures requires greater understanding.

2.5 The Management of HEIs and their Changing Character

As discussed in Section 2.4, a multitude of pressures are impacting upon HE and many of these are contributing to increasing complexity with respect to the management of institutions themselves. This section addresses four main themes: the management and leadership of institutional change; organisational re-structuring, the re-definition of key roles and managerialism; marketisation, consumerism and entrepreneurialism; and bureaucratisation.

2.5.1 The Management and Leadership of Change within HEIs

There is strong evidence to suggest a growing concern for management and leadership within HE (Deem, 2007a; Kekale, 1999), with Clark (cited by Dill and Sporn, 1995b) suggesting that strong leadership is necessary in a chaotic HE environment. Yet, HEIs are generally not fond of change (Vest, 1997) and tend to be conservative in nature (Taylor, 2006). The gauntlet laid down for HE leaders today highlights the need to become 'less fearful, less resistant, and more responsive' to change (Vest, 1997: p.54). However, HE change has tended to occur incrementally and at a sluggish pace (Green, 1995). Indeed, Allen and Fifield (1999) suggest that change of an incremental nature is most likely to succeed, yet, the scale of globalisation processes impacting upon HE suggest the inadequacy of incremental change (Davies, 1997b). Hence, Scott (2000: p.10) advocates the need for HE 'to reinvent, reengineer and re-enchant itself'.

A pattern of educational reform is becoming increasingly evident and a central way in which reform is manifesting itself is in the internal organisation of HEIs, with the traditional academic leadership of institutions being replaced by a more managerial-oriented culture (Cowen, 1996). Indeed, the role played by the 'centre' of a HEI in acting as a catalyst for change has been noted (Goldspink, 2007), with leadership positions linked with setting the direction of an organisation (Middlehurst, 1993). A critical function of the senior management team is one of 'orchestration' of change (Wallace, 2003: p.24). Clark (1998a) suggests that institutions need to develop a 'strengthened steering core', i.e. mechanisms to facilitate the steering of an institution's activities and to allow for a combination of both strategic capability and centralised decision-making, alongside a collegial approach. One of the challenges facing HE leaders is to avoid undermining the traditional values and position of academics, an accusation sometimes levelled at those advocating change (Taylor, 2006), and to portray an understanding of the value system within the academe (Winter and Sarros, 2001). Furthermore, the role of HE leaders in maintaining staff morale (Ramsden, 1998) and the need to develop commitment to change among key

stakeholders (Middlehurst cited by Dunne *et al*, 1997) has been noted. Given the challenges, the manner in which change is implemented therefore needs careful consideration. However, it has been argued that, while a top-down approach to change fails to attract adequate support and ownership, a bottom-up approach is even less effective (Fullan, 2007). Instead, Fullan advocates the need to combine both approaches to create a predisposition for action.

The next section explores the processes of organisational re-structuring that are occurring within HEIs and how key roles are being re-defined and managerial practices implemented.

2.5.2 Organisational Re-Structuring, Changing Roles and Managerialism

The necessity of organisational re-structuring has been recommended if HEIs are to become adaptive to changing environmental conditions (Sporn, 1999). However, Green (2002) suggests that, while marked changes have occurred in the governance of HEIs, there has been less change in their structures. Yet, Walford (1992) has advocated that re-structuring is necessary if HEIs are to be in a position to compete with each other. Indeed, it has been argued that to be a leading international university, a HEI needs to change its organisational structures (Taylor, 2006). Wilson (2001) has also drawn attention to the proliferation of management layers, with HEIs becoming more hierarchical and with defined managerial structures. However, in research conducted in four UK universities, the need to reduce bureaucracy and improve administration was highlighted, thus necessitating a reduction in the levels of management (Taylor, 2006). Faculties and departments have generally become administrative and organisational units (Gibbons *et al*, 1994), with increasing emphasis being placed on the department as the main unit of organisation (Taylor, 2006). It has also been suggested that greater devolution of organisational and management responsibility to faculties and schools is taking place (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999), including responsibility for financial matters (Meek and Wood, 1998; Taylor, 2006).

During periods of change, the redefinition of strategic roles within HEIs is implied (Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot, 2002) and while the leaders of HEIs have traditionally been part-time (Hellstrom, 2004), a new kind of leader has been emerging. In recent years, the idea of a Chief Executive at the helm of a HEI has gained momentum, with such position-holders expected to introduce large-scale reform (Weil, 1994). The Vice-Chancellor's role is being increasingly seen as 'a strategic director and change agent, obliged to reinvent the university, its management structures, its internal culture, and sometimes its core business' (Marginson, 2000: p.30). Vice-Chancellors act as 'initiators' of the wider HE mission, as 'mediators' between global, national and local forces, and as 'managers' of their own institutions (Bargh *et al*, 2000: p.1). Not only has the role of the Vice-Chancellor been expanded and strengthened, but the number of Pro Vice-Chancellor roles has also increased (Meek and Wood, 1998). Indeed, in research conducted by Henkel (1997), the majority of the UK universities studied (five out of six) had put in place a strong management team to support the Vice-Chancellor. Rather than heading up a collegial structure in the academy, Vice-Chancellors are increasingly seen to be leading a team of line managers (Neave, 1988). Furthermore, the World Bank favours a competitive recruitment and selection process which enables HE leaders to make decisions perceived to be unpopular (World Bank, 2000).

The role of the Dean has also expanded to incorporate greater management responsibilities, with Deans now part of the management team (Meek and Wood, 1998; Taylor, 2006). Sarros *et al* (1998) suggest that this role has also changed from that of a senior academic officer to the position of chief executive officer, with duties focusing more on the generation of funding and human resource decisions. Aside from these changes in the role of the Dean, Heads of Departments have also witnessed a proliferation in their management duties, including greater responsibility for budgeting, implementation of institutional policies and supervision of staff (Meek and Wood, 1998). In research conducted by Taylor (2006), the changing relationship between the Dean and academic staff was highlighted, with Deans now seen less as 'one of them' (p.264). To stem such criticism, it has been suggested that

those in management positions, such as Deans and Heads of Departments who work alongside academic staff, need to maintain their ongoing teaching and research experience to ensure continued standing among colleagues (Johnson and Deem, 2003). Also, recent developments in curriculum design, primarily modularisation, have resulted in the creation of manager-academic positions (Winters cited by Nixon *et al*, 2001).

Alongside the changing roles discussed above, a key trend in the public sector has been the rise of New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1991). HEIs are said to be responding to environmental pressures by drawing on NPM ideas (Bellamy *et al*, 2003; Henkel, 1997), the incorporation of which serves to absorb elements of the market and the competitive environment into institutions (Zambeta, 2006). NPM involves the active management of the public sector (Hood, 1991) and a performance and outcomes orientation (Olssen and Peters, 2005). Managerialism represents the adoption of such private sector managerial practices in HE and it has been suggested that this is one of the most pervasive and intense changes taking place (Currie, 1998c; Deem, 2001; Goldspink, 2007; Lee, 2004; Porter and Vidovich, 2000; Teichler, 2003). Among the business techniques being adopted are strategic planning and mission statements (Lee, 2004) and the monitoring and measurement of performance (Morley, 1997). One of the outcomes of current environmental demands upon universities (Sporn, 1999) and reductions in State funding for HE (Miller, 1998; Walford, 1992) is an increase in strategic planning, with such planning one of the most discernible outcomes of managerialism within universities (Crebert, 2000). The need for a coherent strategic plan that incorporates the plans of all levels of the institution has been emphasised, with HEIs typically developing an overall institutional plan, followed by its operationalisation through the development of faculty and school plans (Crebert, 2000). In research conducted by Nixon (1996), those interviewed emphasised the need to be consulted as part of the strategic planning process, that their concerns and interests be considered and that they have a clear understanding of the direction their institution is taking.

However, the literature offers competing views on whether private sector management practices are actually becoming more evident in HE and on the extent to which such practices result in efficiency gains. Jodie (2004) suggests a lack of knowledge about both of these issues, yet, we do have some insight into the varying views of commentators. Chandler *et al* (2002: p.1053) suggest that British HEIs have been the subject of a 'managerial assault' and research conducted by Deem (2007b), to determine the extent to which managerialism has permeated UK HEIs, revealed the existence of a drive towards greater efficiency. However, Goldspink (2007) has suggested that, while more modern management techniques have been adopted by HEIs and have resulted in more efficiency, a managerialist approach has not fundamentally changed the way HEIs are managed. This is further reinforced by Skilbeck's view that some combination of traditional decision-making approaches and private sector practices is occurring (2001). Indeed Kogan and Teichler (2007) put forward three views on the management of change in HE and the response of academics to this: one view suggests that 'managerial values' (p.11) have won out over the values of academics; another view suggests the opposite in that academic values have won out over a more managerial approach; and the final view is that some hybrid combination of managerial and professional values has resulted with academics retaining a significant degree of autonomy, but with some control over the goals of academic work being removed.

Having outlined the above changes, it is important to consider the extent to which the overall balance of power may have shifted within HEIs. While Henkel and Kogan (1999) raise the question of whether power has moved from individual departments to the institution itself, Askling (2001) questions where power should be concentrated − i.e. at the top of the institution, in the Vice-Chancellor's office, within faculties or in the office of the Dean. Some commentators have argued that, in general, power has shifted away from professors and other academic staff (Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot, 2002; Lacy and Sheehan, 1997) towards management (Ackroyd and Ackroyd, 1999; Avis, 1996; Skilbeck, 2001), i.e. what Trowler refers to as 'a decline of donnish dominion' (1998a: p.52). In the Irish context, Clancy

(2007) draws attention to the 'centralisation of power in university 'managers'' as a consequence of the move towards competitive funding processes (p.117). There is no doubt that the granting of power to one interest group inherently involves removing it from another (Holley and Oliver, 2000). Overall, it could be argued that the balance of power has shifted away from academics, and now resides somewhere in the middle with certain management responsibilities devolved to Faculty/Department level, but with senior university management playing a central role in determining institutional strategy and direction. However, a greater understanding of the extent to which academics actually perceive such a shift in power is necessary. Furthermore, the increasing adoption of private sector management practices by HEIs is likely to contribute towards a re-shaping of the life and work of the academic by ensuring that the activities, outputs and performance of this cohort of staff are in support of institutional priorities that have, in turn, been increasingly influenced by national priorities. Academics often view the concentration of power at the top of the institution or faculty as an enlargement of bureaucratisation processes (Askling, 2001) (this will be returned to in Section 2.5.4).

2.5.3 Marketisation, Academic Consumerism and Entrepreneurialism

A market approach encourages HEIs to compete against each other and such an orientation towards the market has permeated the culture of HEIs (Miller, 1998). Indeed, it has been suggested that competition and market forces within HE represent one of the strongest drivers of change (Taylor, 2006). From a State perspective, marketisation allows the government to reduce its funding of HE (Marginson and Sawir, 2006) and, indeed, a devolution of financial management to HEIs is a central feature of marketisation (Williams, 1995). Further examples of the intrusion of market values into HE include the emphasis HEIs place upon the development of institutional identity (Williams, 1997) and the development of international league tables (Lynch, 2006). Indeed, education is increasingly being viewed as a commodity to be bought, sold and marketed (Yang, 2003) and this is

contributing to the consumer playing a more central role (Edwards, 1995). Such an approach is referred to as academic consumerism (Gumport, 2000; Vaira, 2004). This growing marketisation and consumerist approach (Lynch, 2006; Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005) and increasing consumer choice within the curriculum (Trowler, 1998a) reflects the shift towards neo-liberalism. This commodification of education has resulted in rapid change (Epstein, 2007), particularly with respect to the curriculum (Henkel and Kogan, 1999). The encouragement of students to adopt a consumerist approach (Dunne *et al*, 1997) has been partly facilitated by advocates of modularisation who emphasise its ability to facilitate greater student choice (Morrison *et al*, 1997).

Finally, the past decade has seen HEIs create corporate enterprises to manage revenue generation activities (Williams, 1997). One of the driving forces behind such moves towards greater entrepreneurialism is the search for more diverse sources of funding (Etzkowitz *et al*, 2000; Slaughter and Leslie cited by Room, 2000) as highlighted in Section 2.4.2. In his seminal work on the entrepreneurial university, Clark (1998a) identified five elements that are necessary for institutions to become entrepreneurial: a range of funding sources, a strong central managerial capability; administrative units which promote more consultancy, research and education on a contract basis; the spreading of an entrepreneurial culture to all areas of the institution and; 'a stimulated academic heartland' where departments attempt to merge traditional values with an entrepreneurial spirit (p.12). Yet, the extent to which an entrepreneurial approach is permeating the activities of universities and directly impacting upon academics themselves is unclear.

2.5.4 Bureaucratisation

Given the themes addressed in the previous three sub-sections, it is important to consider the notion of bureaucratisation and the evidence for its pervasiveness.

Bureaucratisation encompasses a proliferation in levels of administration, a growth in the ratio of administration staff and an increase in the scale of the organisation at higher levels compared with lower levels (Lane and Stenlund, 1983). Kogan (cited by Gornitzka *et al*, 1998) suggests that bureaucratisation is also evident in the augmentation of power among administrators and in the shift in power away from academics towards the institution, with decision-making responsibility now concentrated to a much greater extent among this category of staff at the centre of the institution (Niblett, 1994). More specifically, bureaucratisation within HEIs is evident where the level of administration is disproportionately more than teaching and research (Gornitzka *et al*, 1998). Such disproportionate growth in administration in comparison with teaching has been referred to as 'bureaucratic accretion' (Gumport and Pusser, 1995: p.500). However, it has been argued that bureaucratisation does not represent a planned initiative within HEIs, but is instead 'the by-product of internal processes' and the cumulative effect of countless small decisions (Gornitzka *et al*, 1998: p.43). Concern about such growth in administration has been highlighted (Gornitzka and Larsen, 2004), with questions being raised about whether administration has, indeed, grown too large (Gornitzka *et al*, 1998). Yet, large-scale reform of HEIs has tended to call for greater prescription of procedures and Jackson (1997) suggests that increased bureaucratisation is one of the outcomes of this formalisation of procedures.

Four reasons could be put forward for the increase in bureaucratisation and administration: the growth of the student population (Gornitzka *et al*, 1998); a move towards curriculum approaches that are credit and modular based (HEQC cited by Jackson, 1997); the centralisation of management that is increasingly evident in market universities (Buchbinder cited by Orr, 1997); and the increasing complexity, and adaptation, of HEIs to their environment (Gumport and Pusser, 1995). Indeed, this question of adaptation has also been raised by Gornitzka *et al* (1998) who emphasise the requirement for a greater understanding of how internal bureaucratisation and administration are induced by changes and pressures emanating from the external environment.

Having considered the management of HEIs and their changing character, the next section will address the changing nature of academic life and work.

2.6 The Changing Nature of Academic Life and Work

A central question posed by Green, i.e. to what extent does external change result in change of a fundamental nature or do 'values and systems' already in place remain largely untouched (1995: p.233), is a critical one when we consider the actual impact of change on academics. Indeed, the OECD recognised the potential impact Irish HE reform could have on academic staff and academic life (2006: p.173) by stating the following:

> At this period of major change and adjustment it is difficult to engage the full communities of the universities with the broad university-societal interface issues. It may well be that the increasing specialisation of academic work, coupled with the significance for career progression of peer-reviewed published research, as well as the general workload, are deterring university staff from active engagement with policy-type issues which do not directly impinge on their work. This may be a necessary consequence of the way of life of large-scale universities, but it could lead to an impoverishment of the character of academic life.

Certainly, it can be argued that the scale of institutional change is considerably more discernible than change in the behaviours of individuals (Henkel cited by Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot, 2002). However, Taylor (1999) suggests that change taking place within HE is discontinuous, i.e. it impacts upon all aspects of university life. Little research has been undertaken to assess the precise impact of HE reform on academics (Churchman, 2002) and a lack of any significant attention to the micro-level focusing on 'academic work and life' in studies of HE governance is evident (Enders, 2004: p.376).

Among the changes affecting academics are modularisation, (Dunne *et al*, 1997); an increasing emphasis on performance, workload and accountability (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999); a growing division between academics and decision-making

procedures and increased fragmentation of tasks (Bellamy *et al*, 2003); a change in how their work is organised (Gumport and Sporn, 1999); and a lengthening of working hours, with more time spent on administrative tasks (McInnes, cited by Bellamy *et al*, 2003). Further changes have been highlighted by Taylor (2006), including the declining dominance of academic staff in the governance and management of HEIs and the replacement of extensive consultation and decision-making practices with shorter procedures that involve individual managers to a greater extent. Critically, if one is to accept the argument that academic staff are a vital resource (Cappelleras, 2005), then an analysis of what Fullan (2007) refers to as the phenomenology of change, i.e. how staff actually experience change, is of fundamental importance.

The remainder of this chapter will address the main trends and developments surrounding academic life and work, with a focus on four dimensions: the role of the academic; decision-making and collegiality; the autonomy of academics; and performativity, managerialism and the erosion of trust.

2.6.1 The Role of the Academic

In the context of a changing HE landscape, a certain feeling of inevitability that the role of academics will also have to change is apparent (Taylor, 1999). Yet, the impact of internal and external change on the performance and day-to-day work of academics cannot be easily determined (Enders, 2004). Therefore, the need to scrutinise academics, to examine how their work has changed and how they have accommodated demands from the HEI have been noted (Walford, 1992).

Concerns surrounding the intensification of work have been highlighted (Chandler *et al*, 2002; Coate, 2001; Deem, 2007b; Miller, 1998; Wilmott cited by Waring, 2007; Winter *et al*, 2000) with academics expected to do more with fewer resources and to increase their research productivity (Ramsden, 1998). The factors contributing to this intensification include marketisation and managerialism (Currie, 1998a),

pressure for greater research output (Miller, 1998) and increasing student numbers (Scott, 1994). Indeed, Ball (2003) suggests that academics are 're-worked as producers/providers' (p.218) and this concern for a 'product' outcome has implications for how academics work (Cowen, 1996). While HEIs have been adopting more formalised workload models, the implementation of these models lacks theorisation (Hull, 2006).

Furthermore, with increasing attention being paid to the curriculum, decisions surrounding pedagogical approaches are no longer the sole responsibility of academic staff (Holley and Oliver, 2000). The shift in emphasis from elite producer-led HE systems to one characterised as consumer-led has considerable implications for the academic profession (Farnham, 1999; Winter and Sarros, 2001). For example, an emphasis on educational and learning outcomes has become increasingly pervasive (Allan, 1996; Andrich, 2002; Fry *et al*, 1999), with considerable implications for academics. Learning outcomes serve to shift the focus from the teacher towards the learner (Donnelly and Fitzmaurice, 2005). Trowler (1998a) cites Winter who puts forward the notion that the increasing role played by students in designing their own curriculum removes the role played by academics in shaping the identity and learning paths of their students.

While an element of administration is considered part of the role of academics (Becher and Kogan, 1992), the increasing amount of time being devoted to administration has become the focus of debate. Such an increase in administration has been termed 'academic bureaucratisation' (Gornitzka *et al,* 1998: p.21) and as 'administrative fallout' in the context of credit approaches to the curriculum (Trowler, 1998a: p.36). Among the administrative functions being undertaken by academic staff are the recording of grades (Lacy and Sheehan, 1997) and teaching and assessment strategies (Williams, 1997). The poor use of an academic's time in such a manner (Gornitzka *et al*, 1998) and their view that such tasks could be handled by administration staff (Everett and Entrekin, 1994) has been highlighted. Henkel (1997) noted the feeling among academics that time spent on non-academic

tasks detracted from time devoted to students and this particular implication, along with the views of academics with respect to the time taken away from their research activity, has received little attention thus far.

While Section 2.5.3 set out some of the reasons why modular curriculum approaches have been introduced (e.g. to increase marketisation and enhance student choice), moves towards a modular curriculum have attracted criticism with respect to the additional administrative tasks generated and the extent to which gains in efficiency result from such an approach (Gass *et al*, 2004). Indeed, the increase in administrative duties within academic roles was specifically highlighted as an outcome of modularisation by Cheyne and Ferguson (cited by Paterson, 1999). While the documentation of module descriptions (Dunne *et al*, 1997) has been put forward as a strength of modularisation, one might question whether academics are now required to devote too much time to meeting the administrative demands of modularisation. In research conducted by Lane and Stenlund (1983), professors and lecturers employed on a full-time basis observed an increase in administration, with Gornitzka *et al* (1998) putting the proportion of time spent by UK academics on administration tasks in 1989 at twenty-four percent. In research on eight Australian universities, Anderson *et al* (2002) found that academics observed an increase in the time spent on such duties, with fifty-eight percent suggesting that the time required for administrative tasks had significantly increased. While academic staff may be aware of the existence of bureaucratisation and consider it detrimental to academic life (Lane and Stenlund, 1983), the precise nature of its impact on academic staff is not well understood.

While it is important to consider the changes that may be occurring with respect to the role itself, it is also necessary to consider how the role of the academic in institutional decision-making is changing. This will be addressed in the next section.

2.6.2 Decision-Making and Collegiality

Bess (1992) identifies three types of collegiality – (i) cultural collegiality where members of institutions hold a set of shared values and beliefs including their right to participate in the governance of the institution; (ii) behavioural collegiality where the behaviour of institutional members is directed at meeting institutional values and; (iii) structural collegiality where a participatory approach to decision-making is implied. Arguably, one of the key changes taking place in HE in recent years has been the shift away from structural collegiality and self-regulatory academic communities towards corporate, bureaucratic and explicit management approaches (Anderson *et al*, 2002; Deem, 2007b; Jackson, 1997; Orr, 1997). The collegial approach is being increasingly replaced by decision-making on a centralised basis, with greater demands for alignment between the goals of the institution and the academic (Gamage and Mininberg, 2003). Empirical research highlights the perception that such a move towards decision-making on a centralised basis has occurred, with sixty-three percent of those surveyed in the US and fifty-three percent in Australia concurring (Jodie, 2004). Academics highlighted some disillusionment at their lack of input into decision-making (Winter *et al*, 2000), with staff exhibiting feelings of disaffection towards the institution where greater emphasis is being placed on a corporate-like orientation (Meek and Wood, 1998). Indeed, Sterling (2010) notes that much of the recent discussion about Irish universities highlights the rejection of collaborative decision-making by 'top-down management' (p.13).

A critically important issue is the tension that is created between notions of collegiality and managerialism (Clegg, 2003; Meek and Wood, 1998), with academics suggesting that their long-established values are being compromised by managerialist approaches (Winter and Sarros, 2001). Indeed, the incongruity between institutional cultures of a collaborative and collegial nature and centralised decision-making (with respect to curriculum reforms) was noted by Hargreaves (1994). Hargreaves draws an important distinction between 'collaborative working relationships' (p.192) and 'contrived collegiality' (p.195). Collaborative working

relationships between colleagues are characterised by the development of voluntary collaborative relationships of a spontaneous nature, the setting of tasks and reasons to collaborate by teachers themselves, and the initiation of informal opportunities to collaborate that are not bound by time and space. Contrived collegiality is characterised by the imposition, by the institution, of a requirement for teachers to collaborate with each other and to implement institutionally driven initiatives. Such attempts to create collegiality of a contrived nature are regulated in terms of their purpose and are held at fixed times.

A number of reasons for the decline in collegiality and the increase in centralised decision-making have been argued, the most common of which is the failure of collegial institutions to adequately respond to environmental pressures (Sanyal, 1995) and the slow pace of decision-making in such institutions (Clark, 1998b; Edwards, 1994; Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002; Sanyal, 1995). It has been suggested that HE leaders viewed a move away from staff consultation as a necessary outcome of attempts to create more efficient decision-making systems (Martin cited by Winter and Sarros, 2001). Indeed, the part played by factors such as support for competition, both within and between institutions, and the decline of candid communication between the top level of the institution and other levels in serving as active deterrents of collegiality, has been noted (Middlehurst and Elton, 1992). Yet, Edwards (1994) notes that the challenge for HE leaders, in the context of change, is to create a hybrid system that allows institutions to respond speedily to external changes while also allowing for a continuation of collegial approaches through a process of devolved decision-making to constituent parts of the institution. In research conducted by Sporn (1999), the need for collegial decision-making approaches in the context of significant changes in both process and structure was still evident and she advocated the need for such an approach in order for institutions to be sufficiently adaptive to their environment. This is particularly important in the light of Moses and Ramsden's (cited by Ramsden, 1998) assertion that there is a greater likelihood that academics will be less effective and less productive, in terms

of teaching and research where the level of collaboration, dialogue and participation is low.

2.6.3 The Autonomy of Academics

Increasing autonomy at the institutional level has been highlighted (Askling, 2001; Henkel, 1997), with Askling pointing to increasing freedom among HE leaders and governing authorities. Yet, a tension between greater institutional autonomy and declining individual autonomy has been raised (Hellstrom, 2004). In research conducted by Taylor *et al* (1998), the notion that there has been an increase in academic freedom was rejected. However, given that the notion of academic freedom has been a cornerstone of academic life, the more fundamental question is whether academic freedom has declined. Certainly, while academics retain the freedom to decide on what they teach and to follow their academic interests (Anderson *et al*, 2002), the pursuit of freedom is becoming more difficult (Nixon *et al*, 2001). Indeed, the more prevalent attempt to align the goals of the institution with the work of academics has often been interpreted as an attempt to exercise control over this group of staff (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). In research conducted by Anderson *et al* (2002), fifty-six percent of those surveyed suggested a decline in academic freedom. Among the changes having a considerable impact upon academic freedom are managerialism (Taylor *et al*, 1998; Winter *et al*, 2000), the increasing influence of the market (O'Hear, 1988), and the increasing performance-oriented nature of the sector (Olssen and Peters, 2005). There is no doubt that the scale of change taking place in HE has resulted in few areas escaping unscathed, including individual autonomy (Neave, 1988), and there is some suggestion that the practices of academics are being subjected to increasing control (Jackson, 1997). Such changes have resulted in an inherent tension and contradiction between notions of academic freedom and accountability (Taylor *et al*, 1998).

From the perspective of academic staff, changes in the curriculum and moves towards a modular approach have the potential to negatively impact upon autonomy (Henkel and Kogan, 1999) and, indeed, this resulting threat to academic freedom was highlighted through research conducted at a UK university (Rich and Scott, 1997). Section 2.6.1 discussed the increasing focus on learning outcomes. One could question whether the increasing prescription of learning outcomes (Barnett, 1994) and the setting of guidelines for staff relating to the development of course outlines and the more meticulous scrutiny of these (Taylor *et al*, 1998) has contributed towards a decrease in the autonomy of academics. Trowler (cited by Deem, 1998) suggests that the demands being made upon academics relate to efforts by administrators to shape and control the work of this group of staff. Indeed, much of the literature appears to imply a deliberate attack on autonomy and one might question whether this is how it is perceived by academic staff themselves and whether this is the actual intention of the institution.

2.6.4 Performativity, Managerialism and the Erosion of Trust

The literature would suggest that academics are witnessing an increasing emphasis on performativity and managerialism and the increasing pervasiveness of the 'flexible' institution. Thus, the question arises as to whether these factors are impacting upon the level of trust between academics and the institution and on the job satisfaction of academics themselves.

Central to attempts at managerialism is the notion of performativity, at the heart of which is an acceptance of performance-oriented approaches (Lyotard, cited by Cowen, 1996). A performativity culture sees a multitude of performance indicators being introduced into education systems (Rizvi and Lingard, 2006). While the general emphasis tends to be placed upon the impact of managerialism at a macro-level within HEIs, both Walford (1992) and Teichler (2003) draw attention to the lack of discussion on its impact on other stakeholders, such as academics. The impact of managerialism is unclear in respect of both the 'working lives' (Barry *et*

al, 2001: p.89) and work activities of academics (Winter *et al*, 2000). What can be said, though, is that managerialism, as evidenced in the UK, has resulted in an increased emphasis being placed upon academic workloads and on monitoring the performance of academics (Deem and Brehony, 2005). Indeed, Ball (2003: p.220), suggests that 'the teacher, researcher, academic are subject to a myriad of judgements, measures, comparisons and targets'. Furthermore, Trowler (1998a) has suggested that a modular approach to the curriculum can facilitate the provision of thorough information on the performance of academics.

One of the apparent difficulties academics have encountered with the notion of managerialism is its focus on outputs and a 'management by objectives' approach (Newby, 1999: p.111). It has also been suggested that the adoption of such practices has created considerable conflict (Meek and Wood, 1998). Among the purported negative effects of increasing managerialism are a sense of disillusionment and a lowering of morale among academics (Winter *et al*, 2000); the dissipation of an 'ethos of care' in relation to both staff and students (Lynch, 2008); and low institutional commitment on the part of academics (Winter *et al*, 2000). However, the positive aspects of managerialism and performativity, from the perspective of academics, have received little attention in the literature, particularly in relation to its potential to improve fairness and transparency with respect to individual performance and outputs.

It has been suggested that academic tenure in HE has acted to constrain management discretion regarding the allocation of duties to academics and to unilaterally change the make-up of a faculty (McPherson and Shapiro, 1999). There is also evidence to suggest the emergence of a more flexible staffing structure, with a small group of academics operating at the core of the institution and a larger group operating at the periphery with lower pay and less secure employment (Currie, 1998a). Lacy and Sheehan (1997) identified five categories of academic staff during research conducted in three universities. In addition to three groups of core staff identified – upper management, middle management and full-time academic staff – they

identified two separate categories of staff at the periphery – those on fixed or short-term contracts and casual staff, primarily postgraduate students. These changes have made it difficult to view academic staff as part of a cohesive profession (Nixon *et al*, 2001).

Given the increasing prevalence of the above issues, it is important to understand notions of trust, job satisfaction and staff morale in HE. Trust plays a part in how academic staff interpret change (Winter and Sarros, 2001) and, indeed, the erosion of trust has been highlighted (O'Neill cited by Sachs, 2003; Teichler, 1999). Winter and Sarros (2001) advocate the provision of performance feedback to academics as a means of building trust with their supervisors. Yet, one might question whether the implementation of a performance feedback process undermines traditional notions with respect to the self-governance of academics. What is, perhaps, called for is a better understanding of the relationship between increased performativity, managerialism, the 'flexible' organisation and the erosion of trust. Furthermore, research on the job satisfaction of academics is limited (Pearson and Seiler, 1983). While there has been a suggestion of low morale among academics (Eggins, 2003), the commitment of such staff is considered to be high (Lacy and Sheehan, 1997). However, Lacy and Sheehan's research does not appear to have investigated the role content of academics and their research, and it therefore, provides us with an incomplete picture in relation to the impact of recent changes in HE in this regard. In other research conducted by Pearson and Seiler (1983), the focus is on the context in which academic work is carried out and the satisfaction of academics with this context. While Pearson and Seiler acknowledge the potential usefulness of undertaking further research on both the context and content dimensions of academic life, I would argue that researching either dimension in isolation presents us with a limited picture of the issue. So far, there is little understanding of the impact of increased performativity and managerialism on the job satisfaction of academics.

The final section below will examine the general reactions of academic staff to change in HE.

2.7 The Reactions of Academics to Change

The report published by Universities UK (2010) on the *Changing Academic Profession*, noted the tendency to treat academic staff as a 'homogenous entity'. The authors of the report suggest that academic staff respond differently to change and that such differences can be explained by a number of factors including, 'differences in status within academic and institutional hierarchies, in the characteristics of different disciplines and between generations' (p.37). Brennan (2007), furthermore, noted the 'increasing differentiation', for example, with regard to the types of HEIs and suggests that academics are better able to resist change where they are working in 'older, more elite institutions' (p.21). Indeed, diverging views on the impact of change on academics are evident. On the one hand, the intense impact of change at the individual level, where change may not be seen as a positive development, has been highlighted (Middlehurst, 1993). Indeed, some commentators have suggested that academics have become 'disenfranchised' (Holley and Oliver, 2000: p.11) and disconnected (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). On the other hand, the idea that academics may be able to detach themselves from changes taking place at the institutional level has been put forward (Bellamy *et al*, 2003; Watty *et al*, 2008). I would suggest that the extent to which this is possible, and the means adopted, is important in helping us understand the impact of HE change at the micro level of the institution. Furthermore, the manner in which change has been introduced has also been a source of tension among academics. For example, in Taylor's research within four universities, it was noted that where there was some disagreement in relation to a change initiative, it related more to the make-up of structures, and less to the philosophy underlying the change (2006). Academics' unreceptive response to change introduced in a top-down manner, referred to as 'academic conservatism', may reflect their substantial investment in

the development of their expertise and body of knowledge over time (Becher and Kogan, 1992: p.135).

While Deem (1998) suggests that academics sometimes resist attempts to exercise greater control over their work, debate among commentators provides little insight into the strategies adopted by academics when coping with discontinuous change and the ways in which they respond. The exception to this is the study conducted by Trowler (1997) who places the response of academics to change in four main categories. While Trowler examines the response of academics to curriculum change specifically, the four categories could be used when examining other types of change in HE and provide some means of theorising change at a micro institutional level. *Sinking*, the first response identified by Trowler, tends to capture those who have become increasingly disillusioned as a result of increasing work intensification, student numbers and declining resources. The second response, *coping*, is summed up by 'I'm not as generous with my goodwill as I used to be' (p.308). *Re-construction*, on the other hand, involves academics engaging in a process of re-interpretation of institutional policies with the result that policy delivery by academics is altered. Finally, the response of some academics to the changing nature of HE can be characterised as a *swimming* response in which they prosper.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter set out, firstly, to identify the traditional notions of academic life and work in HE. Among the issues discussed in this section included the teaching, research and service functions of academics and the notion of academic identity; academic freedom as a cornerstone of academic life; the existence of an academic community as a way of life in HE; the tenured nature of academic positions and the central role traditionally played by academics in institutional decision-making. Secondly, the chapter set out to discuss the pressures impacting upon national systems of HE. At a global and national level, the literature drew attention to a number of noteworthy pressures, including the impact of globalisation; the growing

influence of supranational organisations; changes in the role of the State and funding policies; and increasing pressure for greater efficiency and accountability across the HE sector. These factors are contributing in a considerable way to the re-shaping of the entire HE landscape.

At the level of the institution, the increasing spotlight being placed on the management and leadership of HEIs was also discussed in this chapter. Attention was drawn to four particular themes – the management and leadership of institutional change; organisational re-structuring, the re-definition of key roles and managerialism; marketisation, consumerism and entrepreneurialism; and bureaucratisation. The literature identified a clear pattern across HEIs with respect to the replacement of traditional academic leadership of institutions with a more managerial-oriented culture and highlighted the increasing emphasis on institutional re-structuring and the proliferation of management layers. Of particular note was the re-definition of the roles of Vice-Chancellor and Dean and the rise of NPM and private sector managerial practices in HE. The consequent impact of these changes for the shift in power away from academics and individual departments towards the institution itself was also noted. The chapter also drew attention to the intrusion of market values into HE, the increasing commodification of education and a move to create more entrepreneurial universities. The evidence for increasing bureaucratisation and the reasons behind this increase were also considered.

The chapter has highlighted how institutional change is placing increasing pressure on the traditional notions of academic life and work and has identified a number of implications of HE change for academic staff. While the chapter noted the difficulty of determining how change is impacting upon the work of academics, some clear developments are evident, including the intensification of work, the increasing emphasis on performance outcomes and the increasing time devoted to administration tasks. The literature also drew attention to increasing tension between collegiality and managerialism and noted the move away from structural collegiality and self-regulatory academic communities towards more centralised

managerial approaches. The increasing tension between institutional autonomy and individual autonomy was also noted, yet, the extent to which the changes taking place in HE represent a deliberate attack on the autonomy of academics remains unclear. Perhaps, the feature of academic life and work which has been receiving most attention in the literature recently is the extent to which academics are witnessing increasing performativity pressures and moves towards more managerial approaches. The impact of some of these changes on job satisfaction and staff morale was noted along with their impact on the trust relationship between academics and the institution.

CHAPTER 3 –
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In 2004, UCD instigated a programme of large-scale institutional change. This chapter sets out the research design considered most appropriate for investigating the impact of HE change on academic staff. The research provides insight into this under-researched problem in the Irish HE context and considers the changes taking place with respect to traditional notions of academic life and work from the perspective of academics. This chapter will outline the research questions; my guiding theoretical framework; the research approach adopted; and the research site selected. The chapter will discuss how both primary and secondary data were collected and analysed; the ethical issues considered at the research design and execution stages of this enquiry; the criteria for evaluating the quality of the research; and the strengths and limitations of the research design.

3.2 Research Question

The research questions are what guide many aspects of the research process, including the search for literature on the educational problem, the design of the research and how data will be collected, analysed and written up (Schostak, 2002). The research questions help keep the researcher on track and serve as a framing mechanism for writing up the data (Punch, 1998). Silverman (2000) advocates the use of one or two central research questions, accompanied by a set of sub-questions and he draws attention to the value of asking 'what' or 'how' type questions when formulating research questions for the purposes of case study research (the approach adopted for this research). My question and sub-questions were designed to explore the change programme and its impact on traditional notions of academic work and life.

My research question was – *How, and to what extent has, change in HE impacted upon academic staff?* To investigate this educational problem, the research was designed around three sub-questions:

(i) From the perspective of academic staff, where has the impetus for HE reform emanated from? Given the complex and large-scale nature of change that has taken place at UCD over a relatively short period of time, it was necessary to gain an insight into the extent of academics' understanding of the array of internal and external drivers of change. It was anticipated that an understanding of where change was emanating from would provide some insight into the kinds of changes being witnessed by academics.

(ii) What changes have been occurring in the decision-making approaches of HEIs and how have these changes impacted upon traditional notions of collegiality among academic staff?

(iii)How, and to what extent, has the role of the academic changed, how has reform in HE impacted upon academic autonomy and to what extent is the increasing control of academic staff becoming more evident in academic work and life?

The above research questions are set against a background of increasing HE reform, particularly in the context of increasing globalisation, efficiency and funding pressures set out in Chapter 2. The next section provides an explanation of my philosophical approach to research which serves as the basis for the research design.

3.3 Guiding Theoretical Framework

The literature uses a variety of terminology associated with research and the different interpretations and meanings given to such terminology has been acknowledged by Grix (2004). Furthermore, a wide array of approaches used to address different questions in educational research has been noted (Pring, 2000a). Indeed, in educational research, such variety in approaches to research may be explained by differences in philosophical positions (Pring, 2000a) and in one's view of the nature of social science (Cohen *et al*, 2007). The influence of tacit

assumptions on the selection of a particular research methodology calls for an explanation of one's ontological and epistemological perspectives on which these assumptions are grounded (Crotty, 2004). Indeed, the need to consider the ontological and epistemological perspectives that form the basis of a research inquiry (Mason, 2002) and the role played by the assumptions underpinning such perspectives as the 'building blocks of research' have been noted (Grix, 2004: p. 57). The importance of addressing such issues in this chapter is evident in the fundamental role these perspectives play in framing the questions one might ask during the research and in how one might go about addressing these questions (Grix, 2002).

Firstly, *ontology*, i.e. the study or understanding of the nature of reality (Sarantakos, 2005), serves as the starting point in articulating one's philosophical perspective. On the one hand, one may accept that the world and reality exist external to social actors and that reality is 'out there' and not created by individuals (Cohen *et al*, 2007: p.7). Such an ontological perspective, which accepts that the world exists irrespective of our perceptions, is referred to as '*realism*' (Scott and Usher, 1999). On the other hand, one may accept that reality does not exist independently of social actors and, instead, that reality is constructed and shaped by social actors themselves – an ontological perspective referred to as '*constructivism*' (Bryman, 2004; Grix, 2002). The work of Hodgson (2004) is of value at this point. While Hodgson acknowledges a lack of agreement on the meaning of methodological individualism, broadly speaking it refers to an emphasis being placed on individuals as a sole means of explaining social phenomena, structures and institutions. He argues, however, that individuals alone can never be used to offer explanations and, instead, one must always start with both individuals and institutions. Methodological collectivism advocates that the behaviour of individuals can be explained solely on the basis of 'social, structural, cultural or institutional phenomena' (p.23). Again, he notes the criticism of this latter approach for failing to take sufficient cognisance of the processes by which the behaviour of individuals can be changed.

Secondly, *epistemology*, i.e. the nature of knowledge (Silverman, 2000), addresses two key questions – 'what' we can know and 'how' we can know it (Grix, 2004). On the one hand, the epistemological position, *objectivism*, reflects a view of knowledge as objective and 'tangible' (Cohen *et al*, 2007: p.7) and where insight can only be gained through experience and observation (Sarantakos, 2005, p.32). On the other hand, knowledge may be subjective (Cohen *et al*, 2007), with research participants and their 'interpretations, meanings and understandings' considered the primary sources of data (Mason, 2002: p.56). Such a subjective epistemological position recognises that differences arise in the meaning people attach to a phenomenon (Bryman, 2004). This approach accepts that the 'known' and the 'knower' cannot be separated and, instead, understanding is jointly created during the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Finally, the overall framework which incorporates the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions is referred to as a 'paradigm' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The paradigm which reflects the approach taken during this research is best described as a constructivist-interpretivist one. In adopting an ontological constructivist position, I recognise that the search for 'absolute truth' was not a goal of this research and, instead, I accepted the constructed nature of the reality put forward by my research participants. In adopting an epistemological interpretivist position, it was possible for some understanding to be gained of the varying impacts of change at UCD on each research participant and allowed me to analyse and interpret the findings with the specific institutional context in mind.

3.4 Research Approach and Research Site

Pring (2000a) calls into question the rigid divide often placed between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research and suggests that there are features of individuals, such as emotions, which can form the basis of quantitative research and that differences in these dimensions which become evident during such research can form the basis of further research of a more interpretive or qualitative nature.

Quantitative research adopts a deductive approach where the starting point involves testing a theory (Bryman, 2004) and it focuses on exploration and discovery and on the generation of theories and hypotheses (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Where the world is viewed as external to social actors, a quantitative research approach is generally evident (Bryman, 2004; Cohen *et al*, 2007). Four central aims of quantitative research are discernible – (i) the measurement of concepts being investigated; (ii) the explanation of concepts in terms of cause and effect; (iii) the generalisability of research findings; and (iv) the ability to replicate the research findings (Bryman, 2004). The above four aims of quantitative research were not considered appropriate for this research given my ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Instead, a qualitative approach was considered most appropriate as it not only allows for exploratory and descriptive narrative to be generated, but also enables the 'participants' lived experiences' of the phenomenon to be documented (Marshall and Rossman, 1995, p.39). Qualitative research is associated with efforts to understand people (Schostak, 2002) and the meanings they attach to phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). It is essentially interpretive and naturalistic where, based on the meaning of phenomena depicted by the research participants, the researcher sets out to 'make sense of' the phenomena under scrutiny (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: p.3). The researcher sets out to describe a particular person or setting and to identify and present a description of themes that have emerged from the data (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research can, perhaps, best be characterised as one capable of allowing the researcher to investigate a topic in its natural setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Punch, 1998). Thus, in the case of my research – where reality is acknowledged as ultimately a human construction – a qualitative research approach is best placed to capture, identify, present and explain the multiple realities of the research participants with respect to the impact of the UCD change programme. Furthermore, the meanings that individuals give to both their personal and social reality cannot be quantified (Pring, 2000a) and, thus, qualitative research was considered appropriate.

The eighteen-month period over which the research was conducted (from research design to the write-up of the findings) allowed for adequate breadth and depth to be achieved in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. A case study – the methodological approach adopted – was undertaken at UCD School of Business (hereafter referred to as 'the School'). The School is one of the largest of the thirty-four Schools in UCD (I have been employed within the School for the past fourteen years in a professional/administrative capacity, with a relatively minor teaching function). This research approach is effective in comprehensively investigating real-life situations (Seale *et al*, 2004). It allows the researcher to gain an extensive understanding of the case, whilst recognising the contextual imperatives involved (Punch, 1998) – an important consideration in conducting qualitative research as noted by Dey (1993). It has been advocated that a case study is appropriate where the researcher wishes to broadly define the topic under study; where the phenomenon and organisational context cannot be separated; and where the researcher wishes to draw upon multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1993).

Furthermore, bearing in mind the centrality of the research questions, it is necessary to select the most appropriate type of case study to undertake. An intrinsic case study (see Stake, 2000a) formed the basis of my research and Punch (2005: p.146) suggests that this type of case study is appropriate where 'the case may be so important, interesting, or misunderstood, that it deserves study in its own right'. In Ireland, we have been witnessing a period of unprecedented change in HE and UCD was at the forefront in implementing large-scale institutional change. The research question is, as yet, under-researched in the Irish context and there is a need to better understand the parameters of both this educational problem and the case in question. During a case study of this nature, one can expect the development of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). In striving for such 'thick description', I sought to gather a full description of each participant's views on the research questions and to gather detailed narratives of their experience of the issues researched by transcribing all interviews in their entirety.

One of the decisions made at the research design stage was whether to adopt a single or multiple case approach. A single case study approach, within one UCD School, was considered most appropriate and recognises Denscombe's assertion that certain insights may be gained as issues may emerge that would not have done so had a multiple case approach been adopted (1998). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) further suggest that we can learn from a single case depending on how like and unlike other cases it is. While UCD is not unique in the internal and external challenges it has been confronted with in recent years, it is, however, unique in the Irish HE landscape with respect to the magnitude of the imposed changes and the speed with which institutional change was introduced. This unique case example is one rationale for case study research as put forward by Yin (2003). A good case study also calls for the setting of clear boundaries for what the case will encompass (Denscombe, 1998; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). For my research, the timeframe I was concerned with was the period since the appointment of a new President in early 2004. Therefore, the particular School selected and the time period involved served to set the boundary surrounding the case.

The need to consider how access to the research site might be achieved has been highlighted (Burgess, 1984; Silverman, 2000). In arranging such access, Flick *et al* (2004) noted a common omission in qualitative research where gatekeepers are not identified. The gatekeepers are the key individuals who are in a position to grant access to the research site (Burgess, 1984). To proceed with my research, permission was sought from the key gatekeeper – the Dean (Head of School) – through a letter outlining the purpose and scope of the research. The Dean brought my research proposal to a meeting of the School's Heads of Subject Areas and all agreed that my proposal to conduct this research should be supported.

Finally, it is important at this point to highlight the intended relationship between the theory surrounding traditional and changing notions of academic life and work and the findings of my research. It has been suggested that the purpose of case studies is fundamentally mis-understood where generalisability is viewed as the intended

outcome (Bryman, 2004; Schostak, 2002). Marshall and Rossman (1995) highlight the importance of reflecting on how the research will contribute to theory and practice. While the purpose of a case study is partly to inform our understanding of a larger number of cases (Gerring, 2007), the outcome of my research will represent an inductive approach, with theory being the product of the research (Bryman, 2004). My aim was to generalise only to theory and to existing literature. This reflects the types of generalisation evident in interpretive case studies as referred to by Walsham (1995) – i.e. the development of concepts, the generation of theory, the identification of the implications of the research and the insight provided by such case studies.

The next section will present an account of the research methods used to collect the data.

3.5 Research Methods

Before presenting a detailed account of the research methods selected, the direct relationship between one's ontology, epistemology and methodology will be outlined. Grix (2004) highlights the interrelationship between these concepts, with the subsequent choice of research methods firmly influenced by the ontological and epistemological assumptions one holds. Indeed, Grix emphasises that it is our ontological and epistemological assumptions which determine the kinds of questions we might investigate and how we might set about addressing these questions. Furthermore, Cohen *et al* (2007) cite Hitchcock and Hughes who suggest a directional relationship between these concepts, i.e. that epistemological assumptions are derived from ontological assumptions, that methodological approaches are derived in turn from epistemological assumptions and that research methods used to gather data result from the methodological approach adopted. Therefore, it can be said that the methods considered most appropriate when conducting any research are those which allow for the researcher's ontological and epistemological perspectives to be represented. During this enquiry, therefore, the

research methods selected allowed for consideration of the nature and understanding of reality as a constructed phenomenon and of knowledge as a subjective and interpretive process.

The research methods are the techniques used to generate and collect data (Bryman, 2004; Oppenheim, 1991) and the need to align these methods with the research question has been noted (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) draw attention to the reliance of case studies on three particular research methods, i.e. interviews, document analysis and observation. My research utilised two of these methods – interviews and document analysis. This combination of methods allowed for an understanding of the research participants' interpretation of the extent to which traditional notions of academic work and life have changed in recent years. This ability of case studies to manage diverse sources of data and to allow for an examination of attitudinal dimensions of the topic under scrutiny was acknowledged by Yin (2003). The third research method highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) above – observation – was not considered appropriate for this research as it would not allow for a detailed and descriptive account to be presented of the changing notions of academic life and work as constructed by academics themselves, particularly in light of the complexity of the ongoing change programme at UCD and the various subjective meanings attached to the phenomena being investigated.

The next section provides an overview of how both secondary and primary data was collected.

3.5.1 Collection of Secondary Data

One of the reasons for using secondary data during case study research is to corroborate data gathered from other sources (Yin, 2003). There has been a proliferation of external reports on Irish HE over the past decade and these have highlighted the need for change in the management and governance of institutions

and in the curriculum (see European University Association, 2005b; Higher Education Authority, 2004; OECD, 2004a; OECD, 2006). Among the external reports reviewed included the 2006 OECD Review of Higher Education in Ireland; the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation 2006-2013; the National Development Plan 2007-2013; the HEA report on Governance of Irish Universities (HEA, 2007); and the HEA Strategic Plan 2008-2013.

Internally, a vast array of internal memos and briefing documents on the UCD change programme were readily available. Some important reports on the need for change at UCD, such as the Washington Advisory Group (2004) report and the results of the Mercator survey, commissioned by the university in 2007, were reviewed. This survey was conducted among academic and professional staff, students and other stakeholders, with approximately four hundred and forty academic staff responding to the survey. The focus of the Mercator survey differed from my research in that it set out to ascertain stakeholder attitudes on the Strategic Plan 2005-2008 and its implementation and the survey instrument was appropriate for this purpose. The survey results indicated a sense of frustration among staff in relation to a number of issues, including the extent to which they had been consulted during the strategic planning process, the increasing workload of academics, the need to allow such staff to concentrate on academia, and the need to examine ways of facilitating greater collegiality. While surveys do not fit within my ontology and epistemology, I have, nonetheless, taken account of some external facts and findings that emerged from the Mercator survey. The survey method would not have adequately 'explained' or helped to 'interpret' the full impact of the changes with respect to the issues that formed the basis of my research questions. Instead, data collection, primarily through interviews, helped to get 'behind' and 'beyond' the Mercator data to provide greater insight into the extent to which academic working life has changed. In addition, a range of other internal documents were reviewed, including the membership of the School Executive and Programme Boards (post re-structuring). The purpose of reviewing these documents was to compare the composition of the decision-making structures within the School pre-change and

post-change and to compare the extent to which academic staff played a role in both the old and the new decision-making structures within the School.

The various national and international HE policy documents and internal reports referred to earlier in this section were assessed using criteria suggested by Scott (1990). Namely, a judgment was made on the credibility and authenticity of these reports and whether the evidence contained therein was clear and sufficiently articulated the typicality, or otherwise, of the evidence. These reports were generally used as a means of collating the broad events and facts surrounding the changing HE landscape both in Ireland and at UCD, thus, avoiding any possibility of bias or subjectivity from these reports impacting upon the research findings. In reviewing the content of these reports, a qualitative content analysis approach was adopted, with the identification and analysis of themes contained in the reports (Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 1998). The content of these reports was analysed and relevant categories and codes were noted beside the content that related closely to my research questions. In undertaking a descriptive analysis of the content of these documents, the purpose was to generate a summary of the key themes referred to (Sarantakos, 2005).

3.5.2 Collection of Primary Data

Interviews are the most frequently used qualitative research method and are commonly used in case study research (Bryman, 2004; Kvale, 1996). Interviews 'allow the subjects to convey to others their situation from their own perspective and in their own words' (Kvale, 1996: p.71). Semi-structured interviews, where the researcher puts forward questions covering specific topics (Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 1998), were an integral feature of my research design and allowed for a set of pre-determined questions to be developed that served as a guide and prompt throughout the research. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to probe issues that arise during each interview (Denscombe, 1998). The interview questions were derived from key themes surrounding the research questions which emerged

from the literature, from my own initial observations of the impact of the changes on academics, from a preliminary analysis of the secondary data sources that were collected, and from my ontological and epistemological assumptions set out earlier in this chapter. The interview questions also took account of the kinds of issues that are impacting upon academic life in other national HE systems and which have been addressed in other studies, for example of British and Australian HEIs (see for example, Anderson *et al*, 2002; Gornitzka *et al*, 1998; Jodie, 2004; Meek and Wood, 1998; Rich and Scott, 1997). The same set of interview questions was put to each research participant, regardless of their role in the School. This was considered important to allow for the research questions to be addressed in a consistent manner across all interviews and for a subsequent comparison of findings to be made across the research participants. A copy of the interview questions used during the pilot study and the main study can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively.

Burgess (1984) suggests that researchers must make a decision on who should be interviewed and he gives prominence to the choice of informants based on their knowledge of the topic. Only full-time permanent academic staff who were employed at the beginning of 2004 and who witnessed the change programme from the outset were chosen for this study (there was one exception – one informant had been employed as a Research Assistant in 2004 and was appointed to the permanent faculty in 2005). These interviewees were, therefore, selected based on the insight he/she could provide with respect to the nature of the change programme and the manner in which it was implemented, thus following a purposive sampling approach (see Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). At the research design stage, sixty-two full-time permanent academic staff were employed within the School, of which twenty-eight were interviewed (nineteen academics and nine manager-academics) between June and September 2009. Academics from each of the six subject areas were interviewed in proportion to the size of the subject area. This volume of primary research allowed for the emergence of an adequate 'voice' across academics in all subject areas and across the School's management team. Table 3.1 provides an

overview of the number of interviews undertaken. The average interview duration was fifty-six minutes.

Table 3.1: Interview Schedule

Participant	Number Interviewed
Academics (A1 – A19):	
- Accountancy	4*
- Banking and Finance	3
- Industrial Relations/Human Resources	2
- Management	6*
- Management Information Systems	2
- Marketing	2
Manager-Academics:	
- Heads of Subject Areas (H1 – H5)	5
- Directors (Graduate School, Academic Affairs, International Affairs) (D1 – D3)	3*
- Head of School (Dean)	1

* Including one person interviewed during the Pilot Study.

The following paragraphs provide a justification for why the above manager-academics were selected.

The *Heads of Subject Areas* were best positioned to identify the impact of the change programme on academic staff within their own subject area and it was considered essential to allow these Heads a voice in this research. Five out of the six Heads were employed within the School from the outset of the change programme and it was feasible to interview each. One of the Heads was not employed in UCD until approximately four years after the change programme commenced and, therefore, he was excluded from the research. The remaining manager-academics

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were chosen for their central role on the School's management team and their ability to provide a School management perspective on the issues raised during the research (the *Director of International Affairs*, was interviewed as part of the pilot study). The *Director of the Graduate School* was interviewed for the key role he played at the early stages of the implementation of change, in his capacity as then Deputy Principal of the College of Business and Law. The interview conducted with the *Dean* (the Head of School) was considered essential in gaining insight into the research questions from the perspective of an Executive Dean. The last interview was conducted with the *Director of Academic Affairs* – he plays a key role in overseeing academic staffing issues, including recruitment, the workload allocation model, the identification of metrics for research output and the performance management and development of academic staff.

An information sheet, explaining the purpose, scope and objectives of the research was emailed to all interviewees (see Appendix 3), at which stage their agreement to participate in the research was sought. Once their agreement to participate was secured, each interviewee was asked to complete a questionnaire which gathered information on when he/she joined the university and the various lecturer grades he/she had occupied since then (see Appendix 4). This facilitated the collation of such data in advance of each interview, thus allowing the interviews to focus on exploring the themes at the heart of the research. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 provide a summary of the data gathered from this questionnaire. The research participants were drawn from across each of the lecturer grades and from staff with varying lengths of service. This diversity of participants helped to eliminate the possibility that a degree of bias from a particular group might impinge upon the research findings and allows for the perspectives of those at different stages of their academic careers to be reported (the average length of service of those interviewed was nineteen years).

Table 3.2 Interviewees – Lecturer Grade

Grade	Number	Percentage
College Lecturer	9	32%
Senior Lecturer	6	21%
Associate Professor	1	4%
Professor	12	43%

Table 3.3 Interviewees – Commencement of Employment

Year Employment Began at UCD	Number of Interviewees	Percentage
1970 – 1979	4	14%
1980 – 1989	5	18%
1990 – 1999	12	43%
2000 – 2005	7	25%

The majority of interviews were conducted in the interviewee's own office, with a small number conducted in a meeting room. All interviews were recorded and written consent was obtained from each interviewee. The interviews were transcribed in their entirety immediately afterwards and a copy of the transcript was forwarded to each interviewee for verification purposes. Table 3.4 provides an overview of the areas probed during interviews.

Table 3.4: Areas Probed During Interviews

Theme 1: Changes at UCD   • Changes at UCD and in the School and the impetus for change   • Involvement of academics in the planning and implementation of change   • Changes that have had the most impact upon academics   • Response of academics to change   • Comparison of changes at UCD with those occurring at other HEIs
Theme 2: Decision-Making   • Traditional dominance of academics in governance and policy-making   • Academics' role in decision-making at School level before and after re-structuring   • Communication of decisions to academics   • Speed of decision-making before and after re-structuring

Theme 3: Collegiality
 • Collegial nature of UCD / School prior to and since re-structuring
 • Manifestations of collegiality:
     a. existence of a cohesive community of academics in the School
     b. interaction with other academics in the School
     c. involvement of academics in School development
     d. election/selection of the Dean (Head of School)

Theme 4: The Role of Academics   • The traditional role of the academic   • Changes in the role; the emphasis on teaching / research / administration; workload; and the emphasis on the performance of academics
Theme 5: Autonomy and Control   • Changes in academic freedom/autonomy since the implementation of change   • Evidence for more overt control of academics   • Evidence for more accountability of academics
General Issues   • Successes and failures of the change programme in terms of the life of an academic

Data collection continued until 'saturation' point was reached when it became evident that further research was unlikely to reveal any new insights into the educational problem being examined (see Robson, 2002). This also served to recognise the flexible nature inherent in the design of qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

3.5.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study is designed to assist in testing and refining the research design and research questions (see Mason, 2002; Yin, 2003). During the pilot stage of this research, a total of three interviews were conducted – two with academics from different subject areas and one with a manager-academic. Interviews during the pilot stage were used to assist in identifying ambiguous questions and in identifying gaps in areas to be covered during the interviews. Following the pilot study, a number of changes were made to the interview questions. For example, rather than specifically asking about whether academics can isolate themselves from the effects of change, data on this issue could instead be gleaned by analysing the response of academics to the changes. While the pilot study gathered data on the role of academics in the governance of UCD, it became evident following completion of the pilot study that their current role in policy development also needed to be explored. It was also necessary to move this question relating to governance and policy-making to the section on decision-making, rather than addressing it in the concluding part of the interview.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethics guidelines of both UCD and the University of Bath were followed. Once permission to conduct the research was granted, an ethics exemption form was returned to UCD's Human Research Ethics (Humanities) Committee and this ethics exemption was granted. In addition, the University of Bath ethics approval form was submitted for approval prior to the research being conducted and approval was

granted. A number of additional ethical considerations were borne in mind. BERA (2004) specifies the researcher's ethical responsibilities, including the need to secure the informed consent of participants, the need to acknowledge the right of informants to withdraw from the research and to report data in an anonymous and confidential manner. Oppenheim (1991) further suggests the need to uphold the privacy rights of informants. An explanation of the purpose of the research was provided to each informant (see Burgess, 1984) and each was asked to sign an informed consent form acknowledging that he/she understood each of the ethical issues outlined above and that he/she was agreeable to the interview being recorded. A copy of the informed consent form can be found in Appendix 5. As mentioned in Section 3.5.2, following each interview, the transcript was typed up verbatim and a copy was sent to each interviewee, thus allowing an opportunity to comment on whether his/her views were reflected accurately and whether any factual errors or mis-understandings were evident – such comments were then used to amend the transcript and subsequent report.

Finally, the research questions set out in this enquiry represent areas of personal interest to me as a university employee. Indeed, Schostak (2002) acknowledges the role played by the researcher's interests in dictating what is particularly relevant to any research. Consequently, one of the challenges for researchers is to avoid any bias occurring where the researcher has a personal interest in the study (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). To ensure that my own interests did not play too great a part in identifying the issues to be researched, careful attention was paid to allowing the literature surrounding the research questions to inform the areas to be investigated. Furthermore, as I am employed in a predominantly professional/administrative capacity (but with a minor teaching function) within the School, researcher bias was not a cause for concern in this research.

The next section provides an overview of how the data analysis phase was conducted.

3.7 Data Analysis

Cohen *et al* (2007) note that the purpose of the data analysis stage of research is to summarise, describe, interpret and explain the data gathered. Bryman and Burgess (1994) suggest that the analysis and coding of qualitative data is informed by the grounded theory approach to data analysis and this was the approach adopted during this research. Grounded theory is one of the most common means of analysing qualitative data (Bryman, 2008) and involves the continuous interplay between the collection and analysis of data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Indeed, the continuous analysis of data throughout the fieldwork stage has been highlighted as important as it allows for the early analysis of data collected (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2000). During the data analysis phase, my aim was to interpret and explain the data and then to generalise to theory. The inferences contained therein can then be tested using other cases in Irish HE and beyond, thereby contributing to theory and to a better understanding of how change is impacting upon traditional notions of academic work and life.

A justification for using the grounded theory approach is provided by Bryman and Burgess who cite the view of Richards and Richards that such an approach allows researchers to derive theory and concepts from the data gathered. It avoids the researcher being overloaded by data (Cohen *et al*, 2007) and such a reflexive research process avoids the possibility of the researcher imposing themes on the research (Churchman, 2002). Indeed, Bryman (2004) has suggested that the researcher can easily identify themes that are emerging and which can be probed further, or in a more direct manner, during interviews. While the literature review helped to identify key pressures impacting upon HE at a global, national and institutional level, such as globalisation, the changing role of the State, marketisation, managerialism, and bureaucratisation, the grounded theory approach of continuous data analysis allowed for connections to be drawn between these pressures and changing notions of academic life and work as portrayed by the research participants. Yet, a number of limitations or criticisms of grounded theory

have been highlighted by Bryman (2008). The considerable time taken to transcribe interviews can sometimes make it difficult to engage in a continuous process of 'data collection and conceptualization' (p.549). Grounded theory may also result in the fragmentation of data and in the context in which the research is being conducted being lost sight of. Also, while this approach to data analysis results in concepts being generated, it can sometimes be difficult to see what theory is being produced. Another notable limitation of grounded theory is that, while it is suggested that researchers should be mindful of existing concepts and theories and are already inherently sensitive to these, this approach to data analysis encourages researchers to avoid thinking about 'relevant theories or concepts' until the later stages of the data analysis process.

One of the key elements of a grounded theory approach is the coding of data and the identification and organisation of the elements of the data deemed theoretically significant (Bryman, 2008). Such coding allows the researcher to 'make sense of textual data', to assign meaning to a word, phrase or paragraph in the data gathered (Basit, 2003: p.143). The role of coding is summed up by Basit below (2003, p.152):

> What coding does, above all, is to allow the researcher to communicate and connect with the data to facilitate the comprehension of the emerging phenomena and to generate theory grounded in the data.

The identification and noting of thematic patterns emanating from the data is considered an important element of qualitative research, and particularly at the data analysis stage (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Cohen *et al*, 2007; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Such thematic analysis was highlighted by Bryman (2008) as one of the most common means of analysing qualitative data and this approach was considered most appropriate for this research. The qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS ti, was used and all interview transcripts were imported into this software. The use of such

software allows for the management of data and theoretical ideas gathered and the generation of searches of key words or concepts (Bazeley, 2007).

Prior to the start of the primary data collection phase, a project was created in ATLAS. An initial set of codes was created based on themes that emerged from the literature and these provided a starting point for analysing the data. Throughout the research, I was mindful of the need to avoid presenting only the findings which supported my initial thoughts on the themes and, instead, careful attention was paid to identifying, not only the typicality of the research findings, but also the variety of viewpoints (sometimes diverging) that emerged. Following each interview, the transcript was coded on a sentence or paragraph basis, using an open coding approach, i.e. the data collected was broken down and categorised (open coding is a type of coding used in developing grounded theory, as highlighted by Strauss and Corbin, 1990). While an initial set of codes was established prior to the data analysis stage, an open mind was maintained on the codes and categories derived as the research progressed. Once all interviews had been completed and coded, the entire coding process was reviewed a second time to ensure a consistent coding approach was followed. A review of all codes generated was undertaken to draw connections between codes and to categorise groups of codes (see Appendix 6 for a list of free codes created prior to data coding and Appendix 7 for a final list of codes generated during coding). This approach to data analysis allowed for the participants 'story' to emerge from the data. Throughout Chapter 5, direct quotations from those interviewed are presented as a means of portraying this 'story'.

While the use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is advantageous, it can also have a number of potential drawbacks. Firstly, while it can be used to assist the researcher in analysing data gathered, it does not actually carry out the analysis for the researcher (Weitzman, 2000). The researcher must still identify the codes and categories to be used (Cohen *et al*, 2007). Secondly, the time-consuming nature of coding associated with the use of CAQDAS has been noted,

along with its potential to separate the researcher from the data gathered (Kelle, 2004). Thirdly, the need for the researcher to exercise caution over allowing the coding process to 'become an end in itself' has been noted (Richards, 1999: p.420).

Throughout the entire data collection and coding process, I remained cognisant of a number of potential pitfalls. In attempting to avoid the possibility of mis-interpreting any evidence gathered during the research, I followed the guidance provided by Dey (1993). He advocated the need to consider diverging interpretations of the data and to avoid making early judgements on the data. Oppenheim (1991) further emphasises the value of identifying and probing what is *not* being said by research participants. Careful attention to these issues, particularly during coding, helped to ensure that the data was not merely reduced into a series of codes. Instead, the coding of transcripts served as a means of re-constructing the data and developing key themes and concepts.

The next section will identify a number of means by which the quality of this research can be evaluated.

3.8 Evaluating the Quality of the Research

This section will outline how the quality of my research findings was enhanced through a process of triangulation and will outline the criteria upon which this research can be evaluated. Triangulation can be defined as the utilisation of multiple sources of data to explain a particular point (see Marshall and Rossman, 1995). While the replication of educational research may not always be possible due to continuous change, triangulation can be used as a means of achieving internal validity (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). To facilitate data triangulation during my research, 'within method' triangulation was considered appropriate (see Denzin, cited by Burgess, 1984). It was possible, for example, to compare the findings from the interview with the Dean with those from the three Directors interviewed. Furthermore, a comparison of the findings from interviews with not only the Dean

and Directors, but also the Heads of Subject Areas and academics themselves allowed for some interpretation of the extent to which the findings from the 'grassroots' level converged or diverged with the findings from the so-called 'manager-academics'. Mathison (1988) identifies the convergence, inconsistency and contradiction outcomes of triangulation and these three outcomes featured as one of my aims throughout the data analysis and presentation of findings stages of my research.

A number of criteria put forward by Guba and Lincoln and Lincoln and Guba (as cited by Bryman, 2004) are appropriate for assessing this piece of qualitative research. They suggest that qualitative researchers use the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity as alternatives to reliability and validity criterion. The trustworthiness of my findings can be judged by considering whether the principles of good research practice have been followed. It is important to note that I was cognisant of the reflexive nature of research and how the researcher's life experiences and values help shape the meaning and sense made of the social world (Denscombe, 1998). This notion of reflexivity, i.e. 'ongoing self-awareness' that occurs during research and that makes the 'practice and construction of knowledge within research' available to the reader (Pillow, 2003: p.178), was borne in mind throughout this research enquiry. My research, therefore, can be judged on the extent to which my 'personal values or theoretical inclinations' (p.276) have influenced how the research was conducted and how the findings were arrived at. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest criteria for evaluating the authenticity of qualitative research and one issue they highlight is pertinent in assessing my research – i.e. the extent to which the research has allowed for a fair representation of the viewpoints of those in the setting under investigation. In ensuring this criteria can be met, careful attention was paid to the inclusion of a cross-section of participants, not only from different subject areas, but also from the various lecturer grades and from those in a manager-academic position in addition to the 'grassroots' academics.

Morse *et al* (2002) have questioned the use of criteria, such as trustworthiness, as a means of ensuring a rigorous approach to qualitative research. They argue that such criteria focus on the assessment of the end product of the research and do not sufficiently address the verification process during the research process itself. However, adequate verification strategies were also followed during my research through the collection of primary data until saturation point was reached and by remaining receptive to new ideas and emerging themes throughout the interviews. Finally, I would argue that a measure of the internal validity of the research findings is necessary in evaluating the quality of this research, i.e. the extent to which the research findings accurately portray the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen *et al*, 2007). My research was conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner, particularly in relation to the study's design and the decisions made with regard to the key aspects of academic life and work that were investigated. A rigorous approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation was adopted (see Sections 3.5 and 3.7) and member checks were conducted following each interview (see Section 3.6). On the question of reliability of the findings, I would, however, argue that the external reliability criterion is inappropriate as it would prove impossible to replicate the findings of this study, due to the magnitude and ongoing nature of the changes that have/are taking place at UCD.

The final section below presents the main strengths and limitations of this piece of research.

3.9 Strengths and Limitations

The research design incorporates a number of strengths. The strengths inherent in the case study approach are evident (Nisbet and Watt cited by Cohen *et al*, 2007), including its ability to take account of unanticipated events during the research; the opportunity to allow data collected 'speak for themselves' (p.256); and its ability to identify unique features that may help to explain a phenomenon. Cohen *et al* (2007) cite Hitchcock and Hughes who note that one of the cornerstones of case study

research is its ability to examine individuals or groups and to understand their perceptions of the particular phenomena. It might be suggested that the greatest strength of the case study approach is that it allows the phenomenon under investigation to be seen 'through the eyes of participants' (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p.257). It has the strength of allowing informants' perceptions of the phenomenon under investigation to be reported (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) and allows the researcher to take account of the contextual uniqueness and complexity in the interplay between, for example, the events and human relationships that exist in the research setting (Cohen *et al*, 2007).

The volume of data gathered, and the combination of both primary and secondary data, allowed for a thorough exploration of the research question. The opportunity for data triangulation through the utilisation of a combination of interviews and documentary analysis represents a strength of the research design. Among the strengths of interviews are their ability to derive in-depth and insightful information; their ability to allow for flexibility in the questioning approach adopted and for the unveiling of the informants' opinions on the research area (Denscombe, 1998). Kvale (1996) puts forward, perhaps, one of the greatest strengths of interviews when he suggests that they provide a powerful means of gaining insight into 'the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world' (p.70). Furthermore, a comprehensive schedule of interviews, drawing on faculty members on different lecturer grades and with varying lengths of service, allowed for a diverse range of viewpoints to be reported on. Finally, the inclusion of a pilot study provided an opportunity to test and refine the research question and interview questions.

A further strength of this research was the avoidance of any form of bias, either in the secondary or primary data employed. With respect to secondary data, Bryman (2008) suggests that documents from private sources cannot be assumed to be objective and free of bias and, therefore, they should only be 'examined in the context of other sources of data' (p.522). With this in mind, the internal UCD

reports were primarily used to collate the timeline and factual account of the change programme and the potentially subjective nature of the reports was borne in mind. Berg (2007) cites Yin who suggests that one of the key skills of case study researchers is the 'unbiased interpretation of the data', with Yin noting that the extent of a researcher's bias can be tested by examining the degree to which the research is open to diverging findings (p.289). As noted in Section 3.7, this reporting of contradictory and diverging viewpoints gathered during the collection of primary data helped to ensure the avoidance of any form of bias when reporting the research findings.

However, the research design does have a number of limitations. It would have been preferable to have collected panel data – i.e. data collected both before and after the introduction of the UCD change programme – as this would have avoided the possibility of any memory mistakes on the part of my research participants. My study only focused on one HEI and one School within that institution and only included full-time permanent academic staff within the School. Future research might consider including part-time and temporary academic staff within the School. Also, given the somewhat different impact that the changes might be expected to have had on administrative and professional staff, any future study of change in HE might include this group to gain a broader understanding of the impact of institutional change on all categories of staff.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research design selected to address the impact of an extensive programme of change on traditional notions of academic work and life at UCD School of Business. The research design set out to scrutinise the impetus for the change programme and its impact upon three particular dimensions of academic life, namely the role of academics, decision-making approaches and collegiality, and the autonomy of, and control over, academics. The qualitative research design has

its foundations in the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm and the assumptions underpinning this paradigm incorporate the belief that the search for absolute or objective truth was not an appropriate research aim and that meaning arises from our interactions with the world. To capture these meanings, an intrinsic case study was undertaken, the purpose of which was to gain a better understanding of the research question and, also, of the particular case in question. Twenty-eight interviews (including the pilot study) were conducted with academics across all six subject areas and with manager-academics. A grounded theory approach to data analysis was employed and this allowed for a continuous interplay between the collection and analysis of data.

The next chapter presents an overview of the background to, and key elements of, the UCD change programme.

CHAPTER 4 –

THE UCD CHANGE PROGRAMME

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief overview of Irish HE and is followed by an introduction to UCD and the School of Business. The purpose of the chapter is, firstly, to present an overview of HE developments at national level and, secondly, to provide a timeline and discussion of the contextual background to the UCD change programme and the key changes introduced at institutional and School levels. The chapter aims to set the scene for the presentation of the research findings in Chapter 5.

4.2 HE in Ireland

The Irish HE system is a binary one (Killeavy and Coleman, 2001), comprising of seven universities and fourteen institutes of technology. The global environment is playing an increasing role in shaping a new competitive HE setting in Ireland (Higher Education Authority, 2004) and, in general, the changed character of Irish HE today has been noted (Higher Education Authority, 2008a). In terms of national competitiveness, the prioritisation of research has become a central feature of the new HE environment (Clancy, 2007). However, the funding of HE has been the subject of much discussion in recent years, with the OECD noting the heavy dependence of Irish HEIs on State funding (2006). The State grant represented 41% of UCD's total income in 2001/02, compared to 38% in 2007/08 (University College Dublin, 2010). Indeed, much of the initial stimulus for recent change across Irish universities has come in the form of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLI), introduced in 1998, which has resulted in the allocation of funding on a competitive basis and on 'the quality and coherence of each institution's research strategy' (Clancy, 2007: p.116). In 2006, the State introduced the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) which served to incentivise institutions to make funding applications that would support efforts towards organisational re-structuring, to improve access to HE, to improve research and to implement innovations in teaching and learning (Ó Riain, 2007).

A number of other HE developments have been evident including modularisation and the increasing use of performance indicators (Garavan *et al*, 1999). The HEA – the statutory body responsible for the planning, development and funding of Irish HE – has argued that policy change is needed to deal with the management, governance, autonomy and finance of HEIs so that they are adequately positioned to meet future challenges (2004). Indeed, the need for institutions to adopt a more strategic approach to their operations has also been called for (HEA, 2008a). A particularly significant development was the introduction of the Universities Act, 1997 (Clancy, 2005) and this legislation has served to stimulate change in the sector. The Act conferred substantial autonomy on universities (OECD, 2006) and signaled a change, in particular, in the role of the Chief Officer. Section 24 (3) defines the role of the chief officer to 'manage and direct the university in its academic, administrative, financial, personnel and other activities'.

4.3 UCD and the Change Programme

UCD was founded in 1908 and is the largest Irish university, with a population of 1,000 academic staff and 23,000 students. In the early 1990s, UCD experienced declining first preference course choices among school leavers (University College Dublin, 2004), yet, demand for places continued to far exceed supply. However, from the late 1990s the university began to witness more intense national and international competition, alongside declining government funding and curriculum policy developments emanating from Europe. Furthermore, weaknesses in the university's governance, management decision-making and resource allocation processes had become increasingly evident (University College Dublin, 2003/2004). A consultancy group engaged by the university in 2004 drew attention to the overly complex and fragmented nature of its structure (Washington Advisory Group, 2004). At the time, the university consisted of eleven faculties and eighty-nine departments. This resulted in duplicative functions, an absence of synergy across departments, a lack of accountability and transparency in decision-making, limited opportunities for inter-disciplinary collaboration and a rigid curriculum.

The overall aim of the change programme was to become a research-intensive university, to create a dynamic academic structure that would support interdisciplinary research, to strive for excellence in teaching and learning and to provide for a high-quality student experience. Table 4.1 presents a broad timeline of the UCD change programme (this is not intended to be comprehensive).

Table 4.1 Timeline of Changes and Developments at UCD Since 2003

Year	Development
2003	• European Universities Association – Institutional Review of UCD • Senior Management Review
2004	• Appointment of a new university President • Appointment of Vice-Presidents / Senior Management Team • Change consultation process across Faculties/Departments • 'Realising the Vision and Strategic Planning Process' – Presentations by the President to the Governing Authority • Washington Advisory Group Report
2005	• Appointment of an Executive Dean, School of Business • Academic Structures at UCD – Discussion Document • Change Management Taskforces Report • Implementation of new organisational structures – abolition of Departments and removal of Faculty meetings • University Strategic Plan 2005 – 2008: Creating the Future • Modularisation of undergraduate programmes • Introduction of new grade approvals process • Revision / development of the internal promotions benchmarks
2006	• Modularisation of graduate programmes
2007	• Mercator Survey: A Review of UCD's Strategic Plan – Perspectives of Key Stakeholder Groups • Research productivity criteria developed within the School • European Universities Association – Mid-Term Review Report
2008	• University Project Reports: Communications and Decision-Making in New Academic Structures and Academic Workload Models • Implementation of a Performance Management and Development System
2010	• University Strategic Plan to 2014: Forming Global Minds • Full implementation of workload model planned at School level

A new UCD President was appointed in 2004, following for the first time, an international search and selection process, and the university has undergone an extensive programme of change since this appointment. During the same year, a strategic planning dialogue began and highlighted the need to align the structures and activities of the university with its overall strategy. Following this process of dialogue, a series of changes were implemented, one of the most significant of which resulted in the re-structuring of the entire university and the creation of five Colleges and thirty-four Schools (Appendix 8 provides an overview of the current College and School structure). The primary aims of the re-structuring are best summed up by the below quotation from the newly appointed President at the time (University College Dublin, 2005b).

> ……..we have a sub-optimal level of collaboration between individuals working different disciplines, and this has a negative impact on research collaboration. We have many more academic staff performing administrative duties than is necessary, so one of the benefits of the restructuring will be to free up our talented academic staff to do what they do best – research, teaching, discovery and creativity.

Also, the university set about implementing management and governance processes that would allow for greater flexibility and efficiency in its response to an increasingly competitive environment. Of particular significance was the appointment of a senior management team, including full-time Vice-Presidents, (see Appendices 9, 10 and 11 for an overview of the university's organisational chart, governance structure and senior management executive). Entirely new processes surrounding both academic policy development and the governance of degree programmes were established. A new resource allocation model (RAM) was also implemented with funding allocated to Schools on the basis of student numbers, research output and the alignment of activities with the university's strategic priorities.

Alongside the above organisational re-structuring and changes in management and governance arrangements, the university set about radically reforming its entire

curriculum and modularised all undergraduate and graduate programmes. The impetus for this curriculum reform stemmed from the University's drive to meet Ireland's obligations under the Bologna Agreement and its aim to create greater opportunities to internationalise its activities and student population. This curriculum reform resulted in, for example, a more formalised approach to the documentation of module content, learning outcomes and assessment strategies and the implementation of information technology systems, such as the Module Descriptor and Curriculum Management tool to facilitate such documentation. At the same time, a new grade approvals process was introduced resulting in the need for academics to engage with all aspects of the process, including grade entry.

Many of the human resource practices surrounding the appointment and management of academic staff were considerably overhauled. Among the changes introduced were the recruitment of so-called internationally recognised 'star' academics and appropriate remuneration packages were put in place to attract such staff; the further development of the internal promotions scheme for academics that provided much greater clarity in the promotional benchmarks; and the implementation of a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).

The changes implemented across UCD, as described above, have radically transformed many aspects of the university's operations. Indeed, the changes implemented have positively impacted upon the university's international ranking, with the ranking climbing from 221 in 2005 to 94 in 2010 according to the Times Higher Education rankings.

The next section will discuss the key changes introduced in the School of Business.

4.4 The School of Business and the Change Programme

The Faculty of Commerce was established in 1908 and during the re-structuring process it became the School of Business. The School comprises both an

undergraduate and graduate school, with 6,600 students enrolled. The Dean had traditionally been elected by members of the Faculty, however, this changed in 2005 with the appointment of an Executive Dean at School level through an international search and selection process. A senior management team and an Executive Committee are now responsible for the School's overall direction and management (see Appendix 12). The School comprises six subject areas (see Chapter 3), each led by a Head of Subject Area. The overall structure of the School is presented in Appendix 13. Responsibility for the academic governance of programmes falls within the remit of both the Undergraduate and Graduate Business Programme Boards (see Appendices 14 and 15 for the membership of these boards).

The change programme also impacted upon the School in a number of other significant ways. Firstly, the School became the main unit for research activity, teaching provision, planning and resource allocation and the management of academic staff (the Department had been the main unit prior to the change programme). While line management responsibility for academic staff lay with the Head of Department previously, such responsibility shifted to the Executive Dean following the change programme. Secondly, the re-structuring resulted in the abolition of Departments (with statutory powers) and their replacement with Subject Areas (with no statutory powers). Thirdly, management and decision-making processes within the School changed radically with: (i) the abolition of faculty meetings where all tenured staff participated in decision-making and their replacement with School meetings used to disseminate information on recent developments; and (ii) the establishment of a senior management team and an Executive Committee. Two other particularly significant changes were initiated – (i) the development of an academic workload model, the first phase of which set out a standard teaching load of four courses for research and service-active faculty and the second phase of which was being rolled out in 2010/11 where faculty members inactive in the above areas would be required to deliver eight courses; and (ii) a greater emphasis on the research output of staff and the development of a targeted list of peer reviewed journals.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has served to provide an insight into the nature of the change programme at UCD and its breadth and complexity. Throughout the change programme, anecdotal evidence appeared to suggest that the changes implemented at UCD were impacting upon traditional notions of academic life and work across the university. The next chapter will present the findings from the research and will shed light on the extent to which the change programme has actually impacted upon academic staff within the School from the perspective of this cohort of staff.

CHAPTER 5 –
RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings around five themes: (i) change at UCD; (ii) academics' role in decision-making; (iii) collegiality; (iv) the changing nature of the academic role; and (v) academic freedom. Themes (ii) to (v) have emanated from the literature and an analysis of these themes helps us understand how the life and work of the academic is being re-shaped by institutional change. Each section will conclude with a table summarising the issues that emerged during my research. Table 5.1 below presents an overview of the issues explored during the research.

Table 5.1 Thematic Issues Explored During the Research

Changes at UCD	- Impetus for change - The nature of the changes introduced - The management of change - Academics' reactions and coping strategies
Decision-Making	- Traditional dominance of academics in university governance and policy-making - Academics' involvement in Faculty/School decision-making prior to, and since, the change programme
Collegiality	Collegiality prior to, and since, the change programme
The Role of the Academic	- Changing role of the academic - Administrative duties - Workload - Performance pressures - Accountability
Academic Freedom	- Traditional meaning of academic freedom - Changes in individual autonomy - Control over academics

5.2 Perspectives of Academics on Change at UCD

This section presents academics' perspectives on why such large-scale change occurred at UCD; how change that has occurred there compares to other HEIs; the nature of the changes implemented; how the implementation of change was managed; and how faculty members have responded.

5.2.1 Perceived Impetus for Change

In general, those interviewed acknowledged a somewhat changing set of national priorities, with a number of external pressures for change evident, particularly the need to have 'a more efficient public sector which would be done by showing that there are less units' (A10). With respect to universities themselves, the need to be 'more efficient and give more value for money' (A1) and to have a more 'modern organisation' (A9) was noted. A3, furthermore, acknowledged that:

> …….there was an increasing view that universities were an important part of the industrial infrastructure of a country and government began to view universities as being instruments of economic policy and to get an alignment of what the departments and the government bodies wanted universities to achieve – that was only ever going to happen if they had a very, very strong centralised decision-making system in universities………

Those interviewed accepted the underlying aims of UCD's Strategic Plan and the broad underlying principles behind the change programme and this also reflects the findings of the Mercator survey. The need for change at UCD was appreciated by many of those interviewed, with A2 suggesting that it 'should have happened a long, long time ago'. It was acknowledged that UCD had been like a 'sleeping giant' (A1) that was 'under-performing' (Dean) and the change programme had 'shaken us out of a comfortable complacency' (A3). A9 noted that the university structures, which had been in place since its foundation, were 'fairly old-fashioned', with A17 noting that these structures had 'been stretched because of bigger staff, bigger student numbers'. Prior to the change programme, the capacity of the university to engage

in strategic planning was compromised by the ability of university constituents to 'block progress on various issues' (A9) and this is best illustrated in the following quotation:

> ………the previous system was prone to endless debate and blocking and a sort of slow response to the change and that, perhaps, a faster chain of command was needed. I think that the feeling was that things should be done quickly and that too much talking about it would actually slow it down (A6).

As a result of the change programme, greater prominence was given to setting more ambitious targets for research output, with a greater emphasis generally being placed on the university's performance. Indeed, the greater emphasis being placed on research has been welcomed by a number of academics, with H1 suggesting that the institutional vision was 'broadly in line with our vision of how things should be which was about being world-class, about being research driven, about doing great teaching, about not accepting second place'. Another academic suggested that he would not still be working for the university had the President not been appointed.

5.2.2 Comparing Change at UCD with Other HEIs

Academics commented on how the changes introduced at UCD compared with those taking place in other HEIs, both nationally and internationally. In comparing change at UCD with other Irish universities, one academic suggested that 'similar changes have taken place in Trinity' (Trinity College Dublin) (D3), with another noting that 'a more negotiated model of change' (H5) was implemented there. It was acknowledged that some changes were first introduced in UCD and then adopted, 'with varying degrees of enthusiasm' (H5), by other Irish institutions. UCD was seen as 'the radical innovator' (H5) with the changes introduced considered to be more 'drastic' (A7) than in any other Irish institution. In comparing the UCD changes with those taking place internationally, there was a suggestion that the university moved towards the American HE system, not only in terms of 'the managerial structures and so on, setting targets and monitoring performance' (H4),

but also in terms of a more 'business attitude' (D1) towards the university and the move towards a modular curriculum.

5.2.3 Academics' Perspectives on the Changes Implemented at University and School Level

The first area of significant university-level change at UCD reported by those interviewed related to its governance structures, the development of a more concerted managerial approach and a 'more hierarchical form of management structure' (A5) and the re-definition of the role of both President and Dean. It was suggested that 'the philosophical approach is definitely more managerial within the university' (H4). In particular, the establishment of a strengthened university management structure, including the appointment of full-time Vice-Presidents, was noted. The change in the process for appointing a President in 2004 signalled a turning point in providing a stimulus for change and since this appointment, 'greater clarity around the sense of ambition for the institution' (D2) and a stronger 'sense of strategy' (H1) has been evident. As suggested by D3:

> …….it all started when the university made a decision that they were not going to necessarily appoint the next President from within………I think there was a mood building up that the environment was changing so much that different skill-sets were required, different capabilities……

The President had a clear ambition to 'put in place a plan to create a university that was not only competitive in Ireland, but very much competitive internationally' (A2). A3 suggested that the President's experience in the U.S. 'was not an irrelevant factor in that he was used to a system where Deans and University Heads had a lot of decision-making authority'. The President 'viewed himself as an Executive' (A14), and by regaining power, he facilitated greater centralised autonomy and control with respect to both funds and decision-making. The perception of some academics was that 'the whole agenda was to pull power back into the Centre for the President to manage and he did that by pulling the teeth out of anything faculty

could do' (A12). While A3 suggested that the university now has 'a greater ability to co-ordinate grand-scale initiatives across the entire university', he noted that the 'trade-off' has been the reduced 'ability to adapt on the ground in the specific environment that's being faced in one little unit in the university'. Indeed, A3 noted the implementation of 'uniform policies' across the university which did not take account of 'the state of development of individual Schools' and that this did not 'lead to optimal results across the entire university'.

At School level, those interviewed highlighted another significant change – the move away from an elected Dean towards an Executive Dean who was appointed following a selection process. A18 referred to the appointment of an Executive Dean as 'a critical turning point'. Indeed, it was widely accepted that this appointment had 'completely changed everything' (D3) and that 'the biggest single change has been the whole notion of governance and executive-style management' (A19). Yet, H1 suggested that such an appointment was 'absolutely the right thing to do'. The Dean himself suggested that being an Executive Dean allows him to 'serve better as a communicator between the university and the School' as the university would see him 'as representing the School and the university'. While one academic had no strong preference for whether the Dean should be elected from within or recruited from outside, many academics acknowledged that 'the trouble is when you have an election it becomes very political' (A1) and that such a process could be 'divisive' (H1 and H2). The move towards a selection process has meant that the appointment of a Dean is now 'less politicised' (H4) and indeed, D2 suggested that now 'people can get on with their job and not have to worry about which camp they're in'. The changes which the new process signalled included the 'formalisation of the role of the Dean' (A4) and a greater ability on the part of the Dean to 'take the lead in driving a strategy' (Dean). It has also created a 'whole new managerial mood' (A1) where more centralised decision-making power resides with the Executive Dean 'without the political baggage that goes with an election process' (H2). Yet, even with this strengthening and formalisation of the Dean's role, another important change was noted by two academics – the substantial loss of

School autonomy, with the School 'more subject to the controls and dictats of the university' (H5) and with less 'credible strategic planning autonomy' (A3).

As reported by those interviewed, one of the consequences of a more prevalent managerial approach has been the increasing dissipation of power away from academics and subject areas and the centralisation and 'acquisition of power by the President' (D3) and Dean. Such centralisation of power has been facilitated by the 'withdrawal of both resources (monetary and decision-making) from the then Departments and Faculties to the Centre' (A10). This dissipation of power was facilitated by the organisational re-structuring and abolition of autonomous Departments and their replacement with Subject Areas with very little real power. The Department had been the main unit of organisation and could 'arrange their own affairs as they saw fit' (A3). Not only were resource allocations made directly to Departments, but more importantly, considerable decision-making authority had resided within Departments. The 'Head of Department really had a lot of power' (H2) and was seen as a 'figurehead' (A11). Re-structuring resulted in the centralisation of decision-making authority at School level and a reduction in the autonomy, 'power' (A12) and decision-making authority of Subject Area Heads, for example, with respect to recruitment and promotions. Yet, A9 suggested that the Dean had always played a role in recruitment and that 'Departments couldn't really do their own thing'. Indeed, this academic suggested that it is reasonable to expect that new recruits should satisfy both School and Subject Area criteria and that recruitment should not be 'entirely a local matter'. Two academics were of the opinion that this aspect of re-structuring had not had any significant impact on them, with A9 suggesting that 'in terms of day-to-day operations, that hasn't made a huge difference' to individual academics. Indeed, A10 commented on the new structure where academics report directly to the Dean instead of the Head of Subject Area by saying that:

> It doesn't matter at all frankly. I don't report anything to the Dean............. so there is a paradox now….if I need a simple form signed, this has to be the Head of School, who is the Dean, who needs to do it and not the

Departmental Head. That's as much as reporting goes. Teaching allocations, everything else, goes through the Subject Area Head.

While many of those interviewed focused on the negative aspects of re-structuring and the resulting loss of Departmental power described above, a small number of academics expressed competing views. D3 suggested that the move from Departments to Schools was a positive development which may not 'bear fruit for a couple of years', but that it has helped to remove 'all these independent kingdoms that would do what they wanted'. Indeed, a small number of academics suggested that the School had not gone far enough in re-organising Departments into Subject Areas. The 'concept of breaking up the old departments was to remove the bunkers and have more co-operation between people' (A5). Yet, the six Departments within the School 'are still there in spirit' (A17) and were simply re-named Subject Areas. A17 noted that the 'subject areas are completely emasculated' and that 'they're essentially getting in the way'.

The second area of significant change identified by those interviewed related to the administration and bureaucratisation of various aspects of the university's operations. H5 suggested that bureaucratisation has occurred despite:

> ……….the guiding rhetoric behind re-structuring which was to make us a lean kind of fit, agile machine that would make things happen very quickly etc. etc. I think the perception I would have is we've become utterly bogged down in bureaucracy of a very heavy-handed kind and we're a much more bureaucratic institution now than we were before re-structuring – in spite of the fact that re-structuring was sold to people as a way of removing all those bureaucratic impediments.

Such bureaucratisation has occurred partly as a result of the re-structuring process itself, but also due to the establishment of new roles, such as Vice-Principals for Teaching and Learning and the module descriptor process. D3 suggested that the centralisation of power highlighted earlier in this section has been facilitated by this growth in bureaucratisation and the creation of senior administrative positions, 'some of whom are not academics'. Indeed, those interviewed noted significant

change both in the professionalisation of university management and in the increasing involvement of non-academic staff in areas, such as academic policy development. The below quotation illustrates this:

> I think what you have seen is an increased level of professionalisation in the university, like in Registry and so on…you see academic policy makers who are not academics themselves…fairly well trained….but they're not core academics, they're administrators…they're making decisions on academic issues (D2).

Yet, one academic expressed an indifferent view on the involvement of non-academic staff in 'decision-making or administration' and commented that, given the large size of the university, 'there's a lot of stuff that needs to be done which academics aren't necessarily capable of doing or interested in doing' (A17).

Those interviewed drew attention to the relationship between curriculum reform and bureaucratisation. While many academics noted the implementation of a modularised curriculum as one element of the change programme, the actual nature of this curriculum reform was not a real cause of concern to those interviewed. They noted the role module descriptors now play in focusing the mind 'in terms of precisely what is it you're trying to do, impart or engender in the actual students' (A2). Indeed, A1 noted that they serve to address a situation where 'some of us were giving students clearer course outlines, details and objectives and others weren't', with both A1 and A5 suggesting that the provision of such information is only 'reasonable'. Indeed, this formalisation and standardisation of the process for providing students with detailed course outlines was highlighted as a positive outcome of modularisation by one academic. Another noted that administrative changes, such as the introduction of module descriptors, 'are actually good, but it takes a while for academics to actually catch up with them' (A4).

The Mercator survey, mentioned in Chapter 3, highlighted the criticism of academics with respect to the technological infrastructure introduced to facilitate a modular environment. There was some consensus among those interviewed during

my research that this infrastructure did impact upon them, particularly in terms of the 'regulations and compliance' requirements around the teaching, learning and assessment process (H3). One academic commented on 'the horrible tools that go with that – Gradebook, module descriptors, the whole GPA process and all that' (H3). Yet, A16 acknowledged that 'the whole clunkiness and alien feeling of the modularisation process has smoothed a bit' since. Indeed, D2 noted a more 'mechanistic' approach to the teaching and learning process, while A9 suggested that these changes were simply 'operational'. This relatively minor impact of the compliance requirements surrounding modularisation is captured by A1 below:

> …….you can kind of forget about the forms, and rituals and the different procedures you have to go through now which you didn't have to go through before – that has changed – so I would see those as nitty gritty things, not as major things.

Other academics noted the problems that resulted from having to develop module descriptors so far in advance, with H3 commenting that:

> It's crazy. Well you have to comply with it. Then people change it and there's murder you know. Because the windows are only open at a certain time, with changing staff and whatever, there's no cognisance of the academic planning process.

Furthermore, the Mercator survey highlighted the dissatisfaction of academics with regard to the efficiency of the examinations process and, indeed, my research participants drew attention to the increased bureaucratisation now evident when making module and grade changes and in the grade entry and grade approvals process in general. Yet, despite these criticisms, D2 suggested that 'there was a lack of bureaucracy before – things were chaotic, exam boards were totally chaotic'. However, he expressed the view that 'we've gone way overboard with the bureaucratisation'. Yet, some of those interviewed expressed more positive views on the examination and grade approvals process, with a small number suggesting that this process has always been 'relatively inefficient' (A5), but that it is now more 'efficient' (A8) and that the introduction of Subject Area Review meetings as part of

the process 'makes a tremendous amount of sense' (A14). H2 suggested that 'there's a much greater element of quality there than there used to be' and, indeed, A2 was positive about the attention now being paid to the establishment of clear grading criteria which he described as an 'extremely good' development.

The final significant development at university level was the implementation of the promotions scheme and this was warmly welcomed by those interviewed. Two critical weaknesses were evident in the old promotions system – it was subject to 'political waves' (H3) and 'far too much influence by certain people' (A11) and it lacked clarity on the promotions benchmarks which 'was a real source of frustration' (A9). The new system 'did de-politicise' promotions (H3) and provided much greater clarity in the benchmarks to be achieved. H1 commented as follows:

> I think what the difference between a new academic joining now or even at mid-career is that they can get out the promotional benchmarks relevant to themselves and they can say, if I do this, I get that.

The new promotions system has served to reinforce the university's goal of becoming a research-intensive institution as it instils in academics an understanding that 'to be promoted you've got to publish papers, you've got to do research' (A1). While A3 suggested that the new system may not have 'brought notable pressure on academics' to change what they were doing':

> ....the career-oriented academics who want to get ahead understand that the promotions system has clear criteria and, therefore, things that are congruent with those criteria they engage in......things that are not congruent with those, they don't (A14).

5.2.4 Academics' Perspectives on the Management and Implementation of Change

Chapter 2 highlighted the dilemma faced by HE leaders with respect to the implementation of change in a top-down or bottom-up manner. Indeed,

dissatisfaction with the manner in which change was managed at UCD and the extent to which academics were involved in the change process was highlighted in the Mercator survey. The overwhelming consensus among those interviewed during my research was that, while academics were involved in the decision to move towards an Executive Dean, there had been very little consultation with, or involvement of, academics during the planning and implementation of the wider university change programme. Yet, two academics expressed a contrary view by asserting that 'selected academics were involved' (A19) to 'lend colour, cosmetic support' to the change initiatives (H2). There was a view among many academics that while feedback was 'solicited' (A10), a 'veneer of involvement' existed (A6), the outcome of which was that 'they were not really listened to' (A17). There was a sense that the outcome of the change process was 'pretty much pre-determined' (D1) and that 'the process had probably moved forward quite a bit before the academics were consulted' (A4). Yet, one academic indicated that he did not want to be involved and that he had as much involvement as he wanted to have. Indeed, A17 expressed disappointment that 'there were opportunities to have real, important discussions about what kind of a place do we want to be' during the change process and this opportunity was lost. While it was noted that change was 'driven very much from the top' (A1), at the same time A6 suggested that 'when you need big change, you need to put someone in there who can make the tough decisions'. Some views were expressed by those interviewed that 'it would certainly never have happened had it been from the bottom up' or where consensus was sought (D1) as 'it's difficult to take everybody's view on board' (A8).

5.2.5 Reactions of Academics and their Coping Strategies

The evidence from my research suggests that academics reacted to the change programme in a variety of ways. One academic, highlighted the existence of a group of staff 'who have had some management experience' in the School and who were aware of the 'realities' of the HE environment and that, generally, this group would have been in favour of the changes (D3). The remainder of those interviewed

generally placed faculty members in one of two categories – faculty members who embraced the changes (a minority) and those who have dis-engaged as a result of the changes introduced (the majority). One interviewee summed up the reaction of academics, as follows (A3):

> In essence, either people have jumped on board the train and embraced those changes or they haven't. I think, effectively, we have two cohorts of staff…we have a disaffected group of staff, who don't, either for philosophical reasons or due to lack of productivity, don't like the new system and unfortunately a proportion of those faculty have disengaged and then we have a cohort of faculty who in varying degrees have embraced the changes.

The 'huge loss of morale' (A17) suffered by academics was cited as one of the most significant failures of the change programme. The overwhelming sentiment expressed by those interviewed was one of 'discontent' (A3), with academics feeling increasingly 'disengaged' (A10, A14, D1 and D2), 'disconnected' (A7) and 'disenfranchised' (A16 and A17). One academic (A18) who was involved in arguing 'steadfastly against what was happening', and who described himself as feeling 'deflated, dejected, disinterested, disheartened' when this argument was 'lost', suggested that 'people recovered at different speeds'. It was widely acknowledged that many academics opted to 'keep their heads down' (H5), 'batten down the hatches' (A12) and adopted an individualistic approach by looking after themselves and simply 'getting on with the job and just staying out of it' (A5). In the words of D3:

> …….they're not out on the streets opposing it. In other words, in many cases they are simply turned off and have nothing to do with it. They're not going to oppose it publicly but they're going to do nothing to support it. They've withdrawn.

Yet, despite such views, A2 suggested that such talk of 'morale being low, lack of consultation' did not 'make sense' to him and he questioned why changes at university level 'should impact on the morale of individual academics'. Furthermore, H2 suggested that 'morale was always bad' and was, therefore, not

necessarily something which had resulted from this most recent change programme. Other academics commented that the most significant outcome of the change has been in terms of the overall 'climate and feeling' (A10) in the School, with A4 noting that where the real failure lies is in the areas that you cannot 'measure', such as collegiality and in the institution's 'culture or values'. Academics suggested that what has resulted is 'the squeezing out of the extra investment which academics were prepared to put in' (A19) and a loss of institutional goodwill. A17 suggested that while 'there had been an awful lot of goodwill there previously', it is 'more localised' now. D2 noted that what has happened is that the willingness of academics to contribute to 'service or institution building' has declined. Indeed, some academics commented on how their 'sense of wanting to do something for the institution' (A17) and their loyalty and commitment to the university have been damaged as a consequence of the changes and, particularly, the manner of their introduction, thus acknowledging a decline in behavioural collegiality. As noted by H5 –

> What has suffered is what you could call organisational commitment – the commitment to what the university purports to want to do – that's gone entirely.

Those interviewed commented on how this decline in institutional commitment and goodwill has manifested itself, with some noting a 'lower willingness to do things without clear rewards' (A10) and reduced 'reciprocality when it comes to doing favours or helping each other out' (A16). Furthermore, the presence of a considerable degree of 'staff apathy' (A13) was noted, with A18 suggesting that 'people are not as willing to participate in joint efforts for the School's promotion and development' as a result of the implementation of the change programme. Perhaps, though, the most notable outcome of the change programme has been the diminished visibility and 'physical presence' (A14) of academics around the School with many now 'working behind closed doors' (A1). A16 commented that he 'would go long periods' without seeing many of his colleagues now, while others suggested that faculty members are now spending more time working from home.

Indeed, A13 expressed a view that academics are now 'getting on with the job and minimising contact with students and minimising on the administrative duties'. This reduced visibility has been noted as one of the main 'self-protection' (A19) and coping strategies adopted by academics during the change process. The tendency for academics to be less visible was also noted as a likely outcome of a greater institutional focus on research output, with A14 commenting that 'if the atmosphere isn't increasing their research productivity and they're rational, they return to home'. Indeed, a small number of academics suggested that, perhaps, the positive outcome of this reduced visibility of staff has been an increase in productivity which 'has benefited their own careers and their own publication records, and ultimately benefited the School's' (A18), with staff now 'more focused' (A1). Finally, in terms of the regulations and compliance requirements surrounding modularisation and the need to prepare module descriptors, the coping strategy adopted by a number of academics is to submit very 'broad' (D2), and 'generic' (A10) descriptors in their 'vaguest' form (A10).

To conclude this section, Table 5.2 presents a summary of the key points raised by the academics interviewed in relation to the change programme.

Table 5.2 Key Points Raised by Academics in Relation to UCD Change

Changes at University level	• Strategic planning • Strengthened management structure • Research focus • Appointment of President & centralisation of power • Involvement of non-academics in policy-making • Organisational re-structuring • Modularisation • Bureaucratisation • Promotions scheme
Changes at School level	• Abolition of Departments • Heads of Subject Areas: reduced power & influence • Appointment of Executive Dean • Reduced autonomy
Impetus for Change	• Under-performance of university • Complacency • Old-fashioned structures • Appointment of President • Public Sector efficiency • Alignment with national policy
Management and Implementation of Change	• Staff consultation and involvement - dissatisfaction • Top-down approach
Response of Academics to the Change Programme	• Loss of morale / dis-engagement • Loss of goodwill & declining institutional commitment • Diminished visibility of academics

5.3 Perspectives on the Role of Academics in Decision-Making

Chapter 2 highlighted the traditionally participative approach to institutional governance and decision-making and noted the traditional place of academics at the heart of the institution. This section examines the traditional dominance of

academics in UCD governance and describes how a significant shift has occurred in their involvement in School decision-making since the implementation of the change programme.

5.3.1 Traditional Dominance of Academics in UCD Governance and Policy-Making

Those interviewed suggested that, traditionally, 'they were certainly dominant in terms of everything to do with academics' (D3) and there was a general view that they had been 'more dominant in previous years in terms of policy, organisation and planning and implementation' (H4). Academics saw themselves as 'the main decision-makers' (D2) and 'there was a lot more weight attached to what they said' (A6). There was a sense, on the part of some academics, that the elected nature of past Presidents, Registrars and Deans meant that 'they did have to think what the academic's view was' (A14). A3 commented that:

> I'm not saying that past Presidents never had any initiatives or never tried to get anything through, but they had to do it in a much more discursive fashion, that they would have to have come round to Faculties, explain proposals, but ultimately the Faculties would vote.

Those interviewed reflected on the extent to which academics remain dominant in university governance and policy-making. D1 noted that all central university decisions are still made by a core group of three academics – the President, the Registrar and the Vice-President for Research – and, in this sense, 'the university is still primarily driven by academics'. However, he noted that the key difference now is that 'they're driven by academics in a more executive kind of fashion as opposed to a collegial sort of fashion' (D1). Indeed, the general feeling among those interviewed was that they are no longer involved to any 'significant extent' (A5) and that 'policy-making is largely now out of the hands of academics' (H5). However, the reduced input of academics in university governance was not seen as a negative development by all those interviewed. Indeed, one academic commented that

academics 'lived in a glorious contained, self-contained environment that reality permeated only slightly' and questioned whether it was always a good idea that academics should decide on policy matters (A19). A9 commented as follows:

> I wouldn't necessarily think that's a bad thing. I think getting consensus among academics is a very hard thing to do. They're such a diverse group and they can be very narrow-minded and very small-minded about their own little part of the world, so it's probably better to have people at the Centre pushing strategic change who can just impose it on Schools and Colleges, rather than having to negotiate with each and every one.

5.3.2 The Role of Academics in Faculty Decision-Making Prior to the Change Programme

Those interviewed acknowledged that Faculty meetings were the 'main way faculty members could voice an opinion about issues' (D2). However, a variety of views emerged regarding the extent to which these meetings represented a real forum for participative decision-making. On the positive side, they provided academics with an opportunity to 'have an input by either introducing something or opposing something' (H5). In the words of A3:

> ....there was a feeling that, at the very least, any member of Faculty could say their piece in a Faculty meeting. Perhaps, they would be listened to, perhaps they wouldn't. But at least they had a voice …….

Indeed, A16 suggested that a great deal of power resided at these meetings and that it was very much 'a body deciding its own destiny'. Faculty meetings were attended by the President and, therefore, there was a feeling that this resulted in more 'inclusive decision-making' (A1) and academics felt they could make their particular views known to the President which could, in turn, shape decisions. Prior to re-structuring, Deans were considered 'secretaries of the Faculty more or less' (D1). Therefore, 'if something was really contentious, it went to a vote and then they were bound by it' (D1). A 'consensus mood' (H2) generally existed where academics could raise an issue and 'it had to be discussed' (A5). While these meetings allowed

academics to block or veto a proposal, decisions were rarely put to a vote and were, instead, made on a more 'negotiated' (A4) basis. However, A17 suggested that 'we have to be careful in terms of idealising the past and I don't think you ever had this golden age'. While such meetings engaged academics, 'it didn't suit a situation of wanting to change rapidly' (A11). Indeed, A19 commented that it was a 'medieval' notion. Some academics suggested that Faculty meetings were 'ineffective' (A10) and were not a 'productive' use of their time, with H3 commenting that they resulted in 'points scoring' between 'factions' rather than real decision-making. One relatively junior faculty member suggested that he was quite 'mindful' (A12) of his place at Faculty meetings, while a second (A18) felt that they 'inhibited many junior colleagues from participating and they really had to build up the courage to stand up' and that –

> ....yes, there was participation, yes, there was consultation, but I think it was the privilege of those who had the status to contribute (A18).

Those interviewed observed that, even though such meetings were a forum where academics 'could stand up and be listened to' (A13) and where efforts were made to 'bring people on board' (A12), there was also a sense that they weren't 'particularly democratic' (A13) and were 'managed' (A11) and 'highly choreographed' (D2), with many decisions 'made well before the Faculty meeting' (D2). In the words of one academic, they 'had a veneer of people having an input' (A19). Another academic suggested that 'a small coterie of Professors controlled things under the former Faculty structure' (H5). One academic commented that 'there were always nebulous powers in place that had something to say that were never quite visible to the ordinary academic' (A15). Indeed, H4 commented that attendance at Faculty meetings 'had declined consistently in the number of years before the new situation emerged' and that such meetings were not a 'great example' of collegiality.

Yet, while Faculty meetings might not have been seen as 'this madly integrated, collegiate, collective body' (A13), 'the collectiveness was the safety valve that could be stopped and people could ask questions and people could be brought to account'

(A13). One academic felt that Faculty meetings were more a 'forum for collegiate contact' (A19), rather than one where policies and strategies were shaped, while another suggested that 'the actual meeting didn't matter' (A4) and, instead, what was important was that a forum existed where the voice of the academic could be heard. Regardless of whatever flaws the Faculty meeting approach appeared to have, Faculty decision-making prior to re-structuring could generally be characterised as participative in nature. With respect to the Faculty meeting –

> ....there was a sense that it was still an important institution for what it symbolised more than anything else and it symbolised a kind of self-governing community (A17).

Aside from the Faculty meetings, very little reference was made by those interviewed to two other decision-making forums, with the exception of two academics – i.e. (i) the Departmental meeting, where academics could voice their views and where they 'called the shots on everything' regarding that Department (D3) and (ii) the Departmental Heads meetings which A14 suggested was 'the major decision-making forum'.

5.3.3 The Role of Academics in School Decision-Making since the Change Programme

During my research, it was noted that the introduction of 'an executive-style management system' (A19) has played a significant part in a shift away from participative decision-making at School level. During the change programme, Faculty meetings were abolished and replaced by School meetings. However, the overwhelming feeling among those interviewed was that these School 'town-hall' type meetings (A13) are 'explicitly not decision-making forums' (H2) and have a 'terminal function' in that they are used to disseminate information (A13). While A1 felt that he could put forward an idea at a School meeting, he suggested that 'that's not where these things are discussed in detail and decisions taken'. Indeed, academics suggested that essentially the School meetings are 'pseudo participative

entities' (H5), with 'little room for conversation' (A17). Thus, in the view of A19, a forum where the majority of academics can have some input into decision-making or where they can 'over-turn' something 'has been taken away' (A19), thereby creating a feeling that academics have become 'dis-engaged' from the decision-making process (A15). The School meetings are no longer seen by many of those interviewed as an effective or useful forum for individual faculty members, with the result that they are 'badly attended' (D1). Indeed, one academic highlighted the absence of a governance remit at such School meetings and the danger that this may lead to the creation of an 'environment where people don't care' (D3).

Yet, a small number of academic staff expressed quite different views on the usefulness of School meetings. D2 suggested that, while academics can have an input at School and Subject Area meetings and that they are consulted, 'there would be no pretence at all that the decision rests fundamentally with the Head of School' (D2). Indeed, A6 noted that School meetings started out as one-way communication forums, but have since become more 'interactive' following staff feedback. It was also suggested that the 'School meetings are more focused now' and that this represents 'a positive shift' (A10). Another suggested that the removal of the old Faculty meetings has had a positive impact on collegiality because of the lasting legacy that resulted from 'fights that were remembered for decades' prior to the change programme (A9). Furthermore, a very small number of academics suggested that they could still influence decision-making in the School through their Subject Area and that they could also contribute in response to an email from the Dean requesting input on an issue. Indeed, A2 commented that 'if people want to contribute it is quite easy'.

With respect to the input of academics into Programme Board decisions, one academic, who was a Programme Director at the time of interview, was positive about presenting programme changes to the Board which are now discussed with fellow Programme Directors present and not with a 'selection of onlookers' (A9). However, it was felt that the Programme Boards, which deal with academic issues,

are 'influential, but that this would be more at a technical than at a strategic level' (H4). It was suggested that Programme Boards deal 'mainly with teaching structure related matters' (A4), many of which are not seen as 'deal-breaking decisions' (A4) and that 'it deals with day-to-day issues involving the students' (A8). While it may be possible for an academic who is not a member of these Boards to raise an issue of concern with a Subject Area colleague who is a member, D3 suggested that:

> ....you can single out any academic person and you can say if they are not a member of the Programme Board, they have no influence anywhere. And it's a minority of people who are on the Programme Board, so a typical academic has no influence whatsoever – there's no other forum.

The Mercator survey highlighted the need to establish mechanisms to allow the voice of academics to be heard. While individual academics may now have less input into School decision-making, A7 noted that this is not necessarily 'a bad thing' because of the difficulty of securing agreement among academics. Another suggested that, while he is happy to provide 'input and feedback' when asked, he would have no expectation that this input would be followed up on and questioned why there should be any such expectation (A14). It was suggested that decisions regarding School direction now fall within the remit of 'a small coterie of people surrounding the Dean' (H5). A consequence, therefore, of the move towards an Executive Dean was the perception among academics that their influence in shaping the School's direction and development has significantly declined. However, one academic suggested that this 'might be a good thing' (A8), with another commenting that he was 'happy with the light level of input' (A9). H2 also commented that 'your foot soldier academic has no right to be involved in the strategic direction of the School'.

To conclude this section, Table 5.3 presents a summary of the elements of decision-making as reported by those interviewed.

Table 5.3 Elements of Decision-Making (Pre- and Post-Change) as Reported by Academics

Faculty Decision-Making: Pre-Change	• Departmental meetings
	
	• Heads of Department meetings
	
	• Faculty meetings
	  • Self-governing
	  • Consensus building
	  • Tensions evident

School Decision-Making: Post-Change	• Faculty meetings abolished
	
	• School meetings introduced:
	  - Information dissemination
	  - Dialogue?
	  - To influence decision-making?
	
	• Requests for input from academics
	
	• Executive Dean

5.4 Academics' Perspectives on Collegiality

In general, those interviewed referred to collegiality in much broader terms than the three types of collegiality (behavioural, cultural and structural) referred to in Chapter 2. This section describes the perspectives of academics on collegiality at Faculty level prior to, and at School level since, the change programme.

5.4.1 Collegiality at Faculty Level Prior to the Change Programme

Conflicting views were evident with respect to the extent of Faculty-level collegiality prior to the change programme. A large number of academics suggested that while 'it wasn't perfect' (D1), the Faculty was a very collegial place to work, with a very good level of collegiality evident within Departments (although this

varied between Departments). D1 commented that:

> ....there was very easy contact. There were regular meetings. People knew what everybody was doing. If it was a good idea to do something, we agreed to do it, and that was the way that things were done.

Collegiality manifested itself in greater day-to-day interaction between colleagues and greater socialisation among staff in terms of 'taking time out to go for coffee' (A16) and attending social events. Yet, some scepticism was evident among some of those interviewed in that they cautioned against looking back with 'rose-tinted glasses' (A7), with a small number of academics suggesting that very little collegiality existed. While 'people are very nostalgic for Departments' (A9), a certain amount of conflict tended to exist in those Departments where they were sometimes 'dominated by small groups of people' (A9). D2 commented that he never found the Faculty to be collegial and that it was 'extremely politicised' and 'very fractious', while A13 suggested that the 'independence of the Departments' contributed to an absence of collegiality across the Faculty. The Dean suggested that 'there was the appearance of collegiality, but the reality was far from it' and that when he joined the Faculty 'people didn't go out of their way' to welcome him.

5.4.2 Collegiality at School Level since the Change Programme

The need to improve collegiality was one of the priorities identified in the Mercator survey and, indeed, this finding was borne out in my research. The vast majority of those interviewed suggested that collegiality is not 'quite as pronounced' (H4), with D1 commenting that it is 'at an all time low'. Indeed, it was felt that less interaction is taking place between academics, with the Dean noting the absence of a 'committee structure' where staff would have an opportunity to 'meet people from other areas'. Another noted that 'there's far less co-operation, far less discussion among people' (A11). While various seminars are held in different Subject Areas, A19 noted that 'we don't have the same attendance, the same engagement, the same debate and argument'. A number of those interviewed commented on the extent to

which support among colleagues remains a feature of academic life within the School. Generally, a continued willingness on the part of academics to do something for a colleague, such as giving a class on their behalf, was noted. Indeed, A5 commented that 'there's still a sense of common purpose' among academics, with another noting that very little has changed in terms of collaborating with colleagues, particularly with regard to co-authoring a paper or jointly delivering a module. D3 commented that 'in the past, it was quite rare for people to work together on research papers' and that this had generally been viewed as an individual endeavour. Yet, a small number of those interviewed suggested that research collaboration between colleagues in different Subject Areas within the School had increased slightly since re-structuring, with one commenting that he was positive about this aspect of collegiality. However, one academic noted that, 'from an academic collaboration point of view, academics are probably much more likely to collaborate with people outside the university than within' (A3). Indeed, those interviewed placed considerable emphasis on the importance of their external community, with some suggesting that this community is more important than the internal one.

Yet, A11 noted that 'it's very easy to say there was a lot of collegiality before the change and there's less now, but I think there were intervening variables'. Among the 'intervening variables' identified were that, prior to the change programme the Faculty was smaller; there were fewer part-time faculty and it 'was quite a homogeneous entity' (H5); a number of faculty members have retired over the past decade and a half and have been replaced by staff who are travelling longer distances to the university; and the Faculty had been in 'a build and grow' stage of development in the years prior to the change programme (D1). A number of other possible reasons for the decline in collegiality were put forward by those interviewed – for example – the elimination of Departments and the wider span of control that now exists within the School and the consequent difficulty of maintaining 'the same relationship with one-hundred as you had with ten' (A5). The 'lack of sufficient social events' due to budgetary constraints was considered 'short-sighted' by D3 and

he suggested that this should be considered a 'priority' in order to encourage greater collegiality. Yet, A16 suggested that the more limited social interaction between academics was explained, not by the changes introduced by the university, but by changes taking place in 'people's life circumstances' and family situations where they may no longer be in a position to take 'time out in the same way' as before.

Other contributory factors related to the decline in collegiality were cited, including the increasing focus on research and the 'pressure to be producing' (A1); the School's tradition of the 'lone researcher' (D1) which 'doesn't necessarily make for a lot of collaboration' (D1); and the development of a more 'metric promotional system' (A3) which does not encourage collegial ways of working. Other reasons included the separate campus locations for the undergraduate and graduate Business Schools which D2 suggested has negatively impacted upon the level of 'general interaction with colleagues'; the less frequent 'joint decision-making' engaged in by academics (A18); the reduced familiarity of academics with faculty members in other Subject Areas; and the reduced visibility of academics 'around the corridors' (A4). The extent to which academics now attend School meetings and other events, such as graduation ceremonies and Christmas parties, was highlighted as another important indicator of declining collegiality, with A10 commenting that attendance at events could be used as 'litmus tests' and as 'good indicators of climate'. The poor attendance of academics at graduation ceremonies, for example, could be explained by the disillusionment being felt by academics and the additional time pressures they face. The School meetings are not as well attended as the old Faculty meetings, with one senior academic noting an average attendance in the region of seven or eight percent of academics. Indeed, A14 questioned the viability of having a collegial institution operate in tandem with a 'bureaucracy' and suggested that:

> …..collegiality can only work in the absence of strong bureaucracy because strong bureaucracy is fundamentally designed to eliminate that…..to eliminate the informal.

In general, the 'relatively solitary' nature of academic life (Dean) and the

individualist nature of academic work was highlighted, with one academic suggesting that 'you're increasingly living in a world where people just want to go into their own room, close the door and stay there and get on with their own research' (D3). A number of academics also sensed that staff are increasingly focusing on what will drive their own career and there is an increasing emphasis on 'individual performance and CV development' (H4).

Table 5.4 presents an overview of collegiality prior to the change programme and attempts to summarise how academics have characterised collegiality since the change programme. It should be noted, though, that given the complex nature of collegiality, it is difficult to determine the precise impact of the change programme on collegiality and to disentangle the impact of other factors, such as the increase in the number of staff commuting longer distances to work, general life-stage factors and changes in academics' remuneration packages following the introduction of the pension levy in 2009.

Table 5.4 Summary of Academics' Perspectives on Collegiality

Collegiality Prior to the Change Programme	• Conflicting views on degree of collegiality • Variations across university / Faculty / Departments • Greater day-to-day interaction / socialisation • Homogeneous Faculty cohort • Faculty stage of development – build and grow
Collegiality Since the Change Programme	• Collegiality not as pronounced • Continued support among colleagues • Less co-operation / discussion / interaction • Less social interaction (life-stage factor) • Individualist nature of academic life • Focus on research output • Promotions system – focus on the individual • Declining attendance at events

5.5 Academics' Perspectives on the Changing Nature of their Role

In this section, the traditional role of the academic and the emphasis now being placed on the three elements of teaching, research and service/contribution will be addressed along with changes in workload and increasing performance pressures.

5.5.1 The Traditional Role of the Academic

While those interviewed acknowledged that the traditional role of the academic in

UCD involved the three elements of teaching, research and service/contribution, many (particularly those with the longest service) saw their role, when they joined UCD, as predominantly teaching, with H2 commenting that 'teaching was all you did'. Others suggested that the role was 'not just to teach' (A16), but to 'get people excited about a subject area, to understand the world through a particular lens whatever the subject area was or is and to communicate that excitement to students' (A6). It was acknowledged that there had been 'very little emphasis on research' (H5); with a minority of academics engaged in such activity. Instead, the role revolved primarily around 'teaching and service to students' (H1). The traditional role of the UCD academic, as reported by those interviewed, very much reflects the pre-Humboldtian university model.

5.5.2 The Changing Emphasis on Teaching, Research and Service/Contribution

Since the implementation of the change programme, a move towards a Humboldtian model of university has been increasingly evident, with D2 suggesting that clearer expectations have been established regarding the need for academics to be 'performing on all three' elements of the role for promotion purposes. Indeed, D2 suggested that, in the initial stages of the change process, the predominant emphasis was on research, with 'less emphasis on quality of teaching and contribution', but that a 'more rounded approach' is now being taken. While there is an acceptance that performance on all three aspects of the role is now important for promotion, A6 noted that 'what we would really value is in the classroom and the research'. While one senior academic commented that, historically in UCD, staff may have talked about research, but 'never publication', the increased emphasis on research output was highlighted by many as a significant feature of academic life now. This emphasis on research outputs was noted by A14 as partly 'a consequence of accreditation' requirements within the School, but also 'a consequence of the President's promotions criteria'. It was suggested that it is not 'tenable anymore to say that you'll stay here as an academic and not do research' (A9). While D2 suggested that 'there's an over-reliance on research as a criterion for promotion', the

reluctance of the School 'to adopt the notion of researchers versus teachers' was highlighted by A19 and he likened this to 'someone running a building site where everyone has got to be equally as good as a carpenter as a painter as a plumber'. However, while unquestionably there is an increasing emphasis being placed on research, it was also noted that this very much depends on the individual academic and their desire to be promoted. A14 commented that:

> ……..if you elect to not engage in research, I think the consequences are asymmetric – you're not going to lose your job, but you're not going to advance.

Clearly with this increased emphasis on research came a change in focus for the academics who had been employed within the School for many years and who joined the university when the role expectations were very different and who were 'now being asked to do things which they weren't really asked to do when they started' (A3). This academic noted that 'perhaps their research skills have withered away at this point and that then leads to a feeling of disenchantment in that they feel that the goalposts have moved'. Yet, a number of those interviewed who are at an early stage of their careers welcomed this greater emphasis on research as it was what they 'signed up for' (A7). Indeed, it was acknowledged that they joined the university at a time when 'the game was changing' (H3) and they were of 'the understanding that research was going to be important' (Dean). D3 commented that if you enter academia now with the goal of 'being a very good researcher', then academic life is 'better' because research is 'more clearly rewarded'. Yet, A8 opposed the notion that research is now being treated as a priority by the university and suggested that it has 'dropped off the agenda'. Indeed, two academics highlighted the lack of support for research, one in terms of administrative support and the other in terms of being given sufficient time for this activity. This second academic commented that 'any attempts by me to either carve out time or to, you know, manage a research agenda have been stymied in one way or another' (A12).

In terms of teaching, some academics suggested that the implementation of the

change programme – while formalising the role of the academic and introducing more structure to the 'set of things you have to do for the teaching' (A16) – has not, to any great extent, impacted upon their day-to-day role and the way in which a module is delivered. It was, however, suggested that while teaching remains important, it 'has suffered as a priority' and that 'other things are seen as more valuable' (A17). Another suggested that recognition for teaching is 'not as explicit as is the recognition of the importance of research' (H4).

With respect to the service role, D3 acknowledged that, previously 'you did administration as part of a duty', but that staff 'don't see administration at all as being relevant and they're only forced into it now'. One academic suggested that the requirement to engage in this area has not changed 'dramatically', but that it has become more 'formalised' in the context of the promotions system (A15). However, another commented that an increased emphasis is now being placed 'on being a good citizen and contributing to the overall well-being of the School by taking up positions of responsibility' (A18). A certain degree of cynicism, though, was noted by some academics who commented that where staff now become involved in service duties it is so they can 'tick the box' (H3) for promotion purposes. Yet, one academic suggested that engagement in service is 'rewarded less and valued less' (A10), with a 'lack of recognition' in terms of teaching remission for staff heavily involved in service contribution (A5).

5.5.3 Changes in the Administrative Duties of Academics

In the Mercator survey, the reduction of administration and bureaucracy and the need to allow academics to concentrate on tasks that are core to academia were identified as priorities for improvement. Section 5.2.3 noted the relationship between bureaucratisation and modularisation of the curriculum at UCD. Many academics interviewed acknowledged that there has been a growth in 'routine administrative work' (H5), with one commenting that this 'has really exploded enormously' (H5). Some academics commented on the time spent on administrative

duties, with one suggesting that 'administrative interactions take up at least a third' of his time now (A14). Among the reasons cited for this are the absence of administrative support for academics, the absence of teaching assistants to assist with grading and preparing course documentation and the implementation of module descriptors and 'academic governance requirements' surrounding the teaching and learning process (D1). Indeed, A10 noted that where the 'largest change in terms of the work itself' is evident is in the 'reporting and management systems, information processing systems'. It was also suggested that academics have experienced difficulty in dealing with the new systems for managing grade entry and that they view this whole system as a 'big old administrative machine' (D3). Indeed, it was suggested that the curriculum reform introduced 'greatly increases the volume of really very routine administration that academics, including senior academics, are involved in on a day-to-day basis' (H5) – in particular, the need to develop module descriptors and the expansion in the grade approvals process. In the words of D1:

> I'd say what's impacted most on academics are the new systems of academic governance in terms of the modules, the grading machine, Gradebook opening, closing, the Programme Boards, the exam boards….all of that…. I think it's impacted upon them because, basically, they've had to do all of their own results and do all their own inputting and write their own module descriptors…… So I think that the teaching has become a lot more complex from an administrative point of view…..

Yet, one academic expressed a very different view and suggested that while there has been some increase in 'paperwork', it's not 'onerous' (A1). Another suggested that the administrative burden on academics, particularly those who served previously as academic Programme Directors and who were required to handle all programme administrative matters, such as admissions, collation of marks etc., was 'much worse' many years ago and that academics who have joined the university in recent years 'don't maybe fully appreciate where we came from' (A3).

5.5.4 Changes in Workload

Chapter 2 noted the increasing efforts of HEIs to introduce academic workload models. During my research, those interviewed commented on the extent to which their workload had changed and a wide variety of views were evident. The introduction of a workload model was acknowledged as a positive development by a number of academics. The implementation of the first phase of the workload model, which introduced a standard annual teaching load of four modules across the School, did result in an increase in workload for some academics, but for most, the teaching workload remained unchanged. It was acknowledged that what the workload model did was introduce a more formalised teaching allocation process incorporating a greater degree of fairness and transparency. It also provided an incentive for academics 'to get the research out there' (A15) as it allowed for teaching remissions to be granted for publications. The second phase, which will be implemented in 2010/11, will prescribe a standard teaching load of eight courses for staff who are not research active and who are 'really not being centrally involved in administrative stuff' (Dean).

The issue of work intensification was also explored and, in general, those interviewed noted that 'the job has gotten much more intense' (D2) and 'those that are fully embracing all aspects of the job would work longer hours now' (A3). Yet, two academics noted that, while their workload had increased, it represented a career choice, with one suggesting that it was of their 'own volition' (A19). One academic noted that some staff are working 'phenomenal hours' (A17), but that this is not being done for the university itself, but because academics are 'embedded in particular communities' (A17) and 'get some sense of meaning, some sense of value from that sort of thing' (A17). In terms of research workload, it was suggested that while the 'expectations on research' (A4) have increased, the 'research workload' (A9) is dependent on each individual's research ambitions.

5.5.5 Increased Performance Pressures

While the increasing evidence for managerialism at UCD was noted in Section 5.2.3, Chapter 2 drew attention to the relationship between managerialism and an increased emphasis on the performance of academic staff. The extent to which those interviewed were experiencing greater performance pressures was explored during my research. A8 suggested that 'the life of an academic is definitely relatively more pressurised' now and A3 commented that 'the demands on academics – if you want to be a serious academic – have increased dramatically'. In general, H4 noted the increased 'emphasis on individual performance and CV development and doing research and making sure you get your CV into a state where you're in the running for a promotion'. More specifically, those interviewed reported more of a focus being placed on 'exacting performance' (H4) from staff in terms of 'much higher levels of teaching outputs in terms of volume and much higher in terms of research outcomes' (A14) with a target of a minimum standard of one research publication per year now being brought to bear on academics. Indeed, the degree to which increased performance pressures with respect to research output are evident is very much intertwined with the promotional process, with A13 suggesting that 'there's no pressure on us to produce any articles' and that beyond the promotions system, no increased emphasis on the performance of academics is evident. Yet, A16 suggested that this 'fundamental transition to a performance culture of publication' is actually 'a good thing' and H1 noted that the increased emphasis on performance was a good development because 'many faculty members have failed to contribute in the way that they should'. However, while A19 suggested that 'it's a good idea to measure performance', he noted that the kinds of measurements used present some difficulties.

Furthermore, a number of academics highlighted the greater time pressures being encountered where tight grading deadlines are set as part of the new grade approvals process, with one academic noting that this 'puts enormous pressure and demands on people, particularly people teaching large courses' (H5). Indeed, A6 noted that

'what is valuable for us is time and they've definitely been taking the time away'. A6 suggested that where this was particularly evident was in the reduced amount of time now available for reading and that 'spending an afternoon reading' is 'almost like a luxury'. A16 noted the 'conflicting, competing, paradoxical demands' being placed on academics in terms of the 'compression of student time' and the push 'to have quality performance', while, at the same time, increasing student numbers and revenue streams was highlighted as a source of increased pressure on academics. The increased expectation that academics will utilise more continuous assessment in their courses was also seen as a source of added pressure and, indeed A6 commented on the increased administration that this creates and the lack of 'adequate infrastructural support', such as invigilator support for in-class assessment.

The extent to which measures of accountability are increasingly being witnessed by individual faculty members was explored. In general, it was acknowledged that 'there's a much greater audit culture in academia' (H1) and that the importance of 'outputs' (A16) is becoming a more 'incremental and louder and louder message' (A16). While the Dean noted the absence of performance reviews as an obstacle to greater individual accountability, the majority of those interviewed noted that there has been more of an attempt to introduce accountability mechanisms in recent years and that this is still 'in progress' (A10). However, A15 suggested that while increasing accountability is being sought, 'it's still a relatively light touch' and that, in the context of promotions, 'you impose your own accountability'. Where accountability pressures have become more evident, they have manifested themselves in a number of ways, including the requirement for academics to complete a form detailing how they spend their time and the implementation of the workload model which 'requires academics to contribute in a more transparent way across the three headings – teaching, research and contribution' (H4). The implications for teaching loads where academics are not research active has also introduced a greater degree of accountability. The workload model, in combination with the implementation of 'prescribed lists of journals' to be targeted (H5), has resulted in a greater 'degree of accountability of individuals and groups than would

have been the case in the past' (H5). One academic commented that:

> There's sort of an individualisation of it now. It's even in the design of it –
> that we input the marks, we do the module descriptor – every action I take
> has my electronic footprint – proof of what I did and when – so there's a lot
> of that kind of paper trail accountability (A16).

While one academic commented that the move towards greater accountability is 'a good thing' (A8), another expressed no difficulty with accounting for her time, annual leave and expenditure, but that the School is 'not taking it to its ultimate consequences in terms of sanctioning people who don't comply and that's a nuisance for the people who do comply' (A15).

To conclude this section, Table 5.5 below presents an overview of the dimensions of the academic role as reported by those interviewed.

Table 5.5 Dimensions of the Role of the Academic as Reported by Academics

Traditional Role	• Pre-dominant focus on teaching
Changing Dimensions of the Role	**Research** • Considerable emphasis on research at early stages of change programme • Re-balancing of emphasis to focus on teaching/research/service • Explicit research output requirements **Administration** • Growth in routine administration – varying views on its impact • Teaching and learning compliance requirements • Information technology systems **Workload** • Development of workload model • Work intensification/working hours **Performance & Accountability** • More explicit performance pressures – linked to promotions • Focus on outputs (research) • No change in emphasis on teaching performance • Absence of formal performance reviews • 'Light touch' accountability measures

5.6 Academics' Perspectives on Academic Freedom

Chapter 2 highlighted the notion of academic freedom as a cornerstone of HE, with

Section 2.6.3 noting some tension evident between increasing institutional autonomy and declining individual autonomy. The following sections address academics' perspectives on the traditional meaning of academic freedom; the extent to which the degree of academic freedom is changing; and whether greater control over the work and life of an academic is becoming evident.

5.6.1 Traditional Meaning of Academic Freedom

A number of academics commented on academic freedom and the 'autonomy and control over your own work and time' (H5) as one of the attractive features of academic life. A16 advocated that it is 'the thing that's most valued about the job'. Yet, one academic put forward a contrary view and suggested that 'many people come into the Business School for the freedom of academic life', rather than for academic freedom itself (H1). This view was echoed by H4 who suggested 'that the importance of academic freedom is greatly over-stated' and that it is sometimes used 'to justify a kind of a self-indulgent approach'. For those interviewed, academic freedom means a number of things. Generally speaking, it means that they can 'pursue any valid scholarly activity' that they were recruited for 'without being controlled by the university' (A10). In the words of A18:

> The ability to divide up your own time, so yes, get your teaching done, do your research, do your writing, but also then work with outside actors in whatever way you wanted to and you had the freedom to do that and engage and take angles on issues you wanted to take.

From a teaching perspective, it means the 'ability to express ideas in a classroom environment' (A14) and the freedom to 'teach the content you wish and, also, in the way you wished to teach it' (A3). It meant, also, that academics have 'the right to research in whatsoever area they wished, subject to some general constraints, ethical constraints' (A3). Furthermore, academic freedom means that academics are not 'required to do anything or go anywhere at any particular time' (H1) and it involves some flexibility in terms of location. Finally, freedom of speech was cited by a

number of academics as an important element of academic freedom and that this involved 'being able to say unpalatable things and being able to take positions which are contrary to the positions of the people who fund you' (A17) and 'to express points of view which are counter to prevailing thought in society' (A19).

5.6.2 Academic Freedom in Practice

Those interviewed reported mixed views on whether academic freedom remains intact to the same degree as it did before the change programme, with differences in the degree of academic freedom being evident across different aspects of the role.

With respect to teaching, academics acknowledged the continuation of 'a high degree of discretion in terms of how you teach, what you teach' (D2). Where a small number of academics cited a decline in their freedom in terms of teaching, it related to the bureaucratic structures and processes surrounding teaching, rather than the teaching itself. Yet, A14 noted that the 'administrative structures' have resulted in 'a lack of respect for academic freedom and academic capabilities in the classroom' and have created a 'customer orientation, not a learner or educational orientation'. The development of module descriptors, for example, and the need to have these in place so far in advance of the start of a module and the need to have pre-specified module learning outcomes, was noted as a constraint by a small number of academics, with one academic describing the response to these as 'ritualistic compliance' (H5). Yet, one academic commented that staff have some freedom with respect to module descriptors and that the important thing is that 'the inputs and the outputs have to match, but what the inputs and the outputs are' is at the discretion of the faculty member (A16). Indeed, H1, when referring to the module descriptor process, noted that 'like all great bureaucratic systems, it's relatively easy to work around'. In terms of student assessment, while academics now have more freedom in terms of the kind of assessment strategies they might wish to use, a number of academics commented that, in reality, greater pressure is being brought to bear on academics to introduce certain types of assessment.

However, these issues, along with 'these little regulations coming in about continuous assessment and inputting results and having things in on time' (A1), were seen as marginal constraints on academic freedom. With respect to the new grade approvals and examination board processes, a number of academics noted the new process, comprising of tight grading deadlines and a series of meetings to review grades and grade distributions, and acknowledged that the grading process 'definitely requires more discipline' (H4). However, the majority of academics did not feel that changes in these processes impacted upon their academic freedom in any significant way.

It was acknowledged by one academic that, where there has been a curtailment of academic freedom, it was not so much in terms of 'what an academic says or writes' (D3). Instead, its scope is broader in nature, with one academic commenting that 'there's less freedom with regard to whether you research or don't research' (D1). While H3 suggested that the prescribed list of journals to be targeted 'doesn't constrain you because it is a sufficiently long list', H1 expressed a contrary opinion:

> .... not many people are research active and so, as a result of not being research active, you have to introduce models and tools that force people to do research and that inevitably leads to lists of journals…... But I think inevitably that leads to a narrowing down of outlets in which you can publish in and I think that's potentially a problem, but it's an unintended consequence, rather than a direct attempt to restrict your freedom.

A 'more narrow focus on what is being strongly rewarded' (A10) is evident, with much more emphasis now being placed on publishing 'in certain journals' and with teaching remission linked to this. While academics can continue to publish in non-mainstream journals, if they do so, it may have implications for teaching allocations and future promotional prospects. D2 suggested that there is a greater focus now on 'outcomes or outputs' and that, perhaps, some academics 'construe that as a constraint on academic freedom'. However, the critical point is that the change programme has not impacted in any significant way on academic freedom and that the vast majority of academics feel that they continue to have the same level of

freedom in terms of being able to research in their chosen area. In the words of A9:

> Nobody has ever said to me – don't do research on this and do research on that. Nobody has tried to set my research agenda in any way really.

The reduced 'temporal flexibility' aspect of the role was noted (H3). Indeed, H5 suggested that academics have 'much less control' over their own time and over the 'pace of work', with their work 'programmed to a much greater degree than would have been the case in the past'. H3 notes that this reduction in academic freedom, from a 'temporal perspective', was a result of 'the regulation, compliance and bureaucracy' that has become a feature of the teaching and learning process. In particular, the timeframes and deadlines throughout the grade approvals process has meant that 'time has just been compressed' (A4).

Two academics commented on the generous remuneration for academics, with one suggesting that with tenure and academic freedom comes a 'responsibility to work hard (A17). The other academic suggested that the working environment in UCD is not 'as pleasant as it used to be' but that because of the generous remuneration package, it doesn't really matter 'whether it is pleasant for me or not on an institutional basis' (A14). It was suggested by two interviewees that a considerable amount of academic freedom remains with academics and that they 'just have to tick the kind of mechanical boxes' (A16), with one suggesting that –

> ....at the end of the day, we still have an awful lot of individual and collective discretion I think that we don't take advantage of. I think people over-estimate the limitations and the constraints being imposed upon us…….you're independent in terms of what you teach and how you assess people – okay you're a bit tighter now in terms of how you're grading, so your grading needs to become more transparent (A13).

5.6.3 Control over Academics

A number of academics expressed a view on the extent to which the university is

attempting to exercise greater control over their work and academic life. One academic suggested that, by their nature, academics 'are not amenable to control' (A1). However, they could see that such control is beginning to be exercised by the university and that this was 'logical as a consequence of a more managerial approach' (H4). Indeed, A6 expressed a view that 'there is a sense that everything seems more determined, rather than us determining our own kind of future'. The introduction of the workload model was, perhaps, also seen as 'a vehicle to exercise more control over academics' (D2). Some degree of increased control was evident in a number of other respects, including increased reporting requirements, more explicitly defined promotional criteria that calls for the targeting of certain journal publications and, also, through the various systems surrounding the teaching and learning process. This latter means of control was highlighted by two academics:

> Elaborate bureaucratic processes connected with modules, connected with exam approvals, connected with a whole variety of allied activities, have been introduced and people are required to conform to them and I think all of these things mean that people perceive them to be directed, controlled, managed, paced to an inordinately greater degree than would have been the case in the past (H5).

> ....I would see it more in the descriptors, the form-filling, the way we grade, how we grade, how we report, all that stuff…I'd see it more like that…more day-to-day admin. stuff is definitely controlled (A6).

It was also suggested, however, that many of the controls being introduced are more 'subtle' (A17) or 'soft' (D1) forms, and are not overt and direct in nature. Indeed, A16 suggested that the university is 'being fairly clear they just want me to have a profile and tick the boxes' and that they are less concerned with how this is done. A number of academics also suggested that the issue of time-keeping and attendance on the part of academics may come under increasing scrutiny due to concerns in relation to health and safety and 'customer expectations' (D2) and academics may see this 'as a control feature' (D2).

To conclude this section, Table 5.6 presents a summary of the perspectives of those

interviewed on academic freedom in this changing HE environment.

Table 5.6 Summary of Academics' Perspectives on Academic Freedom (Post-Change)

Current Degree of Academic Freedom	• To research or not to research – less freedom • Focus of research – no constraints • Targeted publications – more defined • What to teach/how to teach – no constraints • Assessment strategies – greater autonomy • 'Temporal flexibility' – reduced
Exercise of Control Over Academics by University Management	• Some evidence of 'soft' forms of control, but not widespread

5.7 Summary

This research set out to explore how, and to what extent, HE reform has impacted upon academic staff within the School.   It is useful to note that there is no evidence to suggest that the findings of my research differed in any way between academics and the manager-academics interviewed. Those interviewed identified a series of changes that have occurred at university and School level since the start of the change programme in 2004.   In particular, academics noted the strengthened university management structure; the increased focus on research; the appointment of a new President and Dean and the centralisation of power following re-structuring. Many of those interviewed acknowledged that institutional change was necessary to address the under-performance of the university and the growing complacency that had become evident in recent years.   Alongside calls for

increasing public sector efficiency and a greater alignment between the activities of HEIs and national policy, the appointment of a new President acted as a significant catalyst for large-scale institutional change at UCD. Yet, despite the general acceptance of a need for change, the majority of those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the extent to which academic staff were consulted and involved in the planning and implementation of the change programme. A significant number of interviewees suggested that a considerable loss of morale, institutional engagement and goodwill towards the institution has occurred and that academics are now less visible throughout the School. However, some competing views emerged with respect to the degree to which academics welcomed and embraced the changes, with a small minority (primarily those at an early stage in their careers) welcoming the changes.

The research provided considerable evidence to suggest that the change programme has had a considerable impact on the decision-making process within the School. Prior to the change programme, the Dean was elected by faculty members and the Departmental and Department Heads meetings, along with Faculty meetings, served as the main forums for decision-making. Many of those interviewed referred to the self-governing nature of the Faculty and the consensus-building approach to such meetings and suggested that these meetings represented a forum for all academics to shape decision-making. Yet, many academics drew attention to some tensions evident with respect to the conduct of these meetings. These academics, not only highlighted the 'managed' nature of these meetings, but also questioned whether a veneer of involvement in decision-making existed and suggested that decision-making authority fell to a small coterie of academics. Many of those interviewed lamented the abolition of Faculty meetings which took place during re-structuring and their replacement by School meetings. It was generally acknowledged by those interviewed that School meetings primarily serve as a forum for information dissemination and some questioned whether such meetings provide an opportunity for dialogue and for academics to influence decision-making.

A variety of views emerged with respect to the extent to which the change programme has served to erode collegiality at School level. Indeed, while conflicting views were evident with respect to the extent to which the university and Faculty had traditionally been collegial, those interviewed suggested that variations had historically been evident between Departments. Only two academics touched specifically on the impact of the changes in decision-making approaches on collegiality, with one suggesting that university policy and governance is now driven, in a less collegial manner and more in an executive manner, while a second suggested that the abolition of Faculty meetings had a positive impact on collegiality because of the legacy of internal conflict that often resulted from these meetings. Generally, academics acknowledged that, prior to the change programme, a greater level of day-to-day interaction and socialisation among academics was evident. It does appear that, while there is evidence of continued support among academic colleagues, the degree of collegiality is now somewhat less pronounced, with less discussion and interaction between academics. This shift in the level of collegiality can, however, be somewhat explained by factors other than the implementation of the change programme, for example, the influence of life-stage factors on the level of social interaction, the generally individualist nature of academic life which has become further entrenched as a result of the increasing focus on research output and the promotional metrics which focus on individual performance.

The research findings have also served to highlight the changing nature of the role of the academic, with a shift in emphasis taking place, from a pre-dominant focus on the teaching function prior to the change programme, to a much greater emphasis on research and publication outputs post-change. While the development of the School workload model, and its accompanying transparency and fairness, was welcomed by a number of academics, those interviewed highlighted the growth in routine administrative duties, particularly those resulting from the information technology infrastructure implemented to support a modular environment and the teaching and learning compliance requirements. However, varying views were evident with regard to whether the working hours of academics have increased and whether we

are witnessing a general intensification of academic work. Furthermore, an increasing focus on the performance and outputs of academic staff was evident post-change, particularly in terms of research. However, it was also suggested that, the degree to which such performance pressures had a real impact on academics is very much intertwined with an individual's promotional ambitions.

Finally, the research provided some insight into academics' perspectives on academic freedom pre- and post-change. While there is some evidence to suggest that the university is beginning to exercise 'soft' forms of control over academics, there was little evidence of a reduction in academic freedom with respect to what they teach, how they teach or what they research. There was, however, some suggestion that academics now have less freedom in terms of whether or not to research and, indeed, the publications which academics should target are now more defined (although not everyone agreed that this reduced academic freedom).

The next chapter will discuss the above research findings in the context of the literature presented in Chapter 2 and will draw some conclusions from this research.

CHAPTER 6 –

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 highlighted a gap in research on the impact of HE change on academic staff (see Churchman, 2002) and noted the insufficient attention paid to the micro-level of the work and life of the academic (see Enders, 2004). This research enquiry set out to explore how, and to what extent, HE reform has impacted upon academics and examined this question within the context of the UCD School of Business. The research was designed around the following three themes (see Table 5.1 for a more detailed outlined of the themes explored):

(i)   The **general perspectives** of academics on the UCD change programme.

(ii)   The changes that have taken place in the School's **decision-making** approach and how changes in decision-making have impacted upon **collegiality**.

(iii)   The extent to which the **role** of the academic has changed and how HE change has impacted upon **academic freedom**.

This chapter will discuss the research findings presented in Chapter 5 with reference to the debates in the literature (see Chapter 2). The contribution of my research to both theory and practice will be discussed and some personal reflections on the experience of carrying out this research enquiry will be outlined. The chapter ends by drawing some conclusions on the extent to which each of my research objectives has been addressed and the manner in which the work and life of the academic is being transformed.

6.2 The Change Programme – General Perspectives of Academics

Table 5.2 presented a summary of the key points raised by those interviewed in relation to the change programme and this section will review these points with reference to the literature presented in Chapter 2.

6.2.1 The Management and Implementation of Change

The considerable scale of change being witnessed in HE has been noted (Nadler and Tushman, cited by Taylor, 1999), with Mulford (2002) suggesting that HEIs can no longer avoid change. Chapter 2 noted the many driving forces behind HE change. For example, the pursuit of greater national HE efficiency was noted by Gumport and Sporn (1999) with changes taking place in approaches to HE funding and increasing attempts by governments to introduce performance-based approaches (see Hartley, 1995; Higher Education Authority, 2008a; Porter and Vidovich, 2000; Ramsden, 1998; Teichler, 2004). Indeed, Mahony (1990) noted that the pursuit of greater coherence between HE and the objectives of the State represents one of the driving forces behind HE change, with Meek and Wood (1998) suggesting that the quest for greater efficiency across all HEI activities is now more prominent on institutional change agendas. Vest (1997) highlighted the need for HE leaders to become more responsive to change, with the role played by the centre of the institution in acting as a catalyst for change noted by Goldspink (2007). My research reported on the considerable change that has taken place at UCD since 2004, with such change pervading all aspects of the university. Yet, those interviewed generally accepted that change was necessary and it served to address the sense of complacency that had become evident throughout the university. Many of the reasons for change identified by those interviewed reflect the drivers of change set out in the literature. For example, in addition to the need for UCD to be in a position to compete internationally, it was clear that the search for greater efficiency in the HE sector and the public sector and the need for leaner organisational structures also served as driving forces for change. A number of

those interviewed also noted the need for closer alignment of national and institutional priorities and acknowledged the growing need for HEIs to be accountable for their spending of public funds.

There has also been much debate in the literature concerning the ownership of change, with Fullan (2007) suggesting that top-down change fails to draw adequate support and ownership, but that bottom-up change is even less effective. Becher and Kogan (1992) suggest that the negative reaction to top-down change may reflect academics' considerable investment in the development of their expertise and knowledge over time. The overwhelming evidence from my research supports Fullan's assertion that top-down change fails to result in adequate support and ownership, and, perhaps, the single biggest failure of the UCD change programme has been the change in the overall climate and feeling within the School and its failure to gain the ownership, involvement and commitment of many academics. Yet, HE leaders face a considerable dilemma when implementing such radical change – i.e. whether to consult widely and involve academics (thus ensuring their ownership and commitment), with the result that change may be introduced at a slower pace and may not be radical enough to address the increasing complexity of the HE environment; or to drive change centrally with the aim of introducing more transformative change in a shorter period of time (whilst risking the loss of commitment and goodwill among academics).

While the literature suggests that academics may be able to somehow detach themselves from institutional change (Bellamy *et al*, 2003; Watty *et al*, 2008), academics have been known to adopt particular coping strategies such as those suggested by Trowler (1997), namely sinking, coping, re-constructing and swimming. My research findings suggest that the manner in which change is implemented can have a profound effect on academics, with evidence that academics were able to detach themselves to some degree from the changes taking place by having a reduced presence and visibility around the School. In coping with the change programme, academics exhibited certain strategies. The largest group

expressed a 'sinking' approach and have become disillusioned and demoralised following the change programme. The overwhelming cause of lower morale as highlighted by those interviewed was not necessarily increased managerialism or more centralised decision-making, but, instead, was the result of the manner in which change was implemented and the extent to which academics were consulted and involved during the planning and implementation phases of the change programme. A small number of academics welcomed and embraced the changes and displayed a 'swimming' approach whereby they prospered in the new environment and embraced the more explicit requirement for greater research output. This latter group tended to be those staff who had joined UCD in recent years and who were at the early stages of their academic career.

6.2.2 Organisational Re-Structuring

The need for organisational re-structuring so that institutions can adapt to changing environmental conditions was noted by Sporn (1999). While Green (2002) suggests that there has been somewhat less change in the structure of institutions compared to changes in institutional governance, this is somewhat at variance with what has occurred at UCD, where both governance and structures have been transformed. From an organisational structures perspective, the most significant change to impact upon academics was the abolition of departments and the removal of power from the Heads of Subject Areas. Also, while the drive towards more emphasis on interdisciplinary activities across UCD was cited as one of the driving forces behind organisational re-structuring, there is little evidence to suggest that re-structuring has resulted in such an outcome to any significant degree within the School (see Taylor (2006) who cited the need for fewer faculties as a means of overcoming any obstacles to interdisciplinarity). Indeed, a number of those interviewed questioned whether the re-structuring that has taken place could potentially result in greater interdisciplinary activity given the focus on the individual in the promotions system.

6.2.3 Strengthened Management Structure

Wallace (2003) suggests that a critical role of the senior management team is to orchestrate change and the increasing emphasis on the Vice-Chancellor as a change agent and strategic director tasked with reinventing the university has been noted by Marginson (2000). The literature has clearly highlighted the redefinition of strategic roles within HEIs during times of change (see Bleiklie and Byrkjeflot, 2002) and the idea of a Chief Executive leading the HEI (Weil, 1994). Indeed, the fundamental question of whether power is generally moving away from individual departments towards HEIs themselves has been highlighted by Henkel and Kogan (1999). The changes that have occurred at UCD closely mirror those highlighted in the literature, particularly in relation to the strengthening of the senior management team and the redefinition of key roles within the university. The case also highlights the prevalent move towards a much more managerial approach to the day-to-day operations and activities of the university.

Furthermore, the increasing adoption of private sector management practices within HE, for example, strategic planning (Lee, 2004) and the development of faculty and school plans which serve to operationalise institutional plans (Crebert, 2000), have been highlighted. Indeed, those interviewed during research conducted by Nixon (1996) emphasised the need to be consulted during their institution's strategic planning process. My research highlighted an increased emphasis on institutional strategic planning at UCD and, particularly, a much more concerted effort at ensuring that School plans are more closely aligned with the university's strategic plan. Indeed, the centralised nature of strategic planning (both at university and School level) is a very prevalent feature of the 'new' UCD today, with the majority of academics now having little influence in shaping the School's overall direction and development.

6.2.4 Bureaucratisation

The literature contains much debate around the idea of increasing bureaucratisation, with Scott (2000) suggesting that HEIs have developed into bureaucracies of a corporate nature. In understanding what is meant by bureaucratisation, much of the literature highlights an increase in both the level and scale of administration at the top of the institution (see Lane and Stenlund, 1983). While Gornitzka *et al* (1998) suggest that bureaucratisation is evident where the level of administration is disproportionately more than teaching and research, there is no evidence to suggest that this has occurred at UCD. However, the creation of a number of senior management and Vice-President positions and the increasing involvement of administrative staff in academic policy-making at university level does suggest that the level of bureaucratisation has increased to some degree in recent years. Section 6.4 will return to the issue of bureaucratisation with respect to the role of the academic.

6.3 Changes in School Decision-Making and the Impact on Collegiality

Bennett *et al* (1992) suggest that the involvement of academics in decision-making serves to create cohesion among staff. Indeed, academics have traditionally held a significant interest in decision-making and in shaping working life (Farnham, 1999), with collegial decision-making and management a fundamental value underpinning academic life (Sporn, 1999; Weil, 1999). The election of leaders of HEIs was also noted by Askling (2001) as a traditional approach to collegiality. Yet, the literature noted the difficulties associated with slow decision-making within collegial institutions (Clark, 1998b; Edwards, 1994; Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002; Sanyal, 1995). It highlighted the increasing prevalence of a move away from collegial decision-making towards a more managerial approach (Anderson and Johnson, 2002; Deem, 2007b; Jackson, 1997; Orr, 1997). As a consequence, it has been suggested that the increasing division between academics and decision-making

(Bellamy *et al*, 2003) and the declining dominance of academics in institutional governance and management (Taylor, 2006) is now more evident.

Table 5.3 highlighted the key elements of decision-making as reported by those interviewed and draws attention to the marked differences in the decision-making approaches at UCD pre- and post-change. Indeed, the slow nature of decision-making pre-2004 was cited by those interviewed and the decision to move towards an international search and selection process when appointing the President and the School Executive Dean were seen as critical turning points aimed, in part, at facilitating speedier decision-making. At School level, the removal of decision-making forums where individual academics had traditionally dominated and the appointment of an Executive Dean represented particularly significant developments. A decline in direct communication between the top level of the institution and other levels (see Middlehurst and Elton, 1992) became apparent at UCD following the removal of Faculty meetings that had traditionally been attended by the President. While input from academics on various School matters is still occasionally sought, it is evident that the majority of academics no longer have a formalised and regular opportunity to contribute towards School decision-making. However, many interviewees drew attention to the negative aspects of Faculty meetings, such as the existence of factions and a lack of transparency where decisions were sometimes made outside the meetings. This finding somewhat challenges Middlehurst and Elton's (1992) notion that collegiality incorporates ideas of transparent flows of information. Nonetheless, a clear shift has occurred at UCD in line with changes in HEI decision-making approaches outlined in the literature. While the literature noted the positive relationship between high levels of participation in decision-making and the morale of academics (Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002), it has been suggested that the impact of increasing managerialism is a lowering of morale and a greater sense of disillusionment on the part of academics (Winter *et al*, 2000). Indeed, the disillusionment of academics with respect to their current lack of input into decision-making emerged as a key finding of my research.

While the above discussion highlights a clear move away from structural collegiality, i.e. a participative decision-making approach (see Bess, 1992), a considerable change in behavioural collegiality is also evident within the School. It would appear that the behaviour of academics is now directed less at meeting institutional values and more at meeting individual and disciplinary values (see Bess, 1992). In Chapter 2, the important distinction drawn by Hargreaves (1994) between collaborative working relationships and contrived collegiality was noted. While at UCD, there continues to be some evidence of voluntary and spontaneous collaborative working relationships within the School, the evidence for such relationships appears to be diminishing. Instead, greater evidence of contrived collegiality is notable whereby the university is attempting to require academics to collaborate and implement institutionally-driven initiatives. Perhaps, what is most noteworthy is that the general degree of collegiality and day-to-day interaction among academics within the School appears to have suffered considerably with the reduced day-to-day visibility of academics one of the most significant findings of this research.

6.4 The Role of the Academic – A Change in Role Expectations

The traditional role of the academic comprised of three elements – teaching, research and service/contribution (see Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999). While Taylor (1999) argued the inevitability that the academic role would have to change given the shifting HE landscape, the question remains of whether a fundamental change in the role has occurred. Those interviewed suggested that, traditionally, the predominant focus within the School was on teaching, with only a minority of academics traditionally engaged in research activity. My research suggests that academics have witnessed a considerable change in the expectations surrounding each of the three elements of the role, with the requirement to perform across all elements now more explicit. Furthermore, increasing pressures of performance and productivity (particularly in terms of research) were also noted by some of those interviewed. Figure 6.1 illustrates how the scope and focus of the role has changed:

- <u>FROM</u> the former situation where the role (predominantly concerned with teaching) was much less formalised, and its scope and requirements were primarily managed at the level of the individual/department;

- <u>TO</u> a more formalised approach where the scope of the role is determined to a much greater extent by the university and the School through the internal promotions benchmarks and the workload model; where increased performance pressures and the intensification of work are now more evident; and where the emphasis is placed upon research and service, as well as on teaching.

Figure 6.1 The Former and Current Role of the Academic

The literature also notes some concerns around the intensification of academic work (Chandler *et al*, 2002; Coate, 2001; Deem, 2007b; Miller, 1998; Wilmott cited by Waring, 2007; Winter et al, 2000) and some of the reasons cited for this include the pressure for greater research output (Miller, 1998) and increasing student numbers (Scott, 1994). While Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) note the increased emphasis on the performance, workload and accountability of academics, Cowen (1996) noted the implications of the increased focus on a product outcome for how academics work. During my research, those interviewed raised concerns about many of the added pressures now being faced by academic staff. For example, increased work intensification was noted, with some suggesting that this can be explained by changes in the grade approvals process, tighter grading deadlines and, in general, increased pressures on academics' time. While the increasing focus on performance and outputs was noted by many of those interviewed, some suggested that the increased intensification of work was self-imposed and drew attention to the relationship between such increases in performance pressures and an individual's own promotional ambitions. My research has noted the further entrenchment of the individualist nature of academic life and the increasing focus academics are now placing on their own research output, publication record and curriculum vitae.

Furthermore, the literature noted the relationship between bureaucratisation and modular curriculum approaches (see HEQC cited by Jackson, 1997) and curriculum developments were put forward by Miliken and Colohan (2000) as leading to the greatest changes in the internal functioning of HE. However, this was not echoed in my research, where, instead, it was suggested that some of the changes introduced to support modularisation (e.g. module descriptors) were merely minor changes. Yet, the literature suggested that an increase in the amount of time spent by academics on administration has occurred (McInnes, cited by Bellamy *et al*, 2003). Administrative tasks, such as the recording of grades (Lacy and Sheehan, 1997) and the recording of teaching and assessment strategies (Williams, 1997), were noted as some of the additional administrative functions now being performed by academics. While Gass *et al* (2004) note the criticism that modular curriculum approaches

sometimes attract in terms of the additional administrative tasks such approaches can generate, Dunne *et al* (1997) suggest that the documentation of module descriptions represents a strength of modularisation. What is clear from my research is that some of the changes introduced around modularisation (e.g. the formalisation of teaching and learning processes) have resulted in increased administration and bureaucratisation that has impacted on academics to varying degrees and is placing greater demands on their time. Many of those interviewed suggested that the absence of administrative support for grade entry, the requirement to prepare module descriptors and the need to deal with the reporting requirements and information technology systems is now taking more of their time than ever before. While some have noted that the new grade approvals process has improved the examination boards and that the new module descriptor process has improved the provision of module information to students, others suggested that such a development has impacted negatively on them in terms of increased bureaucratisation. There is, therefore, some tentative evidence to suggest that the effect of greater formalisation of the above kinds of processes is resulting in increased demands of a bureaucratic and administrative nature being placed on academics.

6.5 The Impact of Change on Academic Freedom

The literature generally defined academic freedom as the freedom to teach and pursue research in line with one's interests (Anderson *et al*, 2002; Nixon *et al*, 2001) and, indeed, Kekale (1999) suggested that academic freedom was one of the best features of working in the HE sector. The literature rejects any notion that there has been an increase in academic freedom (Taylor *et al*, 2006) and Anderson *et al* (2002) assert that academics still retain the freedom to decide on what they teach and to pursue their own academic interests. While Henkel and Kogan (1999) highlight the potential of modularisation to negatively impact upon academic freedom, the literature does suggest that the increasing prescription of learning outcomes (Barnett, 2004) and the implementation of guidelines for the development of course outlines (Taylor *et al*, 1998) has reduced the autonomy of academics. My research closely

mirrors the above debates in the literature with many of those interviewed acknowledging that academic freedom remains one of the most attractive features of working in the sector.

My research did not provide any evidence to suggest that there has been an increase in academic freedom, with the single exception of academics having greater freedom in the range of assessment strategies they can adopt. Of particular significance was the finding that, apart from some constraints on the time available to academics, those interviewed rejected any notion that academic freedom had declined either. While my research did not highlight any evidence that modularisation per se is impacting upon academic freedom, there was some evidence to suggest that the prescribed grading deadlines had the potential to somewhat constrain an academic's freedom in terms of time. While a small number of those interviewed acknowledged that the need to have module descriptors in place so far in advance of the start of a module acts as a constraint, one academic suggested that the inputs and outputs of a module still remain at the discretion of the academic.

Finally, while Ackroyd and Ackroyd (1999) have noted the absence of an overt approach to the management of academics, Jackson (1997) has suggested that increasing control is being exercised by institutions over the practices of academics. Altbach (2000) also highlighted the traditional lack of accountability pressures on academics. My research, while largely acknowledging the absence of attempts to overtly control academics, does suggest that academics are observing a greater attempt on the part of the university to exercise greater control over their work and academic life through, for example, the workload model and increasing reporting requirements. However, the means of control imposed so far are 'soft' in nature and there is nothing to suggest that this represents a deliberate strategy on the part of the university. Finally, my research has noted some evidence of an increasing drive towards greater accountability on the part of academics, with the promotions system playing a key role in this.

The next section sets out the main contribution of this research enquiry to both theory and practice.

6.6 Contribution to Theory and Practice

While the literature has provided considerable insight into, and understanding of, the elements of the international and national HE environments which are directly impacting upon HEIs, it has not provided a systematic insight into how these elements of the HE landscape and internal institutional changes are impacting upon academics. Indeed, while there has been a considerable amount of research on the life and work of the academic in other countries, there has been a considerable dearth of research on this subject in Ireland.

This research enquiry has served to provide some insight into my research question through a case study of the School of Business at UCD. Based on the evidence from my research, we are witnessing a period of sustained institutional change that is re-shaping many aspects of the work and life of the academic. My research has also served to capture the considerable institutional change that is occurring and has identified the changes that are having a significant impact on the role of academics; their involvement in decision-making; and their level of institutional goodwill and commitment. Chapter 5 also presented some early indications of changes which are likely to have a much greater impact on academic staff in the future, including a much more managed approach regarding the performance of academics, more explicit requirements for research productivity in particular, and a drive for greater accountability on the part of academics. Table 6.1 presents a summary of the key changes that have taken place within UCD and the main impact of these changes on those interviewed. The table presents the key institutional and School changes that have had both the greatest and the least impact on academics as reported by those interviewed. It also categorises the impact of the UCD change programme on academics according to whether the changes were generally noted by academics as having nil, some, or strong negativity.

Table 6.1 Elements of Institutional Change at UCD and their Impact on Academics

UCD-Specific Changes (University and School)

- **Greatest Impact:**
  ~ Strengthened management structure
  ~ Changing roles - President, Executive Dean, Head of Subject Area
  ~ Research focus
  ~ Bureaucratisation/modular curriculum

- **Least Impact:**
  ~ Organisational re-structuring - abolition of Departments
  ~ Workload model
  ~ Internal promotions scheme

Impact of UCD Change on Academics

- **Nil Negativity:**
  ~ Academic freedom largely untouched

- **Some Negativity:**
  ~ Re-balancing of emphasis on teaching/research/administration
  ~ Increased performance pressures and work intensification
  ~ Increasing accountability measures
  ~ Increasing control over academics

- **Strong Negativity:**
  ~ Move from collegial to managerial decision-making
  ~ Decline in institutional commitment and loss of goodwill
  ~ Reduced morale
  ~ Diminished visibility / working behind closed doors

My research has also contributed to practice by highlighting a number of challenges that HE leaders need to be cognisant of during times of rapid and complex institutional change. Firstly, careful attention to the management and implementation of change is critical, particularly in institutions where stakeholders, such as academics, have traditionally played a central role. While top-down change may be inevitable given the increasing complexity of the HE environment, there is a

need to implement some means of facilitating a bottom-up contribution to change. Secondly, while many aspects of HE change may positively impact upon the institution in terms of its international standing and research performance, careful attention needs to be paid to the impact of change on institutional stakeholders. My research has shown that change which results in positive outcomes for the institution does not necessarily result in increased institutional commitment and goodwill on the part of academics. Failure to pay attention to this may have long-term repercussions for the institution itself in terms of the willingness of academics to engage in service contribution and institution-building. Finally, given the complex nature of institutional change, there is a strong case to be made for increasing attention to be paid at a local level (School or Subject Area) to developing mechanisms for the involvement of academics in decision-making and for examining ways of creating greater levels of collegiality through means other than participatory decision-making.

6.7 Personal Reflections

The completion of this research enquiry has been a challenging, but personally satisfying, learning experience. In reflecting upon this experience, three particular issues come to mind. Firstly, it would have been useful to have concluded each interview with a discussion on the actions the university or School could take to re-engage academics and to regain the institutional goodwill and commitment of academics which has been lost during the change programme. Secondly, each academic interviewed was asked about how the UCD change programme compared to changes occurring in other institutions (nationally and internationally). This question resulted in very little data and, instead, each academic could have been asked to comment on how their experience of change at UCD compared to similar experiences they have had while employed in other institutions. Thirdly, it would have been useful to have given some thought to how my data would be analysed at a much earlier stage in the research design. Obtaining soundings from academic

colleagues on the most useful and user-friendly qualitative data analysis software would have helped save time in deciding on which particular software to use.

The final section below presents some overall conclusions from this research enquiry.

6.8 Overall Conclusions

The research set out to address the overall question of how, and to what extent, change in HE has impacted upon academic staff. In addressing this, three sub-questions were explored: where the impetus for HE change has emanated from; what changes have occurred in the decision-making approaches of HEIs and how these changes have impacted upon traditional notions of collegiality; and how the role of the academic has changed and how HE change has impacted upon academic freedom. The main conclusions surrounding each of these research questions will now be addressed.

Firstly, my research findings have provided insight into the changing nature of HE in Ireland, both at the level of the institution and the individual academic. Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 outlined the broad institutional changes being witnessed by those interviewed, including organisational re-structuring, the development of a strengthened management structure, the redefinition of key roles, considerable change in the decision-making approach, increased bureaucratisation across the university and the move towards a Humboldtian model of university with a greater emphasis on research performance. In examining the main drivers for such change, a range of internal and external factors were cited by those interviewed, including the under-performance and complacency of the university; the existence of old-fashioned organisational structures; the appointment of a new President; a call for both greater public sector efficiency; and an alignment of national policy with the activities of HE. There is no doubt that many of the above changes have created tension between the traditional values of academics and the changing shape of

university management and governance. Consequently, the change programme at UCD has considerably re-shaped many aspects of the life and work of the academic as discussed below.

Secondly, the lack of involvement of academics in the planning and implementation of the change programme was a particularly contentious issue among those interviewed. An analysis of change management at UCD highlights how the appointment of a HE leader following a search and selection process and the development of a much more top-down managerial approach can facilitate the implementation of large-scale institutional change. Perhaps, though, the most significant change that has impacted upon the influence and involvement of academics in the management and governance of UCD has been the removal of decision-making power from Subject Areas and the deliberate move away from participatory and collegial approaches to decision-making towards more managerial approaches. At School level, the abolition of Faculty meetings and the appointment of an Executive Dean represent a clear move away from structural collegiality towards a more selective and ad-hoc approach to participation in decision-making by a smaller cohort of academics. The overall outcome of this shift in approach to decision-making has been a marked decline in the voluntary contribution of academics to, and a reduced feeling of involvement in, the life of the School. Perhaps the single biggest challenge now facing the School is to establish some means of re-engaging many of the academics that have become disillusioned following the implementation of the change programme. Aside from the changes that have taken place with regard to decision-making, the research also highlighted a decline in the level of general collegiality and day-to-day interaction between academics. A second challenge for the School is to consider ways of increasing day-to-day interaction between academics and, particularly, to increase the visibility and presence of academics around the corridors of the School.

Thirdly, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the role of the UCD academic is changing to reflect greater expectations of performance across the teaching,

research and service elements of the role. In particular, increasing demands for research output are more evident now, with research more clearly rewarded through the promotions system and workload model. While my findings have highlighted greater monitoring of the research performance of academics, there was no evidence to suggest any increased pressure being placed on academics to generate greater research income and to engage in more entrepreneurial and commercial activities. It would also appear that the majority of academics, with lengthy periods of service and who entered UCD at a time when teaching constituted the main element of the role, are experiencing additional pressures surrounding the changing role requirements and expectations with regard to performance outputs. There is also some evidence to suggest that academics are experiencing greater work intensification and an increase in the level of routine administration they are required to engage in. Furthermore, Chapter 2 highlighted the need to understand the extent to which academics are now witnessing increasing accountability pressures. While few means of accountability have been brought to bear on academics at UCD before now, there was a sense of expectation among those interviewed that the need for greater accountability will become a more obvious feature of academic life in the future. Even considering these changes in the day-to-day role requirements, academic freedom represents the area least affected by the change programme. The absence of any constraints on what faculty members teach, how they teach and the actual focus of their research represents a very notable finding of this research. Indeed, this is not surprising given the statutory protection afforded to one's academic freedom under the Universities Act, 1997. However, from a promotions perspective, academics have much less freedom regarding whether or not to research and in the types of journals to be targeted.

Finally, there is some evidence to suggest that the institution-wide programme of change at UCD has positively impacted upon the international profile of the university. However, in answering the question of how, and to what extent, change in HE has impacted upon academic staff, there is no doubt that the Irish HE landscape has been undergoing considerable change, with significant implications

for the life and work of the academic. The current environment within the UCD School of Business would suggest that tensions have become increasingly evident between the traditional values of academics and the changing shape of institutional management. While the literature suggests that the general commitment of academics is high, my research has shown the importance of understanding the long-term impact of internal institutional change on the institutional commitment, collaboration and contribution of academics. While my research presented no evidence that the commitment of academics to their discipline has declined, considerable evidence emerged of an increasingly disillusioned group of academic staff, a considerable loss of institutional goodwill and commitment and a notable change in the overall climate and feeling within the School of Business. While all of the institutional changes discussed throughout this research enquiry have re-shaped the life and work of the academic at UCD, the real payoff from the change programme, particularly in terms of research productivity, may not perhaps become fully apparent until the next generation of academics emerges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – PILOT STUDY

Introduction

- Focus of my research
- Ethical issues/Informed Consent

Theme 1: Changes at UCD

1. Changes at UCD in recent years & impetus for changes
2. Changes within the School in recent years & impetus for changes
3. Involvement of academics in the planning and implementation of UCD changes
4. Changes that have had the most impact upon academics
5. Response of academics to the changes
6. Possibility that academics can isolate themselves from the effects of the changes
7. Changes at UCD in comparison to other HEIs, both in Ireland and internationally

Theme 2: Decision-Making

8. Extent to which academics have traditionally been dominant in UCD governance
9. Academics input into decision-making at School level before re-structuring
10. Academics input into decision-making at School level since re-structuring
11. Which group of people now make the most important decisions in UCD / School?
12. Communication of decisions to academics
13. Speed of decision-making before re-structuring
14. Speed of decision-making since re-structuring

Theme 3: Collegiality

15. Collegiality at UCD / School prior to re-structuring
16. Collegiality at UCD / School since re-structuring
17. Manifestations of collegiality:

   a. impact of changes in decision-making processes on collegiality

   b. existence of a cohesive community of academics in the School

    c. mechanisms to allow for interaction with other academics in the School

    d. involvement of academics in School development

    e. communication of School developments to academic staff

    f. election of Dean

Theme 4: The Role of Academics

18. Description of the traditional role of the academic

    a. Teaching

    b. Research

    c. Service / Administration

19. Changes in:

    b. the role

    c. the emphasis on teaching / research / administration

    d. the extent to which the role is becoming more 'generalist'

    e. workload

    f. emphasis on the performance of academics

    g. search for efficiency/cost-effectiveness and the impact on academics

Theme 5: Autonomy and Control

20. Academic freedom/autonomy traditionally associated with academic roles

21. Changes in academic freedom/autonomy since the implementation of change

    h. areas where autonomy of academics has increased

    i. areas where autonomy of academics has decreased

22. Prescription of module content/learning outcomes/ assessment – impact on autonomy

23. Evidence for more overt control of academics

24. Changes in exam board processes and impact on autonomy and control of academics

25. Evidence for more accountability of academics

Conclusion

26. Successes and failures of the change programme in terms of academic life and work

27. Extent of academics current role in the governance of UCD / School

28. Characterisation of academic life today

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – MAIN STUDY

Introduction

- Focus of my research
- Ethical issues/Informed Consent

Theme 1: Changes at UCD

1. Changes at UCD in recent years & impetus for changes
2. Changes within the School in recent years & impetus for changes
3. Involvement of academics in the planning and implementation of UCD changes
4. Changes that have had the most impact upon academics
5. Response of academics to the changes
6. Changes at UCD in comparison to other HEIs, both in Ireland and internationally

Theme 2: Decision-Making

7. Extent to which academics have traditionally been dominant in UCD governance and policy-making
8. Extent of academics current role in UCD governance and policy-making
9. Academics input into decision-making at School level before re-structuring
10. Academics input into decision-making at School level since re-structuring
11. Which group of people now make the most important decisions in UCD / School?
12. Communication of decisions to academics
13. Speed of decision-making before re-structuring
14. Speed of decision-making since re-structuring

Theme 3: Collegiality

15. Collegiality at UCD / School prior to re-structuring

16. Collegiality at UCD / School since re-structuring

17. Manifestations of collegiality:

        j. impact of changes in decision-making processes on collegiality

        g. existence of a cohesive community of academics in the School

        h. mechanisms to allow for interaction with other academics in the School

        i. involvement of academics in School development

        j. communication of School developments to academic staff

        k. election of Dean

Theme 4: The Role of Academics

18. Description of the traditional role of the academic

        d. Teaching

        e. Research

        f. Service / Administration

19. Changes in:

        a. the role

        b. the emphasis on teaching / research / administration

        c. workload

        d. emphasis on the performance of academics

        e. search for efficiency/cost-effectiveness and the impact on academics

Theme 5: Autonomy and Control

20. Academic freedom/autonomy traditionally associated with academic roles

21. Changes in academic freedom/autonomy since the implementation of change

        a. areas where autonomy of academics has increased

        b. areas where autonomy of academics has decreased

22. Prescription of module content/learning outcomes/ assessment – impact on autonomy

23. Evidence for more overt control of academics

24. Changes in exam board processes and impact on autonomy and control of academics

25. Evidence for more accountability of academics

Conclusion

26. Successes of the change programme in terms of academic life and work

27. Failures of the change programme in terms of academic life and work

APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Doctor of Education – Research Enquiry
Information Sheet

I am currently employed as Associate Director at the Centre for Distance Learning, School of Business, University College Dublin. Presently, I am a third year Doctor of Education student at the University of Bath (Supervisor: Dr. Steve Gough, Department of Education – email: S.R.Gough@bath.ac.uk; telephone: +44 1225 383919). I would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you for the purposes of my research. Please find below a brief outline of the focus of this research enquiry.

With reference to the case of UCD and its School of Business, my research was designed to allow for an exploratory investigation of:

How, and to what extent, has change in Higher Education impacted upon academic staff?

The research aims to address a number of questions including:
- Where has the impetus for Higher Education reform emanated from?

- What changes have been occurring in decision-making approaches of Higher Education Institutions and how have these changes impacted upon traditional notions of collegiality among academic staff?

- How, and to what extent, has the role of the academic changed?

- How has reform in Higher Education impacted upon academic autonomy and to what extent is the increasing control of academic staff becoming more evident in academic work and life?

The following are my contact details should you wish to contact me at any stage in relation to this research:

Telephone: + 353 1 716 4749
Fax: + 353 1 716 4824
Email: linda.dowling@ucd.ie
Room: Q211, Quinn School of Business

Linda Dowling, June 2009

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APPENDIX 4: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Doctor of Education – Research Enquiry

Research Participant Questionnaire

Subject Area: _____

Please state the Year you began employment in UCD: _____

Current Role: _____

In the table below, please outline the various Lecturer Grades you have occupied since joining UCD:

Year	Grade

APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

Doctor of Education
Research Enquiry – Informed Consent Form
Linda Dowling

Name: _____

Venue: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please tick (✓) the boxes as appropriate

I agree to participate in this research. ❑

I agree to the interview being recorded. ❑

I understand that I can withdraw from this interview at any point. ❑

I understand that I will not be named in this research. ❑

I have been provided with an information sheet on the purposes of the research. ❑

I am happy for the findings of this interview to be published in the final research enquiry. ❑

I am happy for the findings of this interview to be used for academic publication purposes. ❑

I am happy for my job title to be included in the research. ❑

APPENDIX 6: FREE CODES CREATED IN ATLAS PRIOR TO DATA ANALYSIS

1. Challenges Facing HE
2. Modularisation
3. Organisational Re-Structuring
4. Bureaucratisation
5. Managerialism
6. Funding
7. Globalisation
8. Impetus for UCD Changes
9. Involvement of Academics in Change Process
10. Impact on Academics at UCD
11. Coping Strategies of Academics
12. Dominance of Academics in Governance
13. Successes of Change Programme
14. Failures of Change Programme
15. Academic Life Today
16. Decision-Making Process at School Level (Pre-restructuring)
17. Decision-Making Process at School Level (Post-restructuring)
18. Key Players in Decision-Making
19. Communication of Decision-Making
20. Speed of Decision-Making
21. Collegiality (Pre-structuring)
22. Collegiality (Post-structuring)
23. Interaction between Academics
24. Involvement of Academics in School Development
25. Community of Academics
26. Election of Dean
27. Traditional Role of Academics
28. Changing Role
29. Emphasis on Teaching / Research / Administration
30. Impact of Modularisation
31. Workload
32. Monitoring of the Performance of Academics
33. Efficiency
34. Cost-Effectiveness
35. Traditional Academic Freedom/Autonomy of Academics
36. Autonomy (Increase)
37. Autonomy (Decrease)
38. Exam Board Process
39. Control of Academics
40. Accountability

APPENDIX 7: FINAL LIST OF CODES GENERATED

Codes	No. of References
1. Academic Freedom - attractive feature of working in a HEI	5
2. Academic Freedom - Traditional Meaning	26
3. Academic Life	7
4. Accountability	39
5. Autonomy - Changes Since Re-structuring	11
6. Autonomy - Individual Academic Level	41
7. Autonomy - School Level	11
8. Bureaucratisation	13
9. Campus – Location	1
10. Campus - Separation of Belfield/Blackrock	18
11. Care-less Attitude of Academics	2
12. Challenges Facing Higher Education	1
13. Challenges Facing UCD	3
14. Changes at UCD	50
15. Changes in School of Business	36
16. Collegiality - Social Interaction Between Academics	9
17. Collegiality at School Level Before Re-structuring	26
18. Collegiality At School Level Since Re-structuring	34
19. Collegiality Before Re-structuring - Cynical View	3
20. Collegiality Type - Attendance at Meetings/Events	11
21. Collegiality Type - Collaboration between Academics	8
22. Collegiality Type - Supporting Colleagues	6
23. Communication with Academic Staff	48
24. Community of Academics – External	10
25. Community of Academics – Internal	38
26. Comparison of Changes in other HEIs	19
27. Control Over Academics	26
28. Coping Strategies	26
29. Corporatism & Entrepreneurialism	5
30. Cost-Effectiveness	23
31. Decision-Making at School Level Before Re-structuring	55
32. Decision-Making at University Level	1
33. Decision-Making: Removal of Old Faculty Meetings	5
34. Decision-Making: School Meetings	21
35. Decision Making at School Level after Re-structuring	71
36. Disparate Nature of Business Schools/Academics	4

37. Dominance of Academics in UCD Governance and Policy-Making	37
38. Dumbing Down Academic Standards/Quality	4
39. Election & Selection of the Dean	39
40. Code: Election & Selection of the President	2
41. Emphasis on Teaching/Research/Administration	43
42. Exam Board Process	25
43. Executive Dean	14
44. Failures of UCD Change Programme	35
45. Form-Filling/Procedures	5
46. Funding	1
47. Globalisation	0
48. Impact of Changes on Academics	29
49. Impetus for Change in HE	3
50. Impetus for Changes at UCD	39
51. Implementation of Change at UCD	9
52. Implications for Future Leadership of UCD and School	5
53. Individualism	11
54. Interaction between Academics	31
55. Interdisciplinary Research	11
56. Involvement of Academics in Change Process	31
57. Involvement of Academics in Governance and Policy-Making post re-structuring	3
58. Involvement of Academics in School Strategic Direction & Development	30
59. Involvement of Administrators in Academic Issues	6
60. Key Decision-Makers in the School	18
61. Layers in Decision Making Process & in Administration	7
62. Leadership Style	3
63. Management of Change	16
64. Management of School	5
65. Management of UCD	5
66. Manager-Academics	6
67. Managerialism	4
68. Modularisation	6
69. Module Descriptors	34
70. Move from Departments to Subject Areas	33
71. Organisational Re-Structuring	10
72. Performance of Academics	43
73. Performance Management and Development System (PMDS	14
74. Power	17
75. Pressures on Academics	28
76. Professionalisation of Management/Administration	7

77. Promotion	34
78. Pseudo Participation	3
79. Research – Support	4
80. Response of Academics to Change	64
81. Role Confusion	3
82. Role of the Academic	48
83. Service/Contribution	15
84. Speed of Decision Making	33
85. Standardisation/Regulation/Compliance - Teaching/Assessment/Policies	3
86. Strategic Planning at University Level	3
87. Students - Consumerism/Demands	15
88. Students - Impact of change	21
89. Success of UCD Change Programme	27
90. Teaching Evaluations	12
91. Transparency – Financial	3
92. Visibility of Academics/Behind Closed Doors	14
93. Workload – Administrative	21
94. Workload – increase	30
95. Workload Model	19

APPENDIX 8: COLLEGE AND SCHOOL STRUCTURE

(at January 2010)

Academic Structure

College of Arts and Celtic Studies

- School of Archaeology
- School of Art History and Cultural Policy
- School of Classics
- School of English, Drama and Film
- School of History and Archives
- School of Irish, Celtic Studies, Irish Folklore and Linguistics
- School of Languages and Literatures
- School of Music

College of Business and Law

- School of Business
- School of Law

College of Engineering, Mathematical and Physical Sciences

- School of Architecture, Landscape and Civil Engineering
- School of Chemical and Bioprocess Engineering
- School of Computer Science and Informatics
- School of Electrical, Electronic and Mechanical Engineering
- School of Geological Sciences
- School of Mathematical Sciences
- School of Physics

College of Human Sciences

- School of Applied Social Science
- School of Economics
- School of Education
- School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy
- School of Information and Library Studies
- School of Philosophy
- School of Politics and International Relations
- School of Psychology
- School of Social Justice
- School of Sociology

College of Life Sciences

- School of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine
- School of Biology and Environmental Science
- School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science
- School of Chemistry and Chemical Biology
- School of Medicine and Medical Science
- School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems
- School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Population Science

APPENDIX 9: UCD ORGANISATIONAL CHART

APPENDIX 10: UCD ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  UCD Governing Authority │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │     Academic Council     │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Academic Council         │
                    │ Executive Committee      │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
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University Undergraduate Programme Board	University Graduate Programme Board
Academic Council Committee on Examinations	Academic Council Committee on Assessment Appeals
Academic Council Committee on Quality	Academic Council Committee on Discipline
Academic Council Committee for Honorary Degrees	Academic Council Committee for Campus Life
Academic Council Committee for Recognition of Student Societies	Academic Council Committee on Internationalisation
Academic Council Committee for Academic Centres	University Education Strategy Board
University Research Strategy Board	

APPENDIX 11: UCD SENIOR MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE

College Officers
President
Registrar/Deputy President
Bursar
Director of Strategic Planning
Assistant to the President

Vice-Presidents
Development
Research
Students
Staff
University Relations

College Principals
UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies
UCD College of Business and Law
UCD College of Engineering, Mathematical and
Physical Sciences
UCD College of Human Sciences
UCD College of Life Sciences

Heads of Large Schools
UCD School of Agriculture, Food Science and
Veterinary Medicine
UCD School of Medicine and Medical Science
UCD School of Business

APPENDIX 12: SCHOOL OF BUSINESS –
SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM AND EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

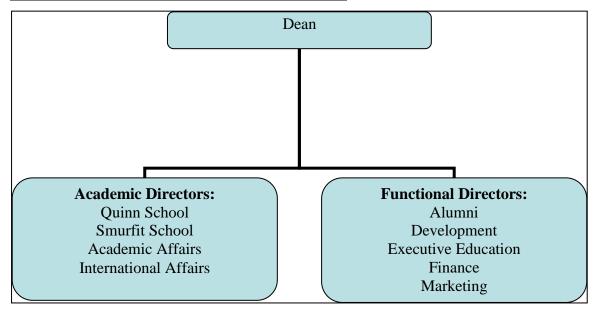## (A) School of Business Senior Management Team

Dean

Academic Directors:
Quinn School
Smurfit School
Academic Affairs
International Affairs

Functional Directors:
Alumni
Development
Executive Education
Finance
Marketing

(B) School Executive Committee Membership

Dean

Academic Members:
Heads, Subject Areas
Academic Affairs
International Affairs
Director, Quinn School
Director, Smurfit School
Head, Teaching & Learning
Director, Research
Director, Doctoral Studies

Administrative Members:
HR Partner
Director Administration
Associate Directors, Programme
Offices

APPENDIX 13: STRUCTURE OF UCD SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │  Executive Dean  │
                    └──────────────────┘
                              │
        ┌─────────────┬───────┴───────┬──────────────┐
        │             │               │              │
  ┌───────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
  │ Directors │ │ Subject Areas│ │Functional Areas│ │ Programmes │
  └───────────┘ └──────────────┘ └───────────────┘ └────────────┘
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Directors	Subject Areas	Functional Areas	Programmes
Quinn School Smurfit School Academic Affairs International Affairs Doctoral Studies Research & Innovation Teaching & Learning	Accountancy Banking & Finance IR/HR Management MIS Marketing	Administration Finance Marketing ILTG Development & Alumni	Distance Learning Executive Education Quinn Programme Office Smurfit Programme Office

APPENDIX 14: MEMBERSHIP OF UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS PROGRAMME BOARD

- Director, UCD Quinn Business School (Chair)
- Vice Principal of Teaching & Learning, UCD College of Business and Law
- Programme Co-ordinators
- Heads of Subject Areas
- Head, UCD School of Languages & Literatures
- Head, UCD School of Irish, Celtic Studies, Irish Folklore and Linguistics
- Head, UCD School of Economics
- Head, UCD School of Mathematics
- Director, UCD Applied Language Centre
- 2 Academic Members nominated by the Registrar
- Representative from University Registry
- 1 Academic Member nominated by the Principal, College of Business and Law
- 4 Student Representatives
- Director of Administration
- Associate Director, UCD Quinn School of Business Programme Office
- Associate Director, Centre for Distance Learning, UCD School of Business
- Student Adviser, UCD Quinn School of Business

APPENDIX 15: MEMBERSHIP OF GRADUATE TAUGHT BUSINESS PROGRAMME BOARD

- Vice-Principal of Teaching & Learning, College of Business & Law (Chair)
- Programme Co-ordinators
- Heads of Subject Areas
- MBA Programme Director
- Director, Executive Education
- Director of Administration
- Associate Director, UCD Smurfit School of Business Programme Office
- Associate Director, Centre for Distance Learning, UCD School of Business
- Representative from University Registry
- Student Advisor
- Student Representatives