

***Principles of strategic management  
in universities***

Volume I

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# PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITIES

## PREFACE

For several years now, CRE has been following the evolution of university management in Europe, focusing on converging trends, common points and differences in the development of higher education and research institutions.

Since 1979, in co-operation with OECD/IMHE, CRE has been offering seminars on the management of the university to member university to senior management teams. These annual seminars would appear to confirm the existence of specifically European aspects in the model outlining the universities' roles and their place in society.

This draft development model has been tested by CRE since 1991 through its institutional evaluation programme, in which 13 universities from 10 European countries have participated so far, and which will involve another 14 institutions in 1997. Adapted from the quality evaluation procedures developed in the Netherlands by CHEPS, the Centre for Higher Education Policy studies based at the University of Twente, this programme does not seek to control the quality of university activities, but to map out the processes by which these services are supplied. The question which is asked is: do these processes permit a quality policy, and does the management of the institution have the resources with which to carry out such a policy? The CRE plays the role of revealer (by taking an outside look at the institution visited) and of mentor (by seeking to understand its dynamics of change), in order to suggest means of supporting its development at the least cost.

In-depth conversations with the teams managing these universities highlight the need for explicit references to a model permitting comparison between various experiences, a model that takes account of the strategic management methods currently practised. The present document is therefore aimed at illustrating the nature and scope of strategy in the management of a university.

No one particular model is proposed. Rather the multiplicity of the methods which universities can opt to implement, based on their activities and resources, their history, their structures and standards, and their potential or leadership, are stressed. Those features which are common to any form of strategic management are highlighted, and certain steps which courses of action are suggested.

The preparation of this document received the support of the European Commission and was drafted by Pierre Tabatoni, former Chancellor of the Paris-Universities and currently teaching Management at the University of Paris-Dauphine, an institution he helped to create. Pierre Tabatoni accepted to share his experience in university evaluation with the French National Evaluation Committee and with CRE. He was one of the three founding experts of the Quality Evaluation Programme of CRE. In order to ensure adequate liaison with this initiative, Pierre Tabatoni asked the Secretary General of CRE to join him in the project. The authors wish to extend their thanks to all the rectors and experts who made suggestions on the draft text and helped to give it its present shape.

The text, published in two volumes, is divided into four parts, each responding to a specific need.

The first part, the introduction in dialogue form, discusses the notions evoked by strategic management, based on the way it is applied in universities. The aim here is to familiarize the reader with a **vocabulary**, and, in an informal manner, to set common reference points.

The next part picks up these points and places them in a decision-making system. In this way, it presents the stages of a **strategic path** in the university. The idea is to introduce those conditions for change which can promote the development at which the institution is aiming. These two parts constitute Volume I, dealing with principles of strategic management in the university.

Volume II looks at the translation of these principles in the management practice of CRE member institutions. When published in the Autumn, it will outline **fields of action** where university management teams can work to position their institutions vis-à-vis rival or allied organizations. The objective of this part is to highlight potential strategic choices, by pointing to the implications of the actions to which they give rise. It will be based on the experience of leadership as told by university rectors.

The book will end with an essay setting out the institutional policies and development strategies as experienced in the daily life of a rector trying to develop a university - here the University of Utrecht. Its former rector, Professor Hans van Ginkel outlines the methods of strategic management practised in this institution, explaining the factors conducive to the approaches involved and the difficulties encountered by the management team in implementing them. These two parts will constitute Volume II, to be published at a later date.

*Pierre Tabatoni et Andris Barblan*

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# **VIRTUAL DIALOGUE ON STRATEGIC UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

The following informal dialogue is between **SR** (the sceptical rector who plays devil's advocate) and **TB** (the authors) who hope that readers will participate in the dialogue, in the two roles, and that their remarks will make this dialogue richer and more pertinent.

## **I – FOREWORD**

*The terms of the debate*

**SR** – *I am quite happy to discuss university management, but first of all, please explain to me the difference between management, administration and governance. I hope that just one of these words will be sufficient to define our institution, an institution which, I would define in this way: a university is essentially a body responsible for teaching and academic research, constituted in the form of a community of persons where academic and administrative personnel, students and outside partners all enjoy a high degree of liberty, but with the goal of working together in order to naturally and permanently improve the quality of the institution's performance and services.*

*I would add that this quality depends on individual and collective efforts, and that all such efforts are largely inter-dependent. When all is said and done, the quality of the services the university provides reflects the ability of each of its members, and, through them, of the organization itself to adapt to the evolution of society's need for training and research. It is the university's capacity for change which is therefore constantly called into question.*

*For this reason, a university's administration must be designed and organized so as to offer academic activities of the best possible quality consonant with the available resources, and to strengthen its character of an active community. The collegial character of our universities means that academic personnel cannot avoid taking on administrative activities directly linked to their teaching and research work. Such a commitment entails being part of a general administration because they are in the front line of change. But there are degrees of involvement depending on their responsibilities within the institution, their functions or their skills.*

*As I see it, these are the key features of the university within its European tradition.*

*Management: management and administration for quality*

**TB** – I agree entirely with your key features. The whole problem is to know what to do to ensure that the spirit of change, and knowledge of paths of change, are very present in all the activities of the university community.

Here we are speaking solely of management, but in the broad sense of the term. *Managing*, in general terms, means organizing a collective action, in order to carry out together joint missions and to achieve joint

objectives. This means: *planning, structuring, facilitating, leading, and supporting this collective effort*. To achieve this, one has to *bring together and allocate responsibilities and resources, and then communicate, co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate, within the framework of quality policies*. In Europe, these functions are carried out by both academic personnel **and** professional administrators, working together.

Administration is first of all an executory function. Managing implies a more global view: it is concerned in particular with the processes of steering and governing, let us say of imparting a sense of direction. *Government and administration together represent the function of management.*

**SR** – *So you are saying that managing is synonymous with governing and leading at different decision-making levels?*

**TB** – In some ways, perhaps. But the word “governing” possibly puts excessive emphasis on the aspects of authority, rules of conduct and hierarchy. The manager should attempt, rather, to steer activities towards participation and discussion and, as a rule, management in the academic world is collective (involving boards, rectors and deans or co-ordination committees). Even where the law in France states that the president *leads* the university, the practise entailed is more one of management than leadership.

As you have emphasized, most teaching and researchers are, to varying degrees, involved in management. In a sense, they are themselves the managers of change, collectively via their committees, and individually by the efforts they make to organize their work in the light of the collective tasks.

**SR** – *If they have responsibility for organizing their work in the best possible fashion, can we then speak of a quality inherent in the management functions themselves, which goes beyond academic functions?*

**TB** – Isn't this obvious? The concern for quality applies to all processes within the institution, whether academic or managerial, and these processes are inter-dependent. It is the same idea which lies at the basis of so-called *total quality* management, a term as yet little used but already rejected in our milieu.

Let us rather talk within universities of *quality promotion policies*. The results of these policies depend of course on having an effective collective organization, in particular an effective management. But they depend even more on the *initiatives* taken and the *discipline* shown by each and everyone involved, in his or her area of competence, in other words, the quality *standards* which reign in the institution.

This view is part of the CRE's efforts to develop *the evaluation of quality policies in universities*. And, as this programme shows, we can talk of quality only when we start with the objectives pursued, that is the whole corpus of policies which an institution has opted to implement.

## II – QUALITY AND CHANGE

**SR** – *Is it not true that in all organizations a quality policy is considered today as a key factor of development, as an essential stage in producing the changes which the institution needs to undertake in order to respond better to the changes in society?*

**TB** – Certainly. We also speak of *strategies for change*. Even if we just want to preserve the *status quo*, we need to change the way of preserving it. A strategy means a choice of goals and resources which aim to respond better to *changes in the environment* – human, cultural, social, technological, economical, political and institutional.

**SR** – *I agree with “strategies”, but why use a military term when, for the academic world, the word “policy” seems enough appropriate?*

**TB** – A question of vocabulary, I would say, but for me with the following distinction: whilst a policy defines principles of actions and relationships, and whilst it concerns general objectives and the type of resources to be used (or not used), it is nonetheless implemented in the form of strategies. *Policy defines, strategy acts*. In turn, it is *management*, seen as a whole, *which permits the formulation and implementation of both policies and strategies*.

**SR** – *The distinction makes sense if these policies and strategies express priority directions, making it possible to respond to changes in society, the effects of which will affect the way the university operates. I believe that everyone rectors, deans, directors and managers, if not most academic personnel are fully aware of the changes which await us. But I fear that we are unable to move from this awareness to action without calling into question the major principle of decentralization – a corollary of grass-roots initiative - which traditionally governs university life.*

**TB** – Your fears express the difficulties of responding individually to a collective challenge deriving from the common needs of our society. For this reason we need to observe and interpret very carefully the changes which are taking place, and indeed even anticipate them. It is these changes which are testing and will continue to test the present and future value of the various activities of the academic world. It is they that will determine the development of the supply and demand of education, research and of services as supplied by our institutions.

For example, *regarding the clientele*, how will student numbers change (young people, adults, foreigners, senior citizens, ....)? How will their attitudes and needs alter? Or the needs of other users of our education and research services? Will the transformation of the attitudes and resources of our partners such as national, regional and local bodies or enterprises, provoke the creation of new community services?

*Regarding resources*, will changes in resources management – financing possibilities, recruitment of qualified personnel, innovation and information systems – profoundly transform the scientific, pedagogical and administrative methods of the university world?

Or, *regarding openness to the outside world*, will new prospects for co-operation with enterprises and other professional and social bodies, at both the international and European level, significantly change the balances between the different university activities in favour of exchanges with the outside world?

**SR** – *In short, you are insisting on the fact that not only do universities need to look at the changes inherent in the knowledge which they transmit, but also, and in particular, they need to adapt to their environment by contributing actively, in the form of **innovation**, to change in society and the building of its future. I do not know whether this desire for openness is much*



*shared in our institutions, at least taken as a whole. The call for not only **adaptive** but also **pro-active** strategies appears to me to evoke little enthusiasm among professors, interested first of all by the success of their chairs or their departments. Our colleague at Twente, Frans Van Vught, is right when he speaks of the university as a **cybernetic system**, the fragmentation and decentralization of which he presents as natural phenomena. For him, the institution functions on the basis of double feedback, that is adaptive feedback and pro-active feedback. In this concept I see a fortunate means of reconciling the explicit fragmentation and the discreet but real unity of the university.*

**TB** – Yes, I know this approach. It is an interesting interpretation, and I would say that the *management activities* of the university are in themselves a cybernetic system where the specific environment of the institution, its structures of interdependence and its diversity, shape the interactive loops of the system.

**SR** – *Let us agree then that the university is one of the most powerful means of transforming society, because research is by definition innovative, as teaching methods, working procedures and life style should also be. But can the university translate its contribution to a new spirit into specific policies? Can it, as an institution, take on responsibility for changing attitudes of both individuals and groups and, beyond them, of society itself?*

*Preservation,  
rationalization, innovation*

**TB** – I believe so, because change, as you have insisted, means not only adapting and reacting to the environment; it also means opening up new paths within this environment, seizing and engendering new *opportunities for innovation*.

Almost any strategy combines *three motivations*, supported by the corresponding differentiated procedures: *preserving* what one wants to maintain using new means, *rationalizing*, that is obtaining better cost-benefit in practice, and *innovation*. Innovation by definition carries a destabilizing element. The combination of these three functions is in itself strategic, because there are optimal proportions to be respected in the long term, and this is the art of management. If one of these missions gains the upper hand over all the others, the whole process of change can be blocked or braked.

Hence, preservation is important: however, one needs to assess what one wants to preserve, in particular when this involves procedures, methods, skills, traditions, standards and experience which would be hard to reconstitute in new contexts. On the other hand, there is little chance of innovating if one has not made a serious effort to rationalize and make better use of resources and to improve the quality of what is already being done. Innovation is in many cases the fruit of spontaneous initiatives, at grass roots level, and this is almost normal. But in many cases change deserves to be stimulated, induced and supported by appropriate policies.

**SR** – *What a lot of words! All sounding rather nice... But isn't it rather the vocabulary we should rationalize?*

### **III – POLICY, STRATEGY, STRATEGIC AREA**

*Policy and strategy:  
institutional policies*

**TB** – Let us try then: by *policy*, I mean the enunciation of *principles, new rules of the game, new paths to be explored which can give*

direction to new ways of doing – or not doing – things, ways which are themselves very diverse, because in a decentralized and diversified system there are always a number of ways of achieving general objectives. This fragmentation gives shape to the cybernetic approach which, as Van Vught reminds us, consists in controlling variety by variety. But, multiple or otherwise, any policy begins with those responsible for it (managing and governing), whether they be individual persons or collective bodies.

**SR** – *In a free, decentralized system, change and development can be spontaneous, and it is for everyone to assume his or her own responsibilities.*

**TB** – Perhaps, but the history of our institutions teaches us that this is a risky wager. Where there is no general policy, there is no university. A global vision makes it possible to stimulate innovation at grass-roots level. It is not a question of integrating new activities nor of having them converge strictly towards shared objectives. But it is important to outline the few common rules of the game which give the university its identity. The cybernetic structure I evoked earlier also insists on this.

Of course, these *policies*, which I will call *institutional policies*, are the outcome of discussion at all decision-making levels, where a certain autonomy is exercised. These policies need to be changed when, as you say, they appear to be overtaken by events. It is essential that management practises this flexibility.

**SR** – *You said just now that, compared to policies, strategies are more operational.*

**TB** – Indeed, for they specify the aims, criteria and methods of evaluation. Strategies establish what has to be done, together with the necessary organizational arrangements, timetable, and allocation of responsibilities and resources, and also organize the communication required to make these new aims fully known. And they lead to action plans with their associated programmes. In short, they give concrete expression to the *relative autonomy* enjoyed by decentralized bodies within the university. They also reflect application of the *general principle of subsidiarity* regulating the responsibilities of the central bodies and the operation of any very decentralized unit.

**SR** – *It is frequently said that a strategy turns constraints into opportunities.*

**TB** – This is a fashionable formula and I believe it to be a good one. But it is a formula, no more. Of course, a strategy is always used to take advantage of or to create new opportunities, and for this reason it needs to be able to reduce the constraints which block the desired change, to help circumvent these by opening up new paths. Though certain constraints remain inevitable, at least in the short term, as we shall see.

**SR** – *Can strategies apply to any type of action?*

**TB** – Yes, to any activity, structure, organization or resource that is important for the development of activities. However, when these converge in key sectors, we speak of strategic domains.

*The strategic domain*

In fact, within the framework of the given constraints (resources, space, regulations, mentalities or competition), the margin of manoeuvre available for the initiatives for change which are both desired and feasible can be more or less extensive.

Universities, and their decentralized bodies, can decide to give priority to changes *in certain basic activities* (training programmes, new groups of students and auditors, basic and applied research, or services to the community, for example) and to changes *in the use of certain resources used to undertake these transformations* – reforms of methods, structures, organization and communications, reallocation of responsibilities and resources, reforming resource management and logistics, new personnel policies, new rules and standards of conduct, new forms of work and life style, changes in public image, external relationships, forms of co-operation and competition, to name the most current levers of change.

**SR** – *You have said that a strategy always implies collective change. However, in a collegial mode, it cannot be imposed from above...*

**TB** – No, because what is needed is an effort of communication, pointing to new needs and making intentions explicit, stimulating people's awareness of the need for transformation and indicating paths of change which have a chance of succeeding. Within a concerted system like a university, we need to negotiate responsibilities, goals and resources; we need to be able to achieve that sense of conviction which alone can unblock acquired positions. This is the role of *leadership*.

*Leadership and  
credibility of a strategy*

**SR** – *I am surprised that you have not yet spoken of leadership, as you have been making constant reference to management functions....*

**TB** – A strategic error of mine, I concede, as there is no management without leadership. The word leadership covers any *personal intervention* which serves as example, as a “catalyst”, even if it takes place within a body or a committee. Let's say that leadership is the capacity which those in charge, or indeed any influential person in or outside the establishment, have of inspiring and leading the action of a group, of promoting individual initiatives, facilitating communication, conducting negotiations, reducing conflicts and blockages, assisting in the design and implementation of projects, getting people to reflect on joint experiences and transferring good practices... This idea of leadership corresponds to an environment in which the government of a collective entity is exercised not just through authoritarian command, but is also supported by inspiration and support for individual and collective projects, which are capable of producing overall changes throughout the institution.

It is effective leadership which makes a strategy credible and *credibility* is the precondition for the acceptance of this strategy, and hence for the collective mobilization which ensures its success. Those responsible need to *commit themselves* publicly and personally, right up to the top if necessary. The desired action needs to appear *relevant* to the perceived need for change, realistic, potentially successful. Voluntary sacrifice is not strategy.

**SR** – *No doubt, but one has to guard against general formulations, wishful thinking, simple contrivances of communication and sterile clichéd language. They may give rise to distrust, disillusion, or resistance through fear of manipulation that might be concealing other strategies.*

**TB** – Of course, a strategy must be operational, but credibility certainly doesn't preclude formulation of its aims and the choice of

means in symbolic language with emotional and suggestive qualities to help secure agreement, commitment and, ideally, enthusiasm.

Leaders know how to adjust their language to different kinds of audience, in accordance with circumstances. But they must be able to get their messages across clearly and to show how they serve the collective interest, so as to stimulate *credible* forms of commitment. However complex a problem regarding change, strategies must be communicated in a simple way, with a focus on their essential aim and reference to the main change involved.

**SR** – *I think it is right that strategy should contain elements of flexibility to enable changes in direction, at no prohibitive cost, as regards psychological aspects, resources and credibility. However, flexibility does not amount to versatility, even though any strategy carries risks since it moves towards an uncertain and often unpredictable future. In fact, it is always a gamble, but never leaves everything entirely to chance. Those who are committed to it must believe that they will be supported and that any mistakes they make will not be irreparable.*

*Explicit and  
implicit strategies*

*And I wonder if strategies always need to be made explicit. They can remain implicit, admitted by use, strengthened by precedent, for example after conflicts or top-level arbitration. Does it make sense to make them explicit when one could avoid sharp, uninformed or malevolent reactions?*

**TB** – Implicit policies have their value only when they are well understood and accepted, otherwise they can engender a sense of manipulation and frustration, causing the credibility of the policies to be called into question. This is why it is better to achieve acceptance through debate.

The whole art and policy of *negotiation and leadership* is to show clearly the risk incurred by doing nothing compared with the advantage of acting now, and to a specific programme. It is necessary, I have said, to address equally people's sense of reason, their interests, their values and their feelings, in a manner specific to each situation – this means also addressing the people threatened by change. Let us remember the old adage: *politics is the art of the possible*. But at the same time, *it is not the constant acceptance of compromise, resignation to status quo, falling back on acquired interests*. It is the vector of collective change.

**SR** – *Even if one does not formulate overall strategies, based on grassroots initiatives, I believe that there are always strategies, although implicit, because change is frequent if not constant, and unavoidable - even if reactions to an event, improvised in the heat of the moment so to speak, can finally turn out to be strategic decisions. Who knows at the outset? That is what action is about.*

**TB** – Of course. But if improvisation proves to be strategic, it will end up being formalized in the guise of discussed and organized policies and strategies.

I would also like to highlight the fact that in the absence of a clearly discussed and adopted strategy, it often happens that the organisation functions, *de facto*, according to the private strategies of certain of its most influential members or bodies, those best able to make use of the collective resources for their gain. This can be good for the institution as a whole. if the examples are good. and if they are

disseminated well. This will be bad, if these private strategies then make it impossible to develop the weaker, less influential sectors of the university.

I remember one university which, out of a concern for excellence, and to avoid its more demanding sectors being encumbered by second quality students and teachers, organized so-called weaker “rubbish bin” sectors, i.e. departments with minimal resources, but frustration grew, and the sectors of excellence also suffered.

**SR** – *I do not deny the role of influential people. There are influential people everywhere, who are more effective, strategically speaking. And after all, aren't an institution's general policies frequently influenced, if not inspired, officially or otherwise, by the desires of its most active members? Leaders need to be surrounded by model examples.*

**TB** – Yes, but only so long as the most influential members are not necessarily those whose activities are the most significant from the viewpoint of the mission of the institution, given the changes it has to confront.

We have all known the effects of privileged influence: for example that of well-established and powerful disciplines, or of experienced but conservative professors; or of teaching staff, conservative or not, who are influential due to their number; or that of political or trade union representatives, or organizations providing contract financing, etc. etc. I believe that the opinions of influential people need to surface at one point or another in the discussion process. This is part of strategic management.

*Biological development  
or strategic management?*

**SR** – *Ah! Strategic management, here we are again. But this has not yet been clearly defined, even if this practice is recommended by all official bodies – the OECD, UNESCO, the European Union, for example. It also lies at the heart of the quality promotion policies which CRE is advocating.*

*Are we not making a bit too much of this? I have the impression that this term, borrowed from business management textbooks, is beginning to go out of fashion. Nowadays I hear more biological-type language, with reference to life processes: do these not reflect better the complexity and diversity of bodies such as a university?*

**TB** – There are certainly many lessons for the study of the organization to be drawn from knowledge of biological processes, particularly since the work done by Rothschild, Kelly and others.

Moreover, modern management principles play up the idea of a “learning organization” whose essential investment is the *human investment* and in which the protagonists, who possess both autonomy and initiative, are concerned to memorize and evaluate their experience, exchanging the lessons learnt from it with others. The same principles further emphasize the variety and variability of situations, the flexibility of structures, and changes in the form of innovation, but also the self-adaptation of projects and attitudes to changes in the environment.

The view of the organization as a network, or system of more or less interactive networks is a good example of this. The idea of decisions emanating from the centre is weakened because each cluster of relations within the network may play a central role, with the result that

all points in the network are intercommunicating. At each of these points, different interested parties take initiatives which, through their interaction, may turn the entire network, or much of it, in fresh directions.

**SR** – *This applies to the INTERNET: with a given technological communication infrastructure, defined computer communications procedures enable the spontaneous development of an infinite number of networks. Individually and collectively, the latter grow like a biological living structure, in accordance with a logic of growth peculiar to partners wishing to communicate among themselves on a theme of common interest. There is no general growth strategy for the network as a whole.*

**TB** – This is so. The information which fundamentally drives such a system travels along innumerable channels to reach recipients wishing to obtain it; and the sole structure is that of the servers that can receive and redistribute it, together with the variety of the sites. The circuits may be superfluous. The policies and action of the protagonists in each circuit may be highly varied and changeable. But the experience recorded is straightforwardly transmitted and errors effectively noted and communicated. As one expert has written, *the network is not a structure but a process in which what really count are the flows.*

However, I do not think that this model necessarily excludes central activities, at least if the aim of the network activities is to achieve certain common tasks, like any other established organization. Even the INTERNET is ultimately about the development of free thought and communication on a global scale.

In a body such as a university whose responsibilities are more precise and specific, some kind of *central steering function* is needed to ensure accomplishment of the tasks entailed, facilitate them, reduce blockage and evaluate and communicate the results. The English-speaking world refers to *coaching* or simply *leadership*. This is not about authoritarian leadership or detailed control but, above all, a question of observation, supervision, assistance, supportive guidance or simply providing illumination like a lighthouse.

**SR** – *I acknowledge the steering aspect of coaching, although it may be devolved to various points in the network. And I like your image of the lighthouse which guides the enterprise, marking the way forward without diminishing the responsibility of any of the captains. In the future, the INTERNET and its related systems of INTRANETS (internal networks linking members of a single institution) and EXTRANETS (networks for links between institutions and external partners), will doubtless play a very active part in communications within organizations. The NET will facilitate general access to central storage, in accordance with different interests, to further their autonomy. However, it will also encourage better more rapidly available central data to further the carrying out of overall policies.*

**TB** – Yes, but on condition that, in each organization, these central policies have been able to organize the information systems to this end. Furthermore, the INTERNET, like all interactive communication systems which are going to constitute the normal environment of the cultural world as it is now developing, possesses more than a logistic function, since it is also a source of growth and diversification. It must enable the multiplication of networks which, under the influence of new protagonists, will be a source of innovation proliferating into fresh networks. This is a process of biological growth. Yet it must still not be forgotten that biological activity is strongly circumscribed by structures.

such as genes, and that it is also subject to mutations, shortcomings and error.

**SR** – *This is also the case of our institutions although I wonder whether innovations and mutation are assimilable. In any event, I note that you agree with me on the respects in which biological development corresponds to the development of our institutions. But to be more precise regarding these points of correspondence, closer critical consideration is required. Yet it is certain – and consistent with biological logic – that universities operate within the framework of structures which are often statutory but in all cases display some degree of inertia, given also that regulations, traditions, conventions and norms have gradually developed within them. These structures are necessary to ensure the transparency of activity and the management of resources.*

**TB** – Let it not be forgotten that structures and networks go together, almost by definition. A network is first and foremost a system of shared information. Networks which intercommunicate badly lead to less flexible structures and make the networks as a whole, or in other words the institution itself, more rigid too. I should further add that the competition and regulations which prevail in our systems do not result in any substantial reduction in such inertia; indeed, it is preferable to refer, as do economists, to monopolistic competition, and concede that regulations which often protect existing structures, also frequently reinforce inertia.

However, one should not rule out the possibility that INTERNET-type systems will eventually strongly reduce the rigidity of structures and of the entire system itself, by making access to information as unrestricted as possible. Ultimately, one might imagine that nothing would be gained from maintaining university institutions, if everyone could learn autonomously within a global interactive network capable even of gauging the progress of learners and formally recognizing the level of their knowledge and experience. This would be the *world-wide virtual university*, and ....

**SR** – *Let's not fantasize for the time being. Experience has already shown how difficult it is to learn on one's own with computers. I think there will always be the need for physical premises in which to learn and conduct research and where those concerned (teachers, researchers, experts, students, and other learners and users of specific services) will need to have direct personal and unstructured interaction. This can be achieved with support from telecommunications which can offload standardized information from the exchanges to make way, with maximum flexibility, for personal in-depth exchanges.*

**TB** – Academic research on the functioning of universities should be left to rigorously observe the mechanisms of generation and propagation of learning, to draw lessons from biology, to determine which activities depend on autonomous learning encouraged by the media, and which others call for personal participation in a human context requiring physical interaction and frequent informal contact, whose very aim may be undefined and alter as exchanges progress.

**SR** – *You are giving me an opportunity to query whether university research has undertaken critical analysis of the functioning of its own institutions to the extent that is necessary.*

**TB** – Probably not, but simply because the idea of university management and the study of this management has not been broadly accepted in our own milieux. There we are once more.

#### **IV – MANAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

May I remind you again that a university is a fully established organization with its own specific character, exactly like a business, a body for public administration, an orchestra, a museum, a research centre, the army, a church or a charitable organization. Indeed, once there is a structured group, there is management because, in simple terms, managing means *leading a collective action*, and *enabling* it to materialize.

Let us say, to simplify things, that the *management* function is exercised by those responsible (*governing bodies*) at the different levels of the organization. The more participatory is the institution, the deeper and broader are the levels of consultation and negotiation. What is certain is that, in universities, this function is largely collective and participatory as generally authority is not exercised according to hierarchical structures.

**SR** – *I cannot let you say that we function without authority. We all know that the majority of rectors, presidents, deans, directors, together with the boards, exercise effective authority which is respected. They hold real power in forms adapted to this milieu. Yet this power is not concerned with regimenting the academic and educational activities of teachers and researchers, for whom there are institutional and professional forms of supervision and incentive.*

*Clearly, the exercise of power is related to personalities, and to the traditions of freedom and critical thinking of the academic milieu. It cannot be considered arbitrary and is always a process of negotiation. In the academic world, statutes, conventions and professional norms are the normal vectors of control. Its leaders possess direct power which they must also know how to exercise, and a variety of means of exerting determinant influence. This power is complex.*

*In any event, the very task of good leadership is to strengthen the authority of legitimate forms of power. Where leadership proves to be lax or ineffective, unofficial forms of influence take over, with restrictions on resources and external control in the form of regulations, instructions and the setting up of new institutions. Another form of external control is loss of those who belong to the institution (staff and students, or joint parties to contracts) who will seek efficiency elsewhere.*

**TB** – You have said that *this power is complex*, but I think that the exercise of power is always complex, since its credibility is always at stake. Besides, in our institutions, it derives as a rule from elections, which can render it subordinate if the leadership is not effective. This is why recent reforms in some countries have replaced the election of leaders with nominations submitted by clearly established authorities. In universities, power can indeed be exercised by academic staff who are not really prepared for the task, unwilling to perform it or, occasionally, elected to do so only within certain limits.

However, this situation cannot last for long. And the history of universities is littered with situations of crisis, deterioration and take-



over brought about by inability to respond to fresh requirements. For example, in periods of prolonged crisis, the need for authority grows because of the urgency of the decisions that have to be taken to protect the institution and its members. The institution may thus give way to bureaucratic tendencies or, from being collegial, become bureaucratic. This is how individuals set to fully assume their responsibilities and exercise power, even by authoritarian means, accede to the tasks of management. These different styles of management – to which may be added the entrepreneurial style – shape the exercise of power and, over and above the form it takes, affect its development.

**SR** – *Let us say that the management function, in your sense, is by its nature inseparable from a certain way of exercising power and authority.*

**TB** – By definition, because management comprises *all procedures, relationships and behaviour* which make it possible to direct the university and its bodies in certain paths of development. Setting principles of quality evaluation and quality policy, is of course part of this management function.

**SR** – *Does this mean that we – presidents, rectors, deans, administrative directors, and members of our councils – are all managers?*

**TB** – Yes, in the case of those who formally or otherwise, individually or in collective bodies, take part in keynote discussion and decision-making. But I recognize that we feel ill at ease in the garb of a technical vocabulary which appears to impoverish what we are doing. We prefer the language of power (governors, directors etc.) which is more symbolic and perhaps more flattering.

**SR** – *Good, then give me a definition of this strategic management!*

**TB** – **Strategic management is a type of leadership, that is of conducting people and things, which aims to develop a spirit of change and quality throughout the university. It is applied to the evolution of the needs for education, science and services which the university provides, and to its ways of responding to or giving rise to them. It is based on collective, organized procedures, allowing for constructive criticism of efforts and results, with a view to the development of the university as a whole.**

**SR** – *I am taking note of all this to be able to come back to it later. But in the meantime, where is your much-vaunted leadership in all this?*

**TB** – Leadership is the major component of management. Today, the English language is going one stage further: everyone in business is talking of “coaching” rather than governance. The reference here is to the trainers of sports teams and athletes. The idea is that what is essential is the athlete's effort and courage, the ability to learn from one's experience on the ground. The athlete is not “governed” but constantly reminded that everything depends on him or her, even if they can be helped to assess what they are doing with outside support and expertise.

**SR** – *I have little time for references to business or, in our context, to athletics – which places the emphasis on the exceptional individual. However, the way a “coach” works, it*

*seems to me, is fairly close to the type of relationship which exists – by tradition and by necessity – between those who govern and those who are governed in a university situation.*

*And this leads me to the question of confidence: doesn't the idea of strategic management introduce ideas of control, of administrative management, eventually of centralization, into university usage?*

**TB** – Certainly not! You have yourself insisted on the need for effective power in the university. Power is normally exercised with a view to certain aims, as a result of collective discipline which preserves decentralized initiatives and supports innovations. This is strategic management.

Even business, whose model you reject, has nowadays adopted the leadership principles of “coaching”. Yet there, the exercise of power is better acknowledged and clearer. In spite of appearances, the tradition of university management is not perhaps lagging behind these new trends in business. However, the latter remains more experienced and further ahead in the practice of strategic management. I shall return to this point later.

*SR – This does not prevent me from returning to this subject: does governance – or “coaching” to use the fashionable expression – require universities' central bodies to attempt, even in a very participatory fashion, to formulate institutional policies and to influence the strategies pursued in their different component bodies? After all, change in academic and teaching activities always comes from the grassroots. And is it not the strategies decided upon there which determine those of the institution?*

**TB** – Whatever the autonomy of the bodies which make up the university, each of which has its own specific features, they all operate within a common framework with certain common rules: setting these standards of collective behaviour is the duty of the institution as a whole, as they affect both central policies, and those of the decentralized units. Otherwise, you are left with the *confederal university*, a gathering of equals with no collective identity.

*SR – This definition would correspond well, from what I understand, to the situation at Oxford and Cambridge, which, after all, are not among the world's least prestigious universities. I can hardly imagine that the word strategic management is held in honour there....*

**TB** – Neither can I ... But the English have their way of doing things without saying so and, at Cambridge as at Oxford, they have acted concertedly for 700 years to preserve the essential features of a research university. And the same goes for the Sorbonne. This indeed is proof that it has been possible to define and apply a demanding institutional policy, with its corresponding norms. Yet I seem to remember that a Royal Commission of enquiry, at the end of the 19th century, denounced their “scandalous torpor”! In 1994, Oxford finally created a *school of management*.

Each country can testify to the decline of some of its universities – those which failed to adapt fast enough to the development of our societies and whose institutional policies were seriously inadequate. Yet notwithstanding these misfortunes, there has always been a renaissance, at least until present times. But we have to ask ourselves

seriously whether this apparent immortality is organic. I do not believe so.

**SR** – *Well, I concede that the organization of most universities in Europe is along **federal**, rather than confederal, lines with central and collective bodies (boards) and staff (rectors, rectorial team and directors) who attempt to follow closely what is happening within the decentralized bodies, in order to formulate general policies enabling the development of all activities. Moreover, in most countries, including the most liberal, the State authorities define the general responsibilities of institutions, and often regulate their structures and functioning to some extent. Alternatively, this control is exercised by the founding bodies, such as private foundations, or “governing authorities”.*

**TB** – The reason is no doubt that we conceive our universities not only as *communities*, where everything is regulated collectively, but as *organizations*, or even as *institutions*.

## **V – THE UNIVERSITY: COMMUNITY, ORGANIZATION, INSTITUTION**

**SR** – *I agree: despite its diversity and its highly decentralized system, a university is a single whole. The whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts and each member needs to be conscious of what the existence of a codified whole, with a clearly recognized public image, contributes to its own and to the group interest.*

**TB** – You have just defined the corporation which, in the Middle Ages, was referred to as a *universitas* – a body set up to affirm and defend its own particular rights and freedoms, expressed in a statute, and symbolized with a seal. Today, the corporatist spirit remains strong in Europe, even in private universities.

**SR** – *I put the question to you again: is the idea of the community not therefore essential? Is not a university a partnership of experts, individuals who accept the commitments and values of a scientific and cultural community, which is their own, to which they give their allegiance according to very clearly determined rules in order to exercise their own trade at the same time as manifesting a vocation of service which demands their total integrity?*

**TB** – Certainly, the spirit of community is always well represented in our universities. As you say, I believe it to be attached to the academic and cultural task, to the institution's values of freedom, discussion and public service - even in private universities. But it seems to me that since the *centrifugal factors* are continuing to grow.

Students are too often “birds of passage”, piled into crowded rooms – it is difficult for them to feel a sense of belonging to the community of knowledge, except when the institution offers them a large number of personalized services.

As for the teaching body, it is increasingly absorbed by outside activities, admittedly very useful to its work, but which create outside allegiances. Its members often belong to professional associations which edict their own standards of quality and pertinence. Its time is also increasingly saturated, within the institution, by the number of students and the multiplication of the collective functions, from which its members attempt to extract themselves through numerous and varied outside commitments. Behind all this we see, in the case of

both students and masters, a certain disenchantment, which affects our societies as a whole.

**SR** – *Frankly, I do not follow you. I do not observe this centrifugal dispersion, nor this highly competitive environment which could increase centrifugal attractions.*

**TB** – It is important to understand the word “centrifugal” in the broad meaning of greater sensitivity to outside influences. This influence may still be latent, but it will become visible as our establishments participate more actively, and more regularly, in outside exchanges, as they become better integrated into co-operation networks with their national and international peers.

All these developments are leading to a greater openness on the part of universities and to greater interaction between their members (staff, students, free auditors, partners) and other cultural environments. The comparison with the outside can be beneficial to the basic institution. But its members can also – and this happens frequently – become more sensitive to standards other than those which apply in their own institution, and other opportunities which are more competitive from their viewpoint. Hence the growth in centrifugal influence.

On the other hand, let us not forget the prospects offered by the *new information society*.

**SR** – *Are you referring to multimedia? It is difficult to imagine that these could reduce the role of the university, whose scientific and cultural missions and ways of working are so different from those of the media, even if they need to make broader use of media productions within their own training. After all, this is what has already happened in the case of books, and for audio-visual. I believe that the media will make an equally broad use of universities' expertise and products.*

**TB** – Of course each cultural network will attempt to use the expertise of the others. But what we are concerned about is their very mission itself. Multimedia form of disseminating information will in the future play a much more active cultural and educational role. They will call into question and offer alternatives – as yet unclearly delineated – to university processes, and will provide opportunities for university staff and students to do things differently, both inside and outside the university.

These *new distance information technologies*, almost totally decentralised and available on demand, could massively *delocalize* forms of learning and even possibilities of discussion outside university walls. Market logic could push them in this direction.

Certainly universities have a conception of scientific knowledge which is different from that of the media, but the media have clearly demonstrated that there are many ways of putting across this information, facilitating discussion of it and awakening interest in science and scientific reflection.

On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that the way the media work, subject to commercial requirements, will condition the form of dissemination of knowledge in a way different from our cultural traditions. People are constantly quoting the risk of an increase in specialist, commercially segmented, channels of dissemination of particular technical and pragmatic forms of knowledge to the detriment of more general and more synthetic types of education. In short, which

is more adapted to an education mission beyond the function of mere instruction.

**SR** – *But we also find this current in our universities themselves. It will be their task to preserve their educational missions, whilst at the same time satisfying the needs for more specialist and applied training. It is important that emulation of the media be prove positive for us.*

**TB** – Certainly, but we will need to develop appropriate strategies. It may very well be valuable for university institutions to create their own multimedia networks, or co-operate formally with multimedia issuers, or even try out new forms of partnerships with them. All of which falls precisely into the area of strategic management.

**SR** – *Touché, but we will see later how things will turn out. Let me come back to a basic problem. Let us remain with your hypothesis of the university developing through networks and partnerships. Will it not, in this situation, be very difficult for an institution to maintain its identity and its collective standards? And what about its strategic management?*

**TB** – First of all, it is clear that a university's identity will inevitably be marked, and indeed changed in various directions by considerable interaction within the networks to which it belongs. But is this not precisely what networks and partnerships are there to do? This strategy brings with it both risks and rewards.

What we need to know is how to assume them and benefit from them. This is the function of strategic management. In any *strategic alliance*, to pick up the expression familiar to us today, each partner attempts to “learn” from the experience of the others, and to enrich itself culturally, whilst preserving what it considers essential in its own policy. A strategic alliance pre-supposes that each partner has its own clear strategy, in particular with respect to the advantages which it believes that it can gain from its partnerships, and also with regard to the positions which it is ready to see changed. Obviously, nothing is static, nor rigorously defined *a priori* when taking on the risk of partnerships. Their implementation should be followed closely and managed in a dynamic and strategic fashion.

**SR** – *Reasoning to the limit of the network logic, the university could become one of these **virtual organisations**, with all its activities taking place within multiple networks.*

**TB** – A little earlier, you asked me not to fantasize about this. Yet nothing can be ruled out as a possible tendency. Is not even commerce, itself one of the oldest human activities dependent on personal interaction, going to become a virtual phenomenon on the Internet?

**SR** – *Certainly, but let's come back to the university as an organisation. Does this reference to organization mean simply that we need to manage and co-ordinate highly diverse activities, to supply them with resources, use these resources in the best possible conditions, and report on what we have done? This is all very normal. The problem arises, however, because the formulation of the objective of this organization, in the scientific and teaching area, or in the social area, remains obscure. This is because we lack uncontested quality criteria like those which companies use to mark out the path to profitability.*

**TB** – Yes, what we do indeed have resembles organizations in the meaning which you say. But large business enterprises, just like universities, sail uncertain seas. Like them, and in as complex a fashion, we have to sound out the future and make decisions based on the unknown. This means choosing the university's objectives (and this is not easy) choosing structures and defining arrangements for decentralized operations. The fact is that universities have very differentiated activities, due to their specialities and their multiple locations. This differentiation leads to *a naturally fragmented organization*, with its own particular logic of action, and within which communication is not always easy. This is why we have a strategic management problem.

**SR** – *I insist: what does the idea of institution add to what we have just heard? For me, a university is an institution through the simple fact that society, via its legal processes, has given it its general missions, official statutes, and provides a large part of its resources. In this way, it has its own identity. No more.*

**TB** – Sorry, I believe that I can go further: the university is an institution because it has the responsibility of representing *and preserving certain values which are important in society*, values which arouse scant controversy but which form the basis of its culture, the basis of understanding between its members, and hence of their ability to live together in harmony. These are the values of critical reason and methods of scientific knowledge which manifest themselves in creativity, tolerance and freedom. These values and methods demand equal access to knowledge for all those capable of benefiting from it, giving rise to a public service duty, that of the wide dissemination of knowledge.

This is why it is essential that institutional procedures exist to guarantee *scientific integrity*, which falls precisely in the area of quality policy, a policy which needs to be monitored very closely, because an accumulation of small compromises and easy short-cuts can jeopardize the integrity and the public image of our activities.

One of the university's roles is to disseminate an understanding of foreign culture, in particular now that we are entering a global environment. At the same time the institution needs also to transmit the *cultural heritage* of the societies in which we live, founded on certain values which, in the European tradition, are expressed by ideas of liberal democracy and solidarity. Transmission does not mean the mechanical repetition of tradition, because universities need to analyse the development of the values which they disseminate, and studies in the humanities and social sciences are showing them today the impact of diversification, if not of incoherence, on the most long-established values, with their dramatic ebbs and flows, that signal crisis.

This is why universities need to work constantly, using the methods particular to them, in order to renew the collective consciousness of the values which can be accepted as the common basis of life in society, to facilitate an understanding of them, to grasp their effects, and to promote the informed and serene exploration of them, to the benefit of the greatest number of students, and not just "humanities" specialists.

**SR** – *Careful, this is a very delicate point. You are well aware that the scientific spirit has difficulty accommodating itself to values other than those of a critical mind. This is why universities can interest themselves in the values of society, as you call them, only through their critical study of them. In particular in their*

*teaching of humanities and social sciences. They cannot advocate any "truth". Have we not fought for centuries to avoid becoming the instruments of the dissemination of religious, political or commercial values? Moreover, by the way we operate, are we not a model of democracy, that is a form of open dialogue, formative for the human mind?*

**TB** – I will admit that this is a key problem, and a delicate one. I believe that this deserves continuous attention, in particular in our time of crisis of values, as we say a little superficially. I also believe in the responsibilities that universities have in the construction of a Europe which is on the one hand culturally differentiated, but where certain shared values, strongly felt by the largest number, could strengthen the consciousness of a European identity. All these points relate to institutional and cultural policy in the broadest sense of the term.

There is no university institution without a concern for common values. Otherwise all we have left are organizations. And the fact is that there are many other organizations in our modern societies which can distribute knowledge and create it effectively, perhaps even better than we can, thanks to progress in information technology, and the techniques of management control.

**SR** – *I feel that this idea is vital for you. But I have to insist: although I am myself a convinced democrat, it seems to me dangerous for our institution to take a position on values other than those of scientific reason, which is a manifestation of the freedom of thought. The danger would be that of reintroducing into our environment ideologies defended in a sectarian or political fashion. The most ardent defenders of the values of society could be perhaps the least tolerant....*

*For this reason, we need to look to the quality of our university training in the humanities and social sciences, those disciplines which train a large number of teachers, managers, authors, media personnel and politicians, in short, people of influence who fashion mentalities. All the more so as the development of continuing education will be giving us a wide access to adults. We can also diversify the science and technology syllabuses by introducing more cultural options, but this is all we can do at the heart of the university.*

**TB** – The balances which underlie what you are saying merit an overall vision of why and how our institutions integrate into society. Academic and cultural freedom within them and throughout the entire cultural system depend ultimately on democratic values and the exercise of freedom within the whole of society. Of course, we have the academic responsibility of observing and analysing transformations in values, and of understanding the dynamic processes underlying their formation and development, their diversification and their contradictions. This is undertaken in particular by sociology, cultural anthropology and political science. But beyond the education and training of specialists, should not the university, as an institution attached to society, help very generally to strengthen a sense of public duty through all its activities, whether of training, service or exchange, rather than hastening its demise through indifference. The direction of strategic management in university institutions calls for responses or, at the very least, in-depth public examination which goes beyond the remit of the media, literature and the performing arts.

**SR** – *For the reasons I have already stated, I cannot go along with you. but your question perhaps shows that this fundamental*

*debate, on which European and, more generally, western universities have been founded, should be reopened.*

## **VI - STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITIES: Principles**

**TB** – In the meantime, allow me to continue explaining the model. Strategic management *is not the simple exercise of strategic planning, of long term forecasting* which you have described. The fact is that in a rapidly changing society, it is becoming increasingly difficult to forecast and plan in the longer term, except in rare areas where uncertainty appears to be lower.

Overly rigid and detailed plans can act as a brake on innovation, adaptation, and risk taking, and can end up turning managers into bureaucrats. The important thing is that those responsible, but also the largest possible number of members of the university, be ready, and be helped, to change, to *seize new opportunities*, to confront constraints, to participate actively in evaluation procedures, all of this with a view to improving quality and to shedding light on future choices, with everybody being very aware of the interdependence of all the efforts being made to improve quality.

I remember the classical phrase of a famous planner of the past, Ackoff: *planning is learning*. The essential thing is for the community to learn to become more tuned to the need for change, to the frequent and critical questioning of present practices at all levels, and in all activities.

This being said, it is too easy to affirm that our universities are naturally learning organizations, within the modern meaning of the term. True, it's their mission. But saying this is one thing, doing it is another.

All our audits emphasize the efforts still to be made in many areas, which are essential to the development of the institution: internal communication; training of teachers, and first of all of young teachers; experimentation with new educational technologies; developing students' learning capacities and more autonomous or team work; the possibility of incorporating knowledge gained outside the university into academic courses; the under-development of open and distance learning systems which seek, however, to respond to the strong demands of society, etc. etc.

All these weak areas could be taken up in institutional development policies and, if not, I have no doubt that society will attend to them, through its laws and regulations, to the detriment of our autonomy.

**SR** – *A vast programme, if we are to believe you. Can you present us with a step-by-step approach to strategic management, as applied to universities?*

## **VII. MODEL STRUCTURE FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

**TB** – I can try. In any event we must bear in mind that what we are trying to do is to influence mentalities within universities, and perhaps even within the networks to which they belong, through new practices of organization, relationships and leadership, in a direction favourable to change, to a more perspective vision, to a concern for quality and a better adaptation to needs, to initiative, communication and training through experience and practising new roles. This model would contain three stages, which are necessarily interdependent and which



have to be structured by each university in function of its own management methods.

The first of these is *systematized institutional evaluation*, leading to the promotion of quality policies. In many cases we speak of internal audits, and there are various practical models. One of the most widely used is defined by the acronym SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). The institutional audit of strategic management is, in turn, more specific, as it is interested more particularly in the analysis and collective critique of *strategic constraints, and of priorities and balances in policies, standards, and development potential*.

Then, this introspection needs to be enriched with an effort of collective reflection on the future, so as to disseminate, at every decision-making level, a certain *vision of the future* which will give shape and reference to the new policies and strategies which will translate this vision into institutional life. For this reason we need to ask ourselves about the relevance of the current *institutional policies* which express the *identity* of the university, and to introduce means of promoting initiatives, and to ensure their strategic follow-up.

Finally, strategies frequently imply *structural reforms*, that is, reforms of procedures and of methods of communication and negotiation, with a view to achieving a better co-ordination of interdependent efforts, which in turn facilitates greater *flexibility* within organization. These reforms should increase the capacity to *seize opportunities, to experiment with new solutions*, to more effectively support innovative behaviour and promising initiatives.

I shall return to this in detail in the second part of the book.

**SR** – *An avalanche of new words, and it remains to be seen whether they really correspond to new practice? For I have no problem in recognizing the way in which we define and carry out our general policies, with our own traditional words. Let us see, for example, how you define the principle of **institutional evaluation**?*

*Institutional evaluation;  
principles*

**TB** – It is not the audit of courses and research, which is so frequent nowadays, but an assessment of the ability of the institution to change its aims and practices and, thereby, its public image in accordance with transformations in society while, by the same token, preserving its cultural responsibilities and the hallmark of its professional expertise.

By means of surveys and discussions between the central level, decentralized bodies and networks of partnerships, attention is thus focused on *the principles of action and on relationships* which form the basis of the way the university develops, so as to assess their relevance to the changes perceived or expected. The aim is therefore to grasp how the university defines and views its own identity; and how it formulates its institutional policies which will be the framework for new strategies.

**SR** – *For example?*

**TB** – In relation to the *outside world*, does the university want to strongly promote adult education, within a system of continuing education with special programmes, or by mixing initial and continuing training? What position does it want to maintain towards applied research and even research and development? What is its position

towards partnerships with firms and other professional and social bodies? Does it intend to actively seek contract financing, and what principles should it apply in managing these contracts? Does it intend to develop a policy of Europeanization, in its programmes, its external relations, its research, its exchanges, or all these together - and, if so, based on what principles? Does it seek to reduce student failure and drop-out rates in the early years of study and how?

In response to *internal pressures*, what general policy should it envisage for the development of information systems, and to what end? What should its policy be on restructuring curricula in order to ensure more consistent teaching? Can institutional policies be limited simply to reinforcing decentralization, or should they rather look to render procedures more flexible with a view to increasing initiatives, if not systematizing policies for promoting quality and the account taken of the conclusions of evaluations?

**SR** – *You speak of evaluation as assessing quality policies: what practice does the CRE seek to develop in this field?*

**TB** – The programme of the Association of European Universities combines institutional evaluation procedures with evaluation of quality policies. Through the vector of quality, the programme probes the worth of the institutions. It is even the subject of strategic management. For CRE, disseminating institutional evaluation methods and getting them to be discussed in university bodies, is a judicious means of disseminating a political and strategic culture relating to the future of the university as a whole. The institutional audit is the means of achieving this.

**SR** – *You invoke the future. However, the word “audit” implies in most cases an assessment of the present situation in a somewhat static fashion. To be faithful to your ideas, should one not rather talk about assessing the institution's present situation, with a view to the future?*

**TB** – I am in full agreement, because in every audit, people talk about the present situation, but assess it with a view to the changes which they believe to be necessary. The future overlaps with the present.

What is of interest to every decision-maker in a university is to know the extent to which the general changes which people are talking about can influence the development of his/her own sector, a particular area with in many cases its own specific forms and causes of change. This means that whilst strategic management needs to give rise to general assessment of the future, which concerns the whole institution, at the same time it needs to encourage each department to formulate its own vision of the future, and to express the responses which it envisages.

These *visions of the future*, based on experience, intuition, imagination, and analysis, ought to inspire the practice of leadership in universities, at all levels of autonomy. This *prospective stage* involves discussions with central bodies but also between decentralized sectors and bodies, each having in this way the opportunity to discern its vocation for change and to determine its policies for adapting to the future. It is a factor of collective learning, a vital *learning process*.

**SR** – *At university level, I fear that the future is outlined only in very general lines, because, for me, it is at the grassroots level in particular that we will have a clearer understanding of the future, that we will sense new trends, that we will recognize the opportunities for innovation. The fact is that each sector has its*

*own technical language, its own professional jargon for handling its problems of change or its projects. Is a general debate then of real use, however necessary it may be?*

**TB** – I believe so, because a general discussion comparing all the different visions of the future is very interesting for examining current institutional policies, assessing their relevance, and judging new principles of action which concern the university as a whole.

## VIII – COMPONENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

*Potential  
for development*

According to my proposed definition, it is clear that the essential aim of strategic management is to enrich the *development potential* of the university, and to reinforce its collective capacity for change. This potential presupposes *specific skills*, and has to be defined in a specific manner, in terms of clearly identified abilities, know-how, responsiveness to change, quality, mobility, participation, etc.....

The research for potential thus places the emphasis on the capacity for change enabling an improvement in the quality of services delivered. It concerns all the different groups of interests on whose conduct the university considers it can exert an influence through its management practices: they include students, academic and administrative staff, joint contracting parties, beneficiaries of a variety of services and, to some extent, representatives of the governing bodies, the media and so forth.

**SR** – *But can one appreciate these forms of potential if new policies have not been defined or, as it were, in relation to possible new policies?*

**TB** – Yes, again, I think so. However, one may first begin by examining the possibility of assessing potential *vis-à-vis* current policies, with a view to improving performance or extending its impact. Later, consideration should be given to scenarios related to new policies that seem desirable and realistic.

*Strategic constraints*

A second important aspect of the practice of strategic management is to be clearly aware of the *strategic constraints* which, depending on the levels of decision envisaged, limit potential initiatives – for example, space, resources, student ability, the ageing of staff and the possibility of expanding or diversifying the abilities of all those involved. Other data are methods of governance by the State authorities, forms of personal status, regulations, traditions, the nature of needs or competition, and the possibilities of funding, to name but a few.

**SR** – *I still have to repeat my previous observation. Does not the tightness of constraints depend on the policies adopted and those planned for the future? There is an interdependence between the constraints and what you have termed the potential for change, or the possibility of altering policies. But the very aim of some policies will be to lessen or avoid constraints and, in certain instances, to exploit them.*

**TB** – I agree, naturally: institutional evaluation has to take account of their inertia, within the framework of a variety of policies for alternatives. While some constraints will appear to stand up to any fresh policy, this will only be realized after examining the possibilities for change.

Among these constraints are the psychological characteristics which appear to prevail within the establishment and also within its partnerships with the outside world. These are the institution's *norms*. What we have here are all the *behaviour patterns* determined by individual outlook, rules, and a sense of belonging – in short, all those attitudes that could potentially facilitate or block the achievement of the objectives for development that the institution sets itself. In general, these are well assimilated by university members, but being almost unconscious, they are not necessarily expressed. However, they can become more explicit within the context of joint deliberation.

The policies envisaged may indeed seek to alter these norms and create a new system of management. This may occur, for example, through launching new programmes, adopting innovative roles, joining new networks, or employing new methods for financing innovation, for quality management or for training; or through relying on new regulations by the authorities in the form of new statutes, stricter public evaluation, or novel methods of funding, all of which may lead to the emergence of new norms. In a system in which “normative control” is a form of control more important than rules and regulations or supervision and sanction, the dynamics of norms are essential in strategic management.

**SR** – *Does not this problem of interdependence between the appreciation of potential, constraints and new policies, to use your own language, make evaluation difficult in practice?*

**TB** – Maybe, but management is a system whose elements are interdependent. There is no other method than that of exploring successively different possible configurations of constraints and forms of potential, given various possible policies. The most feasible one will then be selected.

#### Priorities and balances

Any policy and its associated strategies clearly have to formulate *priorities* (focuses) and the conditions for their implementation, in order to give direction to institutional development at the various levels of responsibility.

They concern elements of what we have termed the strategic area or frame of reference: the nature of activities (programmes), the different kinds of public involved, resources, facilities and of certain characteristics of the policy for quality, the public image policy, the development of certain administrative methods or of the information system; or of human resources management, or the improvement of living and working conditions, the solution of social and cultural problems, the methods of co-operation and competition, etc.

The *setting of priorities* is frequently accompanied by *information on the balances* which the university or certain of its bodies wishes to preserve: in the “priorities”, the hierarchy of goals is clear. In the setting of balances, policy specifies the elements that it intends to take into account, without however opting for precise proportions. Depending on developments, opportunities and resources, these proportions may change, but the principle of balance established at the outset implies attentive monitoring of these developments and the taking of detailed decisions in good time.

For example, one can assess the relative merits of effort invested in improving education as distinct from research activities; distinguish between basic and applied research, or even co-operation for industrial development; devote priority to initial education and training courses for young people, rather than lifelong education or extended

provision for adults with professional experience; identify the emphasis to be placed on Europeanization within the context of internationalization; opt for expansion through internal growth as opposed to more extensive co-operation and activity within networks. In short, balances have to be determined and preserved, in a way that calls for an overall vision of the university.

**SR** – *And is not the choice of structures or of methods of governance evaluated?*

*Governance, structures  
and communications*

**TB** – What is the role – in so far as it is strategic – of the rectorate and the deans, departmental directors, boards and committees, and relations with the governing bodies? How do academic, administrative and technical staff interact and co-operate? How would one describe the functioning of decentralization, the information system, network activity, multidisciplinary activity and, not least of all, measures introduced to improve the quality of all activities?

Despite the apparent difficulty of determining leadership practice for the purpose of change, it is a crucial aspect on which those staff interviewed are quick to express often differing opinions. This is why I think that this audit of the governance of the institution and its leadership has to be conducted throughout the entire evaluation, for all activities, and incorporated more systematically in its conclusions.

**SR** – *But this touches on people and mentalities. How can one tackle an area which is so subjective? Can a subjective approach provide an objective understanding of the institution?*

**TB** – Not easily when university leaders find themselves called into question. But it is important that they have the courage to put their cards on the table because, in most cases, it is the discussions between outside experts and the institution's managers which provide vital impressions on the strategic management of the university. These impressions are then confirmed or otherwise by interviews with other people both inside and outside the institution, with further input coming from press reviews and, in certain cases, discussions with supervisory bodies. However, this enquiry represents the confidential part of the audit, and if the rector so wishes, its conclusions can be made known to him or her alone. It is then for the rector to assess and make use of them.

**SR** – *Do you see the experts as diplomats or inspectors?*

**TB** – The aim of the evaluation is clearly an inspection which must be used by the staff concerned as they see fit. Yet the experts who conduct the audit should not be regarded as inspectors, but as resource persons helping the interested parties to assess their own activities and relations. Clearly, this is a diplomatic role just like any task of strategic management.

Yet this must be neither drawing-room nor gunboat diplomacy. Publicizing the conclusions of the audit in different forms and making them available for collective discussion are the responsibility of the rector. They undoubtedly mark a key point in the process of collective change brought about by strategic evaluation and site analysis. The activity takes time, as has to be accepted. Processes of maturation, and relational and organizational development are involved. The practice of strategic management contributes to them.

**SR** – *Am I to understand that the strategic management model seeks to give rise to imbalance which fuels change, to organize*

*chaos? This term is very fashionable nowadays – even in the field of organization! I should be satisfied if the application of chaos theory strengthened the most confederal conception of the university and if it fostered permissive management.*

**TB** – Any process of change tends to destabilize by definition, but the practice of strategic management aims not to destabilize, but to get those concerned to assume responsibility by encouraging their involvement in strategies for change. As regards your reference to chaos theory, I think that application of these scientific theories to organizations is still rare, at least in a systematic form. Until now they have been directed in particular at analysing innovation processes. The conclusions of this analysis insist on the need for very flexible, highly decentralized structures, for relatively non-standardized procedures, for largely informal objectives. In fact the conditions they define are of a *pre-chaotic type*, i.e. very libertarian, and encouraging a spirit of invention and taking the risk of creativity. They also insist on the need for dense communication between participants, for strengthening their ability to learn and for improving the transfer of experience from one actor of change to another.

I believe that in all universities there are cutting edge activities, in particular in the research area, which operate in a semi-anarchical fashion. However, our institutions also address thousands of users for whom structures must be clear and transparent, in order to permit services to be provided in conditions of equivalence to those supplied by other institutions. In practice, moreover, organizational models disseminate easily within the university environment, either in the form of regulations, or when experts coming from different angles advocate one and the same doctrine.

But the same applies in business: what is important is to know how to *manage the coexistence and interaction* between very innovative activities, with their particular structures and norms, and regular operational activities, which function in accordance with recognized models. That is a part of strategic management.

**SR** – *There we go! ... Is the business model needed in order to legitimate institutional policies for university development to which you are applying the concept of strategic management?*

## **IX - USERS, COMPETITION, MARKET, SIGNALS**

**TB** – In your comment, I note strong reticence towards the competitive business model, which in your view has nothing to do with the university milieu. Yet the environment of society is itself becoming more competitive for all organizations. An innovative business has many points in common with our institutions, and experience of the problems of change is in part transferable

**SR** – *Yes, of course the term is general, but my point is simply that universities are not, a priori, bodies which operate according to the principles of competition, even if, as we all know, sometimes harsh scientific competition has always existed there.*

**TB** – My first point in reply is that there are public services which have to bend to the rules of competitive markets. In all countries, the trend is to increase the autonomy of institutions *vis-à-vis* the State. so that

they can organize themselves and manage policies increasingly obliged to reckon with the competitive nature of resources, as well as training and research activities.

Furthermore, all public bodies, today subjected to quality policies and control and to competition for acquisition of public resources, have to take full account of the needs of their “customers” or, in other words, the satisfaction that users derive from their services.

**SR** – *But universities, as public services, are regulated not by a market, nor by prices, but rather by traditions of use, by standards specific to this profession and this environment, by a professional concern for quality, and by public regulations.*

**TB** – Certainly, in universities which operate as a public service, prices are not, in most cases, market prices, but political prices, for example transfers from the State budget. Yet institutions remain bound by the logic of costs, which they have to minimize, and by the vital considerations of a policy for quality recognized by the users of academic services. One has only to observe the growing importance accorded by our institutions to the quality of teaching, an area often neglected by comparison with research activities.

As we have already stated, management in business now very rarely speaks of hierarchy, centralization, authority, control or of a strategic plan.

Instead, its terminology tends to place emphasis on initiative and individual responsibilities, on human resources considered as the basis of development potential, on *coaching*, the *learning organization*, adaptation to opportunities, the norms of innovation and risk, the mobility of programmes and persons, the system of strategic information and on development in networks. Here can be seen the terms that we used earlier for the university!

**SR** – *Well yes, if you use business language to describe university management, you can then conclude that the university is a business. But that's a fallacy.*

**TB** – I don't think so. The language of management is general, and universities are bodies that deliver evaluated services. They have to provide something both *public* and *private*. State funding is what they receive in return for the public provision. But even in this context, they have to become much more attentive to *signs of satisfaction and dissatisfaction or frustration* among their students, users, members and associates. These signs play the part of market prices. Furthermore, universities increasingly have to deliver private ‘goods’ at the market price, and the private funding they receive as a result has become vital in covering even their public expenditure.

The institution is thus bound by a logic of prices and rationalization in the general sense. But with the specific characteristics of bodies that are not primarily trading entities. Moreover, the theory of *conventions* which highlights the importance of collective norms in organizations for health, education and culture, may be helpful in refining the organizational model of the university. This debate is beyond our scope here.

**SR** – *But, look, business has very clear goals and its criterion of the competitive market and of profit is relatively straightforward. This is not the case for universities.*

**TB** – First of all, when viewed close up, matters are not as clear and straightforward as that, in firms. Yet it is indeed true that, in its survival strategies, a firm has to withstand keen competition in which it faces increasing difficulty in preserving sustainable competitive advantages. It is thus obliged constantly to innovate to destabilize its competitors, and to prevent them from developing their own competitive advantages. Alternatively, it has to reach agreement with them in order to share the risks of innovation.

So, business refers to markets, customers, quality, competitive prices and profits, and strategic alliances between firms that are complementary or even engaged openly in competition. Yet to these terms which are anathema to many universities may be added the themes of the social responsibility of the firm, or of the company-citizen which, it might be said, salve the conscience – whether good or bad – of entrepreneurs!

**SR** – *Even so, this reference to the harsh combat of economic life is not the normal environment of university activities. Can one really speak of students as if they were customers? They certainly don't behave like consumers looking for a standard product "ready for thought". They do not form a market, imposing its own inevitable logic. I think that, because the supply of higher education is cultural, it is not a response to spontaneous demand and that its purpose, in fact, is to educate ....*

**TB** – Maybe, but I fear that tomorrow's students – if not those of today – will develop a primarily utilitarian attitude vis-à-vis education and culture which are becoming steadily more professional in nature. Moreover, staff have outside occupations and their participation in a multiplicity of networks means that they are professionally involved in different bodies in which what is useful matters more than what is satisfying.

**SR** – *If your analysis proves true, the university is at a turning point in its existence. If the institution wants to survive, it must not avoid change!*

## **X - DA CAPO**

**TB** – This is why the development of quality policies, as part of strategic management methodology, responds to the key question: does the university clearly perceive how needs – its own and those of its environment – are evolving, and is it adapting its working methods to the transformations in society?

**SR** – *After setting out nine topics of strategic discussion, I am beginning to feel that we are beginning to come full circle. Are you bringing us back to your starting point? Is this a da capo, an effect found in baroque music?*

**TB** – Baroque music is in fashion without being a fad. We can recognize the eternal return of the same questions. But would we respond the same way the second time round? I think not – because both of us were in a situation of strategic management, a situation which can never be neutral, which is constantly evolving, a situation which is at the time seeking new balances – something in itself very baroque. In short, a learning situation.



# **THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS: PRINCIPLES**

The definition and implementation of a strategy are normally the result of voluntary and organized processes of collective change. As we have seen, their organization derives from strategic management methods. In using the vocabulary and notions already indicated, this section seeks to illustrate, within a model university, the stages of a strategic management process – the essence of any strategic practice.

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

### ***Strategic management and institutional policies***

Any process of strategic management aims to identify factors of change and propagate awareness of them, in the surrounding environment or within the institution itself. In this way, the agencies concerned are called upon to invest their effort in the different kinds of change selected by the institution. This implies the definition and implementation of concerted *institutional policies* and their consequential *development strategies*.

The latter are related to the areas of action considered relevant by the university. They include those sectors, tasks, activities, relations, organizational aspects, methods and norms of conduct for which the university is intending to achieve significant changes. From them, it selects the specific *mechanisms* that activate transformation and call for a particular manoeuvre to induce the changes desired. As a result of their interaction, the mechanisms themselves and their operation constitute the strategic system of institutional change. This system provides a logistic framework for strategic management.

Strategic management is thus an integrated combination of complex, repetitive and dynamic processes, enabling the *collective search* for new points of view, new approaches, new roles and new forms of communication.

It is based on *institutional evaluation* practices which, while making it possible to assess the present situation, are illuminated by fresh visions of the future. Critical concerted reflection is thus initiated in all constituent bodies of the institution. Through its different channels, it contributes to *learning organization* and reinforces institutional integration. These policies underpin and activate specific strategies for change based on more effective exploitation of existent *development potential* and on the creation of new potential.

Here, the behavioural norms of members of the university (students, staff, partners) exercise a determinant influence. The *dynamics of norms* or, in other words, all interaction processes between the behaviour of particular groups, their development and efforts to make them more compatible with the desired objectives, are at the heart of strategic management practice.

These activities and their attendant risks call for committed and efficient *leadership* in an *organizational climate* that stimulates initiative and innovation. A climate of this kind calls for formal and informal exchanges and discussions – between the centre and the periphery of the university – in such a way that all staff concerned are firmly involved in the conception and application of new policies. It also calls for perseverance and the long-term support of initiatives to safeguard their *credibility* and underline the determination of the university to make something of them.

It is clear that the implementation of these strategic management processes depends on the *political art* of change, or the aptitude of the leaders to secure active participation and allegiance to university policies leading to real results with a minimum of political sacrifice (in terms of conflict, motivation and initiative, or backing down from commitments). Those responsible must be able to identify the point in time at which changes appear the least avoidable – and thus acceptable – and decide on adaptive policies, radical new policies or a paradoxical management of change. Political expertise can combine these different ways of acting according to the

development of circumstances, and relations governed by power and influence. From the management standpoint, leadership may be summed up as this political art.

The following account is of a general approach illustrating the nature of this strategic pathway. It is focused on the drawing up of institutional policies and their implementation, development stages that require both leadership and strategic management skills.

Our model may be broken down into different phases illustrating the nature of the stages in this process and the way they are linked. As has been pointed out, they are *processes of collective action* whose management is based on an art rather than science, on seasoned and discriminating experiential know-how, rather than spontaneous improvisation. Thus each university may choose to consolidate certain of these phases, grasp favourable opportunities to gain time or follow other avenues. What really matters is the frame of mind governing the way these processes are handled, with due regard to their characteristics as summarized below.

Here we are dealing only with processes relating to certain specific issues – the most sensitive and strategic – those which are related to the progress of collective effort. The concern is not with scientific research procedures, the shaping of administrative decision-making, or with the drawing up of strategies regarding points of detail or, yet again, with programmes for bringing them about. Instead, these processes are about long-range strategic action of interest both to the institution in its entirety and its constituent bodies.

## OUTLINE

### I. THE FRAMEWORK OF CHANGE

1. *the setting up of institutional evaluation;*
2. *consideration by the university of the future;*
3. *information gathering – constraints and norms;*
4. *commitment to existing institutional policies;*
5. *identification of the strategic field of reference.*

### II. EVALUATION

1. *evaluation of the development potential;*
2. *cultural and dynamic evaluation of norms;*
3. *evaluation of creativity;*
4. *evaluation of the management system and leadership practice.*

### III. FORMULATION AND MONITORING OF INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

1. *styles of management and strategic models;*
2. *methods of formulation: priorities, balance;*
3. *procedural and structural flexibility;*
4. *policies for quality.*

ANNEX 1: Headings in the strategic field: illustrations

ANNEX 2: The most customary development potentials.

### I. THE FRAMEWORK OF CHANGE

Although consideration of change is at the very heart of university occupations and is undertaken by each person involved in normal academic activity or in the different bodies of the university, it helps to entrust the stimulation and monitoring of novel reforms to a supervisory body capable of guiding the evaluation and selection of institutional policies. The suggested name for this body is the SSG (**strategic steering group**). It should include experienced influential personalities determined to devote time to these procedures under the authority of the rector or his or her direct delegate.

#### 1. *The setting up of institutional evaluation*

Our initial hypothesis is that the rector and central advisory bodies of the university wish to launch a systematic institutional evaluation. The opportunity to do so may arise naturally from the preparation of a mid-term plan, or of a programme contract between the University and the State or any other big resources provider, or as a result of initiating a fresh policy for the promotion of quality throughout the institution.

1.1 For the rector and a few members of the rectorial team required to offer support, the first stage (possibly after becoming acquainted with the First Part of this study ), may be involvement, if possible, in this ‘virtual debate’, drawing attention to points of agreement and disagreement and making suggestions inspired by their own experience. This is a simple way of becoming familiar with the whole problem area and the vocabulary used. This first stage might also conclude with a note from the SSG summarizing the points of view, in order to draw up a common body of principles and launch formally the institutional evaluation procedure.

1.2 As a clear expression of the commitment in this evaluation of the SSG, the latter could be attributed, for a period of (say) two years, with a secretariat. Responsibility for organisation and follow-up might then be entrusted to an executive Vice-President supported by the administrative director of the university, the head of its information system and a selection of deans and directors. The SSG would then have the task of setting the whole procedure in motion, appointing from within it those persons responsible for overseeing specific aspects in liaison with officers from internal bodies or representatives (faculties, research centres, essential common services and representatives of students and several major partners).

Next, the SSG may draft a short *Commitment Note* or *Memo* outlining the intentions of the rector and making it clear that what is at issue is not an individual evaluation and control procedure, but *collective critical consideration* of the workings of the university, its ability to carry through innovative policies and go over difficulties in implementing them. Obviously, it will be signed by the rector and circulated among all constituent bodies of the university. The SSG contact persons in each of these bodies would respond to any request for clarification regarding the aim of the evaluation and then report to the SSG which, in this initial phase, would strive to specify clearly the rationale for the entire procedure, via its discussions and other forms of communication. An SSG newsletter would report on the progress and results of work carried out, on the internal and external computerized networks of the university, as well as in conventional written form.

## 2. *Consideration by the university of the future*

2.1 Any diagnosis of the current situation – corresponding to the classical appreciation of strengths and weaknesses – is difficult to divorce from a forward-looking evaluation that takes account of future development prospects. Indeed, awareness of current strengths and weaknesses defined with respect to the objectives in hand, is only useful in attempting to improve institutional development. This can only be done if the persons responsible assess the chances of ongoing policies being maintained. The answer to this question requires some form of forward-looking evaluation, however succinct.

In any event, the priority in institutional evaluation (a process focused on the collective capacity for change), should be given to an examination of future prospects. This will be a case either of current trends making it possible to determine with reasonable accuracy what may be achieved in the future and at what points in time or, alternatively, of uncertainty over the trends prompting the realization that it is vital to watch them closely – and to prepare as far as possible to adjust to unexpected transformations, or to particularly favourable opportunities for innovation.

The entire conception of strategic management is thus derived from the concern to understand the way circumstances are changing, to look into the future and, above all, to adapt at the appropriate time by acting either on the programs of activities, structures, regulations and behavioural norms of the institution, or on the scope for experimentation and co-operation with bodies that seem better prepared for change. This whole approach is both *forward-looking and dynamic*.

In the *turbulence* of our contemporary environment, there is considerable uncertainty and major current developmental trends are far from clear. But, to emphasize the point once more, it is essential in strategic management to govern at the horizon, and make every effort to take account of change, and to be organized so as to react to transformations when they appear.

The SSG will therefore normally specify in a *forward-looking note* the aim and activity associated with this introductory phase: a medium and long-term perception of the university's development prospects, understanding of the strategic limitations and norms of the institution, appreciation of the development potential and an indication of the strategic area in which action may be possible.

To embark on these somewhat formalized forward-looking methods requires regular reliance on expert opinion considered fairly systematically (in debate, and contingency and alternative

transformation scenarios or action plans). After receiving the note, each constituent unit (faculties, departments, research centres, professional schools or central services) will normally be asked to prepare a corresponding note regarding its own sector of responsibility, in co-operation with a member of the SSG. This will then be sent back to the SSG which will identify its most significant aspects for the development of the whole university.

## 2.2 The central perspective

At this stage, the general perception of the future position the university may occupy in its surrounding milieu can only be examined in the form of working hypotheses, general observations, or enquiry with reference to several centres of interest, such as:

- socio-cultural trends in our societies and the role of higher education in society; the social responsibilities of the university; the attitudes towards post-secondary education of its members and clientele; the impact of these trends on the resources of higher education provision;
- the extent to which the university is autonomous with respect to its governing authorities, and the new forms under which this governance is exercised or the autonomy of institutions expressed;
- tensions between competition and co-operation within the academic environment, the prospect for work within networks or focused on projects or partnerships; the prospects for the development of entrepreneurial-type universities;
- the way the demand for education and training should be differentiated in a mass system of education;
- the commitment of the university in the training and retraining of adults; its incorporation into a more general integrated system of continuous education;
- the development of policies for science and technology, and requirements in basic or applied research; training for research and through research; the role of the university in technology transfer and local economic and social development; the prospects for multi- and interdisciplinary research;
- the impact of the development of interactive multimedia activity on the university or, more generally, on higher education and training;
- access to new resources and changes in methods of accumulating and allocating resources;
- development prospects with regard to the management of human resources in universities;
- the international dimension and 'Europeanization' of activities; the mobility of persons; the mastery of foreign languages, etc.

It has to be repeated that, at this initial stage, our concern is with *scenarios* imaginable in the future, which involve not only placing the general environment in perspective – on the basis of work done by national or international bodies – but a consideration of the way the university could or should position itself within this context. In fact, the definition of the strategic area in which the most relevant action may be exercised (see below) will subsequently be derived from this framework of the general perception of the future. The outcome of this deliberation at the centre is thus communicated to those responsible for the constituent bodies of the institution which, as pointed out, are asked to react.

## 2.3 Peripheral perspectives

At the same time as the SSG is organizing its central future-oriented examination, it consults at least the colleagues responsible for each of the constituent bodies of the university regarding their own intentions, wishes or projects – whose scheduling they will indicate within their specific activities. They will be invited individually to formulate *briefly* in writing what, in their view, are the most important prospects for change within the areas for which they are responsible and to show, if only summarily, how these changes could or should affect their activities. Naturally, they will have to take account of those elements of the general framework which seem to them

bound to influence their own sectoral or operational strategies. In collaboration with one of the decentralized bodies, the SSG may prepare one of these short notes so as to communicate it to other units for illustrative purposes.

## 2.4 Reformulation of the central perspective

On the basis of the sectoral notes it receives, the SSG may reformulate its centrally-based viewpoint for communication to the university boards and other decision-making bodies. An information debate may be organized in the central boards to discuss the hypotheses put forward. Thus future-oriented reflection will get under way and be sustained by a dialogue between centre and periphery which will establish or reinforce joint awareness of the prospects for change. It will propagate a sense of collective interest and define a warning level as regards proposed transformations.

## 2.5 Clarification of the *identity* of the university

When the SSG feels that this collective deliberation is under way, it may try to consolidate it by raising the question of the *identity* of the university among its own members and on the central boards. When this issue becomes part of a broader consideration of the future, the more significant features of the latter can be identified. Within this framework, the compatibility of this identity with the apparent vision of the future at this stage will be examined as soon as possible. The same deliberate reflection also enables a general test of coherence which may subsequently have to be refined or even amended in certain respects.

### 2.5.1 Examples of this clarification

Does the university intend to occupy a top-flight position in research and train future researchers and specialists with an international reputation? Is it to emphasize the effectiveness of training for the greatest number? concern for preserving general education or training – and if so of what kind – complemented by more specialized training? professional courses? admission for adults with professional experience? teaching methods enabling students to work alone or in groups? Is it to attach special importance to the lifestyle of its members? easy access to the new information technologies? privileged relations with the local community? Its integration within international networks? etc.

Following a recent evaluation, the Université de Paris-Sorbonne confirmed that it intended to remain the main “heir” of the former Sorbonne, by training humanist students in both tradition and the renewal of a conception of mankind adapted to contemporary society. Established in 1968, the Université de Paris Dauphine has also confirmed its founding identity: through its research and multidisciplinary courses, it aims to contribute to the science of organizations and decisions, thus ensuring the professional training of future managers in the economic and social worlds, but also that of researchers and teachers.

The University of Louvain-la-Neuve and the University of Leuven, both of them Catholic institutions, have stated their wish to be research universities of international standing, while wanting also to provide general intellectual training to strengthen the human and social responsibility of their students. Utrecht also sees itself as an international research university, while cultivating special sensitivity towards world development problems in a combination of basic and applied research with an emphasis on student ability to learn autonomously. In Germany, the University of Siegen is openly reformist in its approach, and its interest in the surrounding region results in multidisciplinary and practical studies. Activity at the University of Venice, which offers basic higher education in a range of different subjects, is geared to the advantages but also the cultural and economic limitations of the “city of the doges”. The much more recently established “Autonomous” University of Barcelona seeks a distinct identity from the other prestigious universities of the Catalan capital by developing pioneering activities and an enterprising outlook.

### 2.5.2 Definition of identity

The definition of identity should reflect a degree of stability on the part of the institution and its aims. One might even talk of its *constitution*. Yet in a period of rapid and profound change, this stability itself may be challenged. Strategic practice should seek to avoid excessive disparity between transformations experienced by the university, and the conception and formulation of its identity.

The development of activities in networks and partnerships often built up by particular university bodies or individuals, rather than being piloted by central administration, raises the difficult problem of *circumscribing identity*.

#### 2.5.2.1 Definition of identity, and the “virtual” university

A clear definition of the identity of a university is tending to become blurred with the development of activity in networks and partnerships, and with the very rapid growth of *interactive multimedia systems* which are going to totally transform the education systems of the next century.

There is use of the term *virtual university* whose model is a centre for the organized promotion of learning within a communications system of almost unlimited boundaries and access. For each institution, one can already foresee the widespread use of the Internet, Intranet and Extranet for the purpose of internal and external communications with partners and the general public.

The aim of internal communications networks will be to secure the widest possible access for members of the university to information from a very varied range of sources. The problem here is the widespread integration of information within these databanks. The experience of firms shows that it is not easy to achieve the opening up of information in this way, since it contributes to the power and security of those who possess it. It is thus never introduced into databanks automatically.

The situation will be more difficult to handle in universities where rigorous integrated information policies are far less widespread. Everywhere in spite of technological innovation, information may remain very fragmented, so that reference to a clear strong institutional identity becomes even harder.

However, *activity in networks and partnerships* may encourage privileged information and relations between their participants, and even give rise to specific norms, so that the effects of fragmentation in the university as a whole are accentuated further still. Where these partnerships matter to the institution, their norms may influence the development of institutional policies, thereby running the risk of yet greater incoherence and weakening of its precise identity.

In the final analysis, a university organized in a flexible *confederation* of varied partnerships and networks may be reduced to a simple logistic function that may weaken its identity altogether or renders it insignificant. In this instance, an institutional policy will be more difficult to draw up – and above all to apply. It might be regarded as “non pertinent”, or even “impertinent”! Present-day university organization seems to be developing along *federal lines*, although this is countered by central authorities of the university keen for institutional identity to be firmly and precisely defined. Is this a long-term trend? The challenge to institutions is serious, and can only be confronted through quality strategic management.

### 3. *Information gathering – constraints and norms*

The setting up of a strategic action framework presupposes sound appreciation of the following elements:

- strategic information (3.1),
- strategic constraints (3.2.1),
- institutional norms (3.2.2)

- internal and external perception of existing institutional policies (4),
- the strategic field of reference (5)

### 3.1 Strategic information

Strategic management is not possible without a strategic information system to enlighten its development. From the outset, therefore, it is important to establish a clear idea as to the existence, the quality and the availability of strategic-type information held by the management. How sensitive also are the managers to the importance of this information? Institutional evaluation processes in themselves reveal the quality of strategic information, highlighting the way it is collected, and interpreted and used by managers. Shortcomings in its use or checks on progress and ways of compensating for them also become progressively apparent.

The SSG should be able to draw up an initial list of information considered strategic because it clarifies the development of new institutional policies. In order to supplement it, the Group should specify the internal information that ought to be gathered. This initial reflection constitutes a good introduction to critical examination of strategic management methods in the university. But it is only on completion of the institutional evaluation process that the SSG will be in a position to make general recommendations for the enrichment and updating of strategic information, at least if this is the way it decides to work.

### 3.2 Strategic limitations and institutional norms

These two notions reflect the institutional inertia of the moment, which institutional policies set out to alter. An initial task is to identify them so that, at a later stage of evaluation, their inflexibility will be fully apparent.

#### 3.2.1 Strategic constraints

Consideration of the current situation and future scenarios necessarily means taking note of strong limitations which, for the university as a whole, appear to inhibit immediate improvement in the quality of its services or the way they are adapted to particular circumstances.

These constraints may be physical (space, siting, facilities), legal (regulations and statutes, contractual commitments), financial (rules which govern methods of funding and the amount or nature of expenditure, estimates of the volume and nature of resources), human (attitudes, the possibility of attracting students with the right qualities for embarking on the courses envisaged, staff skills and mobility and the possibility of attracting fresh expertise), organizational (structures, networks, relations and communications, management methods, the information system), to name the most obvious.

In this early organizational phase, simply noting such constraints is enough to start an internal discussion on the validity of the information itemized in the list, with a possible view to supplementing or amending it, or to undertaking a closer analysis to determine its constituent elements more clearly. This initial consultation should also make it possible to distinguish restrictions in the list whose strategic impact might be decisive. Obviously, this impact will depend on the strategies adopted. The initial future-oriented phase should however suggest possible new development strategies – and therefore point to the strategic value of the constraints identified. As discussion and study progress, the perception of constraints will become increasingly fine-tuned, especially during the evaluation phase, as will appreciation of ways of reducing, avoiding or compensating for them.

#### 3.2.2 Institutional norms

Norms are a collective *modus operandi* and sometimes formal codes of conduct acknowledged by individuals in a community. They concern the different kinds of group behaviour reflected in a variety of attitudes on the part of students and others who attend lectures or conferences, staff, partners, governing authorities or the media.



First, we shall discuss the attitudes of participation and support *vis-à-vis* the institution itself, as well as service rights and obligations (community norms). We shall also consider attitudes with a possibly significant influence on policies and activities: they can include norms regarding change and traditions; norms related to work, initiative, risk, co-operation, competition, rigour, quality, transparency and dialogue; bureaucratic or entrepreneurial norms; research and teaching norms; or those related to management and administration, etc.

Several authors consider these norms themselves to be restrictions with which one has to contend and which are themselves influenced by other constraints. However, in our view, it is clearer to distinguish between *endogenous* norms and constraints whose nature is *exogenous*. Indeed, the latter have a different form of inflexibility attributable to their dependence on factors external to the university (public investment or budgets, regulations and the competitive strategies of other interests).

By contrast, norms are largely *endogenous* because they derive from persons conscious of their belonging to a particular university community whose traditions are long-standing. Here, one may cite the standardized behaviour patterns of staff with a long-term loyalty to the institution, or of students who remain there for a sufficiently long period. Naturally, these forms of behaviour are also conditioned by other loyalties, but their aims can only be measured against university practice, even if this results in criticism of them or in attempts to compensate for their effects. These norms can thus adapt and motivation evolve, to take account of changes in academic occupations, fresh policies, evaluation, and new roles, methods or resources – in short, convincing strategic management within the institution.

Following these preliminary studies and the regular dialogue maintained with the various university bodies, the SSG should be able to draft an initial *summary note* for broad circulation. Here again, it may request reactions within a reasonable period, which will result in a second similar note also for possible public consideration. In this way the future-oriented phase comes to a close. It will have highlighted the prospects for transformation of the university, the factors common to its various activities and bodies, and every kind of information making it possible to define the support structure for new institutional policies.

Before embarking on change and renewal, it may, however, be worth reviewing current institutional policies and making them more explicit where necessary, not only to apply them more effectively, but to show clearly how they differ from the new policies considered appropriate.

#### 4. *Commitment to existing institutional policies*

This focus on action in the present enables the rector and the SSG to consider both the identity of the university – its formulation and the internal and external perception of identity – and the consequences of this perception as regards the potential rapidity of institutional transformation.

In order to begin its examination of the present situation, the SSG establishes a document on ongoing institutional policies as perceived by the central bodies of the university. In circulating it, the Group asks the decentralized units to test the way these policies are understood among their different kinds of members and partners, and adopted by them as a strategic framework for their own initiatives. This enquiry will reveal that several such policies are obsolete or unfamiliar. From then on, new policies, even if only informal ones, might be acceptable and valid because they respond to the emergence of new institutional norms.

Put another way, this “perception” survey will point up important ongoing trends and the various ways policies are interpreted among different categories of members (new students, long-term students, permanent teaching and administrative staff, new staff members, representatives of unions and professional bodies, members of external networks in which the university or some of its constituent bodies are involved, representatives of the university governing authorities, the media and other interested parties).

If the SSG makes use of these data, it will no doubt derive from them strategic information on the extent to which the university is fragmented, and on the real and differential autonomy enjoyed in practice by its various constituent bodies, as well as on the emergence of new policies.

## 5. *Identification of the strategic field of reference*

By this area is meant any situation or problem that the university considers sufficiently significant to exercise a substantial influence on its way of working, its style, its rate of development and its entrepreneurial capacity. It may be as vast as the university wishes within the different levels of freedom actually open to it, for example with respect to public regulations.

5.1 The study of ongoing institutional policies naturally leads to establishment of a list of the strategic elements within their fields of implementation, thus revealing their relevance for the strategic management of the institution. Thorough examination of these elements will indicate which of them appear to be vehicles for the most important strategies, whether the latter are applied at central level or in the peripheral bodies.

These elements may be referred to as *strategic mechanisms* or *levers* whose operation enables in-depth application of the selected strategies. For example, under institutional policies aimed at overhauling the research capacity of the university, one heading in the strategic framework may refer to “staff careers”. The corresponding levers of strategic action might thus be the recruitment of young researchers, new regulations for professional mobility, new forms of remuneration with a high premium on research performance, and new methods of remuneration for patents and licences, etc.

The SSG thus arranges for the preparation of a list of the strategic headings most relevant to the main institutional policies and, likewise, a list of the corresponding action mechanisms, or at least those whose manipulation requires the most care.

For the great majority of European institutions, one of these headings concerns the relations of the university with its public governing authorities, and particularly the State, since these relations circumscribe the strategic field of reference of the institution *per se*.

### 5.1.1 State policies and institutional strategies

In all countries, the State authorities today place education and science at the heart of their policies for development and social justice. As a rule, they are thus led to define a fairly extensive national regulatory framework, to provide for major public funding, and to intervene in academic and scientific policies, questions of personal status, investment, evaluation and so forth. However, as the general tendency in Europe is towards greater autonomy for institutions, and increased responsibility for those who manage them, the State is currently seeking to handle these links with universities through multiannual contracts concluded individually with each of them.

In this context, strategic practice on the part of institutions facilitates negotiation with the State authorities which, when persuasive and sustained, results in a *de facto* increase in the latitude enjoyed by universities. Finally, if all universities in a country adopt strategic approaches, the whole system of higher education becomes strategic, making it possible to develop and assume relations in a partnership – rather than between governors and governed – with the civil authorities.

## II. EVALUATION

0. After future-oriented reflection and joint deliberation, a series of evaluations of the strong and weak points of the institution is vital in order to make progress in the selection of headings and stages of strategic action. The discussions of the previous phase, and the study of the

perception of current policies, will have already led members of the university to state their views on a certain number of points. These opinions will have been useful in identifying several constituent headings within the strategic field of reference. However, supplementing them with new items prompts closer critical consideration.

The formal evaluation of research activities is today very widespread. Evaluation of study programmes and teaching methods is more difficult to carry out and is developing more slowly. Peer evaluation of staff careers is relatively frequent, whereas assessment of premises and facilities remains limited because, in many countries, buildings and their equipment do not belong to the university and are not therefore subject to capital accounting procedures. In order to boost institutional evaluation, the CRE has developed an evaluation programme for quality policies by putting a premium on their strategic incorporation into the development of institutions. The aim is to go further than a wholesale, and generally summary, view of their methods of governance and administration.

While functional evaluation is always necessary, the aim of *institutional evaluation* is to assess the extent to which the university is capable of formulating institutional policies and ensuring their translation into action strategies at different levels of responsibility within the institution.

Yet appreciating the capacity of a body to change is not straightforward, especially if the changes concerned are far-reaching strategic developments liable to alter the relative position of power centres inside or outside the institution, thus necessitating new conventions and norms.

0.1 Consequently, the emphasis will be on the determination and ability of the university to make the most of trends, breakdowns, prospects and opportunities to act in an innovative way – and to organize itself as a result. Evaluation will focus especially on the following:

- forms of leadership and stimulation of collective action, rather than administrative efficiency or instruction and control procedures;
- processes rather than situations;
- modes of collective action rather than individual performance;
- collective norms *vis-à-vis* the quality of services, innovation, openness and change, rather than formal procedures and regulations;
- adaptation of structures and operational rules rather than measures to ensure legality and conformity;
- understanding of “total quality” factors, or practices enabling quality norms to be promoted across all activities, rather than factors aimed at strengthening top-rank performances considered as the sole examples of good practice;
- a concern to develop, enrich, update, diversify and widely circulate information, and to promote communication, exchanges of experience, and participatory and committed role behaviour throughout the entire system, rather than concentrating information on these same so-called exemplary elite sectors;
- determination to respond to the development of new situations rather than to the ability to plan in detail actions already fully acknowledged: in short, the capacity to improvise, to take advantage of opportunities, to commit oneself to them and assume the risks they entail, rather than practice tending to preserve already established conventions and standpoints;
- the ability of the organization to create and manage experimental situations and roles, to accept occasional error and risks, and to ensure the coexistence of experimental situations with more standardized management of well-established activities;
- the ability to redistribute resources and responsibilities, depending on the requirements of change and the results of evaluation;
- the capacity to combine in action a spirit of competition in providing quality services with a spirit of co-operation and partnership for better management of scarce resources.

To sum up, institutional evaluation attempts to assess how the leadership of the institution at all levels of responsibility, is attentive to the strategic quality factors referred to above, and how its strategic management methods may develop fresh attitudes and a so-called *organizational climate* receptive to a dynamic process strengthened through collective action.

While this appreciation leads to specific evaluation initiatives, any functional evaluation – by discipline, sector or theme – should also be able to contribute to the institutional evaluation, which is possible if the evaluation instructions take account of it and adequate training is made available. The application of strategic management should provide an incentive for evaluation practices to become widely institutionalized and, thereby, better integrated into the overall strategic approach. Yet each functional evaluation has its own aims, criteria and methods which should not be obscured by the overall concern for strategic understanding. The rector and the SSG should thus seek the means to reconcile these two aims in a practical way.

0.2 Bearing in mind this general remark and that we do not intend to describe any of the already well-known SWOT-type evaluation practices, attention is drawn here to the interest inherent in four kinds of horizontal approach, each including study and discussion of the following:

- the potential for development;
- the normative dynamic process and cultural evaluation;
- creativity;
- management and leadership

Each of these critical and collective approaches is both an essential constituent of institutional evaluation and a supportive mechanism for collective learning about change.

### 1. *Evaluation of the development potential*

1.1 While in an evaluation of the *potential for change*, it is naturally important to note obstacles to the implementation of new policies, it is even more important to be aware of the positive factors that will have to be exploited and developed to strengthen the institution. They may be referred to collectively as the *development potential*. Their analysis is central to strategic practice and, at all levels of responsibility, it is essential to be fully alive to them and work to develop them or encourage their emergence in new forms.

Achievable strategies normally draw on existent potential. However, a vision of the future of the university – or one of its bodies – may imply the acquisition of fresh potential, distinct from those already acknowledged in the present. However, even in this case, the acquisition of this new potential presupposes also the potential of the university to do so.

Thus the theoretical list of these different kinds of potential is as vast as that applicable to the strategic field because the former corresponds to it. In strategic management practice, the list becomes shorter following joint internal deliberation, as particular headings and strategic mechanisms make it possible specifically to enhance the value of ongoing strategies, either to improve their effectiveness or renew them to respond to the requirements of anticipated radical change.

The SSG must act so that awareness of the development potential can be rapidly activated and deepened, as the strategic framework on which the university intends to concentrate its efforts becomes clearer.

Each constituent body of the university must be able to evaluate its own forms of potential, and be aware of obstacles to their development, including underdeveloped potential in other bodies, which will affect its own performance. On the basis of such functional and sectoral evaluation, the SSG must be able to determine the different kinds of potential that can reasonably be anticipated at university level. It will describe them in a general document for

circulation within the institution, with a short list of the potential of each of its individual bodies in an annex.

## 2. *Cultural and dynamic evaluation of norms*

2.1 Attention has already been drawn to the importance of norms within the context of strategic action. Indeed, the processes of strategic management are often based in an all-important way on the dynamics of norms or, in other words, on the processes of transformation of behaviour patterns and attitudes derived from collective action, from the direct practice of lessons drawn from experience of change and from effective leadership of the agents of change.

In our view, the concept of *cultural evaluation* applies to the workings of this dynamic process within the university, and to the way it becomes part of the processes of strategic management and contributes to the development of institutional policies. This notion is doubtless ambitious since, in the broad sense, it covers problems of *values, language and modes of communication*. It is also ambiguous, as it corresponds to two kinds of elements in the cultural dimension of universities.

The complexity of the issue is self-evident. It derives from psycho-social practice (surveys and interpretations) but also, more simply, from the experience of discussions with various members and partners of the university – when they consider it worthwhile. Clearly, these are simply opinions the sincerity and representativeness of which have to be assessed by the person conducting the enquiry. Yet the study or the discussion of potentially conflicting situations and the way they have been handled, is often an excellent pointer to existent divergences within the organization, as well as to the norms for negotiation and solution of the conflicts it harbours.

2.2 A *first* general way of introducing cultural evaluation is to consider how the university itself views the scope of its *cultural responsibilities*, over and above respect for the values of reason, science, tolerance, critical spirit and debate, and its responsibilities in transmitting the cultural heritage of our societies or, in other words, all those values constituting its historical cultural identity.

As an *institution within society*, rather than merely an organization for the creation and distribution of learning and aptitudes, a university, in all its activities and its operation, bears witness to the values shared by society, which create among citizens an understanding of their interest in living together and, thus, of their culture.

In western civilizations, the humanistic values of effort and personal responsibility, democratic freedom, human dignity and solidarity are at the heart of this culture. Traditionally, they are considered to be of universal relevance, which is not to discount academic criticism of this claim to universality, or the marked cultural diversity of our societies.

At university, scientific and technological studies underpin strong values of intellectual and professional discipline. They reinforce the norms of group work and unfailingly alert their students to the implications of science and technology in society (analyses of impact on the environment and health sectors, and problems of professional ethics for example). But it is above all in the study of the arts, literature, humanities, social sciences and communication that the university deals with the human and social aspects of the organization of human activity. And it does so within specialized training and education for students who focus their studies intensively on these questions. In the process, it firmly applies the critical method, emphasizing the contemporary shift towards the diversification of values, as well as towards their instability and conflicts.

It may be asked whether the university should concentrate exclusively on its normal activity, namely the collective scientific analysis of these trends by groups of specialists. Its cultural objective may be *more extensive* when it is faced with a wider audience: when it strives to ensure that the greatest possible number of its students and adult clientele are more aware of

the impact of the evolution of our societies from the standpoint of our democratic and humanistic values. This raises the problem of the role of condensed courses and conferences or debates for all members of the university, which would allow for discussion of the significance of events in our societies of science, technology, communication and globalization. Several universities act in this way already with the aim of explaining the current significance and scope of our humanistic tradition.

Naturally, evaluation does not have to take sides, but it should at least identify the cultural dimension of its activities and the way in which the university confronts this general question – if it does so – and, possibly, how it responds to it and whether its current responses appear likely to evolve. In this respect, for example, evaluation would examine, within courses, the various multidisciplinary options somehow bringing together science or technology and humanities and arts. Or it might consider the privileged role of specialized studies in the curriculum or, indeed, comparative understanding of foreign cultures.

Neither can evaluation be limited to courses alone. For the university deals in values via its whole organization, its operation and its public image; in its openness to new groups of people seeking training; through teaching methods that increase the autonomy of students and their taste for learning; in the priority accorded to personal discipline, competition, creativity and enterprise, but also to a spirit of solidarity bringing a personal contribution to the solution of social difficulties arising from sudden unexpected changes in society.

2.3 A *second* interpretation of cultural evaluation is concerned with revealing the *norms* of the different groups taking part in university life. To a large extent, these norms vary with the areas of study, as well as their particular organization, leadership and history. They are usually part of a *common set* of attitudes *vis-à-vis* the whole university, and their consistency depends on the identity of the institution and its ability to conduct its own policies. They are suggestive of *norms related to membership*, or other norms of significant influence in reinforcing or inhibiting the conception and implementation of university policies.

One of the tasks of strategic management is to see that, given the diversity of norms and, sometimes, their conflicts, the university can ensure the precedence of certain common norms and, in particular, those which are essential in academic occupations because they express the basic aims of a university. In this sense, the dynamics underlying norms are themselves a variable of strategic action, to the extent that the exercise of leadership ensures the predominance of certain norms within the institution – a process that evaluation should clarify.

Student attitudes regarding the university, as well as those of the staff, express the way in which they regard it as a *community* and their greater or lesser concern to conform to its institutional norms. As regards *students*, this desire for integration varies very strongly from one institution to the next and in accordance with the student categories concerned in terms of their professional studies and social group. Nowadays, part-time students or those who alternate study and employment may have an essentially functional view of the institution, and an attempt should be made to compensate for the utilitarian aspect of this perspective. In future, the increasing use of distance education may cause this “de-integration” effect to become more widespread.

As to *staff* norms, they are largely professional in so far as they derive partly from statutes, regulations and national and international convention, and partly from the occupations that they pursue with their own quality references. So attitudes differ across disciplines and activities. Other differential factors may be attributed, for example, to professional union or corporate tactics.

Also predominant in *networks* are those norms governing partnerships in which people with differing backgrounds and priorities work together, generally after co-opting each other on the basis of common values sometimes at variance with those of the institution they represent. More generally, the integration of the university within society, the steady growth of partnerships with other bodies from that society, and the increasing involvement of staff and students in social or

professional practices external to the university, may all challenge existing norms. In any event, they contribute to the dynamic processes underlying institutional norms.

2.4 In any cultural evaluation it is also appropriate to examine questions of *language*. The first issue is the attention languages receive in the study of the cultures, so as to familiarize students with life in foreign or multicultural milieux. It also makes sense to appreciate the influence of technical and specialized languages in the training of the mind and of attitudes, not to mention the language of imagination. In all such cases, *academic research* is probably necessary to understand their cultural impact.

Finally, we have already referred to evaluation of *internal and external communication*, and forms of interaction between university activities and those of the media whose cultural influence is steadily increasing. The way in which the university is organized to manage the overwhelming proliferation of *interactive multimedia communications* in the interests of its academic, scientific and cultural objectives will itself be an interesting “cultural indicator”, all the more in that the economic and technological multimedia revolution will strongly integrate the activity of the media in the cultural development systems of society.

2.5. In short, the prime interest of this *cultural audit* is appreciating the way in which the institutional policies of a university interpret its cultural responsibilities by taking real measures to implement their ultimate aims, in its programmes and activities, relations and partnerships, its modes of working and living within the institution and its management methods. It is a question of analysing the *organizational climate*, which is always the product of strategic management practices.

2.5.1 More generally, evaluation will attempt to assess the means used by leadership to foster new norms and their propagation. Indeed, there has to be less reliance on regulations and incentives linked to the allocation of resources and staff management, than on a fresh outlook brought about by different means: changes of leadership and fresh recruitment; the creation of new roles, new operational regulations more attuned to model initiatives and quality; and integration with partnerships geared to innovation, etc. The strict application of quality evaluation methods must thus assume a positive role, if the evaluators are clearly aware of the new norms required.

### 3. *Evaluation of creativity*

The factors in creativity are numerous. Clearly, they are linked to personal qualities, but also to a multiplicity of organizational and management factors. The latter include more or less flexible structures and regulations that foster initiative and experimentation; development policies for human resources that put a premium on creativity, which in turn presupposes adequate methods of evaluation; methods of allocating resources, a share of which might be earmarked for the implementation of innovative proposals; the existence of communication and co-operation networks between bodies and individuals that have already demonstrated a capacity for innovation; and a strategic information system within the university to transmit innovations leading to institutional change rapidly and conveniently.

In short, it is strategic management in its entirety – with its innovation norms, its organizational climate, its handling of structures and resources, its institutional policies – which establishes and supports a creative system.

3.1 One way of developing these effects is to carefully study the most recently produced *innovations* by closely involving in their evaluation the bodies within which they were initiated. Such a study is complex and must be a part of full-scale internal research programmes on the workings of the university. Here, experience of innovation is always a pointer to the constraints, norms and initiatives that have prompted it, and to the methods adopted to resolve difficulties or overcome obstacles that have prevented, halted or lessened it.

This kind of study thus provides an opportunity to request that the various university bodies publicize major innovations of (say) the last five years, whether they are essentially academic or scientific, linked to teaching, focused on human relations or administrative in nature. Within their own particular areas, what problems have these bodies encountered in initiating and implementing change? Applied to numerous innovations in various areas and sectors of activity (courses, methods, structures, resources, capacities), this sort of historical evaluation should also make it possible to gauge the possible benefits of transferring lessons from this experience to other sectors, and to observe how the coherent application of different policies can foster creativity.

Such a study will be particularly welcome within the institution if it is presented not as a control procedure, but as a stage in *institutional research*. Indeed, each sector of the university will want, in its own way, to clarify what has been done, the obstacles encountered, efforts to avoid them and the support received in order to do so. It will also want its efforts and results to be better understood by the leadership – and more widely circulated.

#### 4. *Evaluation of the management system and leadership practice*

Based on legal and administrative practice, the classical way of understanding the management of a body is to analyse how its *governance* is organized (setting up of management bodies, tasks, centralized and decentralized structures, methods of monitoring and control). Yet one has to look beyond formal structures and procedures.

##### 4.1 Methods of governance

More, indeed, is learnt by assessing the nature, clarity and efficiency of structures and modes of operation of institutional governance and of its capacity to practise strategic management methods. To do so, one needs to examine the following:

- the organization of the *formal system of power*. This includes the elective or other ways of selecting leaders (the rector, the rectorial team, members of central boards, the SSG, co-ordination and budgetary committees, deans, directors of departments and research centres, administrative heads) and for how long; the capacity of these bodies to devise and carry out development policies on a consistent and ongoing basis, while efficiently ensuring the quality of evaluation of activities;
- *power norms* related to the exercise of authority: methods of control, participation and negotiation, and internal communications; the operation of systems of influence (sources, ways of working, power to intervene and in what areas; consistency and stability; conflicts and interaction with the system of power);
- *relations between the centre and periphery*: centralized, federal or confederal form; modes of centralization and *devolution* of powers (and in what areas); clarity of the criteria justifying central intervention; *decentralization*; ways used by central bodies to gain information on “local” activities and events; the effective and extensive operation (or otherwise) of decentralization (strict application, or otherwise, of the *subsidiarity principle*).

##### 4.2 Methods of leadership

It is also possible to describe the ability of leaders in a standard way. Yet the personal style of managers is essential, as it plays a basic part in establishing *confidence in relations* which in turn are crucial to the *credibility* of the management of the institution.

Classical forms of leadership include the following:

- *forms of leadership* itself (personal authority and influence linked to the personality of leaders or their motivation for the tasks of government; to their proficiency, commitment and experience; to their relations, political talent, and their negotiating skills; to their ability to manage information and exercise control *vis-à-vis* various communications networks and to allocate



responsibilities and resources; to the appropriateness of their forms of leadership to institutional norms; and to continuity and consistency in the way they exercise leadership).

- ability to *organize institution policies* and run quality evaluation systems (formulation of policies, monitoring of their effective implementation, reformulation of their aims and means in accordance with experience).
- ability to *develop more flexible structures* and working regulations in order to respond better and faster to the requirements of possible pilot experiments, or to a need to overhaul ongoing operations, which implies monitoring support for innovation.
- ability to *pilot organizational learning*: to organize the strategic information system, explain the experience gained from the various activities and relations of the institution, and circulate their major conclusions; to develop in a targeted and efficient manner the internal communications system, and provide for possible interaction with its beneficiaries.
- ability to arrange or allow for the emergence of *new norms* within the institution itself and as regards its responsibilities to society, by encouraging experimentation and activities with an element of risk and so accepting error and the possible failure of entrepreneurial initiatives (see chapter III.1 on the tasks of leadership in the practice of *paradoxical management*).
- ability to *negotiate with the governing authorities* to further the university's institutional policies, and mobilize both external support and resources by facilitating initiatives to attract them.
- ability to conduct *public image policies*. This is not just a question of public relations leading to diversified information on the identity, policies, activities and performance of the university, but a communications effort directed towards real contributions, to significant action on behalf of the public. Similarly, the public image is not solely the image one wishes to project on the external community, but the one perceived by that community, however indistinctly. For this reason, the activities themselves of the institution or its members can have an impact on public awareness, as a result of their nature or their concrete self-evident results. For example, involvement in local affairs, public conferences and discussions on important issues, in technologically slanted initiatives (such as technology transfer), or in relevant research addressing major local problems may amount to a conspicuous contribution to the social and artistic life of the region. The real reputation of the quality inherent in all such activities as perceived by students, staff and partners of the university is no doubt the most lasting contribution to the institution's public relations.

The foregoing suggests that, nowadays, professional experience, determination and the logical mastery of policies and operations are, alone, no longer sufficient qualities for leaders. Contemporary societies attach just as much importance to emotional insight and integration into community life. In their policies and behaviour, managers must be able to firmly demonstrate their sensitivity to this *relevance of the heart*, which depends initially on attentive listening to others and implies an attitude of understanding, support and team awareness developed throughout the entire management process.

In a period of change synonymous with professional risks and insecurity, the intervention of leaders must take account of heightened competition giving rise to uncertainties, frustration and disappointment. In industrial milieux, there is nowadays emphasis on the need for managers to draw on their *emotional intelligence and skills*. This has a place in the art of decision-making, which is just as important as technical skills.

Under these circumstances, evaluating the quality of leadership is no easy matter. Relevant data is to be found as a rule in opinions gathered among colleagues and associates, often on an irregular rather than systematic basis. Furthermore, to properly understand the capacity to manage, the evaluator has to benefit from special recognition and availability on the part of those who exercise formal authority. The methods and stages for the communication and discussion of results must thus be specified from the outset by the SSG, since respect for the rules of transparency of strategic management always requires broad communication.

#### 4.3 Management and administration

The real *capacity for co-ordination* between the *tasks of management* (formulation and monitoring of policies) and *those of administration* (tasks linked to the carrying out of policies from the standpoint of support activities) is an important part of strategic management. Certainly, the effectiveness of administrative departments must enable staff responsible for management to concentrate firmly on strategic management. But these departments themselves must also be inherently party to strategic practice since, in strategic management, everything hinges on the way things get done. In other words, if these two levels are out of step in any way, the capacity to induce change is limited, while the expansion of quality disciplines and the spread of good practice is held up.

An excess of administrative power thus creates the risk of bureaucracy, inflexibility and too many formal procedures even in the practice of evaluation, thereby reducing its credibility and encouraging standard responses, rather than constructive self-criticism of dysfunctions and prospects (or lack of them). Conversely, over-passive administration which is devoted, albeit efficiently, to the routines of daily operations, without entering into the spirit and activity of strategic management, will fail to provide decision-makers with the organizational processes needed for innovation. Neither will it contribute to the supply of fresh information, support for their efforts or management of the risks that the latter entail.

From yet another standpoint, management or a mode of governance which intervenes too directly and frequently in procedures arising from administration activities, will have a negative impact on the motivation and credibility of administrative staff and result in managerial short-sightedness among staff at the top; they will spend too much time settling points of detail rather than concentrating on strategic development problems. The composition and definition of responsibilities of a rectorial or faculty team with a large number of individuals responsible for monitoring and keeping major organizational activities on track, may weaken administrative management and render it passive. Solutions adopted may lead either to transfer of some responsibilities from the rector to his deputies thus making them truly responsible for important sectors of administrative activity, or to a strengthening of rectorial centralization, with the rector closely monitoring the work of his many immediate colleagues. The task of driving the action may therefore be broken down within either centralized or dispersed management.

### III. FORMULATION AND MONITORING OF INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

0 Institutional policies are the matrix, as it were, of strategic management practice. It is by ensuring their preparation, formulation and reformulation and, then, their implementation that management strives to instil into the attitudes, activities, organization and exercise of leadership, the kind of critical forward-looking spirit and method of communicating that is at the heart of collective learning about change.

This Third Part will be shorter since it has to refer back to the concepts and observations already noted. From an abstract standpoint, it would be enough to state that, within the established strategic framework and as a result of the evaluations carried out, the university has to make choices and adopt leadership measures enabling them to be implemented.

At the same time as they establish common regulations and guidelines for action, these choices must always include provisions (in terms of aims, structures, norms, relations, and the collection and allocation of resources or modes of operation) which, while not getting in the way of bottom-up initiatives, should actually be an incentive to undertake them and support their implementation. The ongoing monitoring of quality which is no more than a permanent system of evaluation and leadership, enables an assessment of these initiatives and may also make it possible to alter certain institutional policies if the prospects for change in the environment, as well as internal innovation, call for it.

0.1 The adoption of institutional policies, whether they confirm those already in existence, make them more explicit, or map out new courses of action, concludes the phase of strategic

commitments by the university which are made possible through the establishment of a framework for analysis and through the evaluation practices of the institution.

It also ensures that the different development strategies adopted in each of the decentralized bodies will be compatible with the identity and general bearings of the institution, and that stimulating a responsible approach on the part of those who act for change will remain the principal code of conduct.

In fact, these institutional policies cannot be considered independently from each other. They interact to constitute a strategic system, which is why managers have to see that potentially irreversible contradictions are not allowed to develop.

Subject to what will be said below regarding *paradoxical strategies*, policies have to be consistent overall – or certainly not contradictory – and contribute to a general institutional policy in keeping with outward manifestations of the identity of the university. The practice of strategic management must ensure this coherence and control its systematization, in particular by fostering the acceptance of institutional norms that result in convergent changes.

While only policies concerning the entire university are under discussion here, it is clear that any big body within the university responsible for differing activities and means has its own central strategies. It too, therefore, should internally respect procedures inspired by the approach and practices of strategic management, as already described, in a decision-making environment which is less unpredictable for being more homogeneous than the one which the university as a whole has to confront. The strategic management of the university may even include regulations and norms aimed at the expansion of the best *sectoral practices* at all levels.

Clearly, the problem of strategic management is not simply a matter of formulating policies, but also ensuring once more that they will be *really implemented*, or reformulated if necessary. So these policies have to be part of *processes which guide* the monitoring of their implementation. Therein lies the crucial role of evaluation practices and the strategic information system.

All observations in the two previous sections are thus relevant to the organization of this guidance, particularly those relating to institutional norms, strategic organization (such as leadership and strategic supervision, adaptation of structures and operational regulations; operation of the strategic information system; internal and external communications, evaluation and re-evaluation of the objectives pursued, processes and results as part of quality policies; strategic management of resources and relations; and interaction between management and administration).

0.2 Strategic organization should therefore promote real institutional norms for strategic management. At least *three types of policies*, resolutely applied, constitute in all cases, the most effective way of introducing these norms:

- policies for *integration and integrity*: promoting the participation and acceptance of responsibility by university members (students and staff); monitoring the development of networks and partnerships and their effect on institutional norms; ensuring the effectiveness of interactive communications; *remaining alive* to any possible deterioration in academic norms (in areas such as recruitment, the promotion and carrying out of services, activities outside the university and contracts; student assessment and the award of diplomas; use of teaching equipment and facilities; freedom and discussion; and security and social services).
- policies for the promotion of *initiatives and innovation*, and the loosening up of structures and operational regulations to encourage the foregoing to develop.
- policies for the *ongoing and general improvement of quality* (evaluation and the measures actually introduced to take account of its conclusions). As will be illustrated in greater detail below, these policies naturally contain procedures making it possible to alter aims and ways of achieving them – if rapid changes in the environment, or any other change-related factor has pointed up operational abnormalities, prompted initiatives and revealed any maladjustment in

organization of continuous oversight of quality, or the systematic monitoring of the results of evaluation are key strategic measures.

However, as we have seen, the university can accord priority to any policy concerned with areas of strategy whose current aspect it intends to alter.

The development of new norms necessary to carry through new policies cannot depend solely on regulations and incentives linked to the allocation of resources or staff management. Once more, it is important to encourage the emergence of a new attitude defined in a variety of ways. They include changes in methods of leadership and the management of crises; the creation of innovatory roles; support for exemplary initiatives; the opening of the university to fresh milieux, including students, other lecture-goers and partners; the integration of the institution into innovative partnerships; and the rigorous application of quality evaluation methods.

### 1. *Styles of management and strategic models*

Management methods applicable to the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of institutional policies are, as we know, varied. Each method has its own style which ultimately depends on the *organizational climate* for change within the university, and on the kind of leadership practised by those responsible for its development. These different styles amount to variants around *strategic models*, three forms of which will be discussed further, namely the *adaptive model*, the *voluntarist model* and the *paradoxical model*.

It will be recalled that several factors influence the style of management. Among them are the competitive and co-operative environment of the changes to be carried out; the potential for change; the history and identity of the university; dominant institutional norms; the conduct of the governing authorities and strategies of different stakeholders; the personalities of the leaders and influential agents, as much within the institution as in networks to which they are attached; and their experience of strategic management and their "reputation". Restrictions, schedules, verification procedures, costs, resources, the flexibility of systems, "contracts" binding stakeholders to the institution, incentives or the public image of the university should also be noted.

All these factors interact and are interpreted and interwoven by the central leadership of the university *with its own particular ways of stimulating* collective learning processes, carrying forward innovative initiatives and stamping strategic bearings on the functioning of the institution. This leadership provides for a *main strategic model* which constitutes a logic for collective action on the part of the entire institution even though, within its different entities, varied forms of leadership may be dominant.

1.1 *The adaptive model.* This style of leadership consists in allowing the institutional strategy to develop through a sequence of separate decisions with strategic implications, which are taken as a rule at the grass-roots level, whereas input from the centre is limited to stimulation, approval or support. In extreme instances, the university does not formulate an overarching scheme, but merely a few common regulations leaving considerable capacity for strategic interpretation to its different bodies. While this sequential process imparts a certain strategic coherence at institutional level, such coherence is often inspired by *reactive* responses to limiting factors, rather than *proactive* anticipation.

This situation is widespread in the case of a complex strategy, or where the strategy is practised in strongly decentralized institutions, such as a university. The difficulty in formulating central objectives is linked to the complexity of the environment and structures, so that the diversity of viewpoints leads to a strategy of so-called *limited rationality* almost as a matter of course. When they are noticed, problems are thus resolved sequentially and in relation to acquired experience. This model is therefore based on collective learning about changes which experience suggests are timely, and on *consensus negotiation* between different points of view and interests, the aim being to adopt a set of common new bearings. Practising it presupposes efficient communications and concomitant institutional norms

1.2 The adoption of a *voluntarist model* reflects a wish to provide particular strategies with a few general directions. Here there is *more committed* leadership which strives, by means of concerted effort, to define common principles for action and stimulate proactive strategies. Increasingly, the central boards of universities, or their governing authorities, require them to formulate clearly their policies and action programmes. The aim is not centralized *dirigisme* but to impart a central momentum in the spirit of the strategic management methods that are the subject of this book. The vision leaders have of the future is thus crucial, as is their ability to influence the development of institutional norms so as to promote new institutional policies capable of driving and stimulating strategic changes in the required direction.

Frequently also, the appearance of new constraints and the need to resolve *crises which seem to accumulate*, give rise to changes of leadership (new elections or nominations of staff officers, changes of attitude on the part of boards, or governing or financial bodies, the possibility of new coalitions among stakeholders). These changes will occur more easily if new opportunities seem possible, whereas the restrictions appear long-lasting or inevitable. Furthermore, effective leadership will make a point of explaining these fresh limitations and opportunities and will make every effort to clarify the ways they affect each other.

In this context, strategic practice may resort to *shock tactics*, targeting major rapid changes at certain aspects. These act as *signals* drawing attention to new forms of leadership, but they have to remain the exception if they are to retain their vitality as incentives. Their aim is to set up a new management system, a new organizational model making it possible to embark on strategies for renewal, without serious crises.

1.3 A third kind of strategic approach, together with forms of leadership associated with it, is the *so-called paradoxical model*, because it entails *paradoxical strategies*. It undoubtedly includes a voluntarist element because it presupposes leadership with a vision of the future and a particular conception of the common regulations and policies needed for it materialize. But it plays deliberately on the divergences and contradictions which may exist between the stakeholders, in the values and interests they defend, in the perception of constraints and opportunities they represent, or simply in their interpretation of the feasibility of proposed policies.

In short, in this model, it seems more important to experiment with new solutions or to test innovative principles for action – even if their conception and effects seem barely compatible either with each other, or with common existent regulations – than to rapidly lay down new directions for policy. As already stated, universities frequently accept to set up experimental structures which are regarded as departures from its customary regulations. However, such structures are generally exceptions to regulations whereas, here, contradiction becomes a real management system - lasting for a certain period, so that different kinds of experience may be compared.

1.3.1 In contrast to a predominantly adaptive approach and its reactive strategies, a paradoxical strategy is more voluntarist, forward-looking and proactive. Its main concern is for action, initiative and innovation. It thus attaches little importance to compromise or the search for consensus which would undermine the innovative nature of policies for change which it is seeking to play up. Contradictions should thus be allowed free expression, and those who promote the process given further encouragement and support when the focus is on plans for action, since conflicts of principle are to be avoided. The specific direction of each project imparts to it its own particular vision; it is the hallmark of its reputation and that of the “actors” wishing to be associated with it.

The *coexistence of these contradictions* is peculiar to a paradoxical situation characterized by an organizational dialectic. The interaction between comments and plans, debates and conflicts which may be associated with them are the dynamic factor of change in norms, action models, relations and performance criteria. In this way, they spread through the entire institution and are the basis for new institutional policies. Via a higher level of organizational analysis, these policies

may re-establish a certain degree of strategic coherence between divergent choices, which may reinforce their coexistence or, on the contrary, lessen it to the advantage of new integrative projects.

In complex situations characterized by an unsettled environment, any organization has difficulty in formulating entirely coherent general policies. Collective action, especially where it is innovative and proactive is led into contradictory ways forward. But the aim of strategic management is to deal with these contradictions in such a way as to maintain a dynamic impetus but avoid the breakdown of the organization or cumulative crises, whose political management costs would be excessive. One of the skills of general policy, and its outward expression, is knowing how to reconcile paradoxical proposals, referring to divergent interests in such a way that the main messages help to strengthen both the credibility of the overall policy pursued, and the legitimacy and reputation of the leaders responsible for it. In some respects, the same applies within the organization, as the result of an appropriate management style. The evaluation of project results by central leadership on the basis of its specific criteria is therefore essential. But the way it conducts evaluation must also help to clarify and test the impact of the value criteria espoused by the whole institution. In this way, innovative realistic policies may be worked out.

1.3.2 A university has to confront such situations *in certain phases* of its development. For example, one may recall lifelong learning schemes for adults, human resources management methods, business or partnership projects in which professional bodies are closely involved, and applied development research projects. The basic initiatives may be contradictory from the standpoint of their particular norms, the effects of their policies, or the image or identity of the institution. However, their critical evaluation must help the central leadership to identify, with experience, clear new institutional policies.

Generally, the university environment may be considered relatively stable, regardless of the innovations to which it gives rise. Usually, it allows universities enough time to develop policies for change that are eventually coherent. As long as institutions don't take too long to adapt their aims and workings to new needs, they are rarely subject to serious urgencies. In fact, they possess relatively little latitude for change, or organizational "*slack*" (to borrow a common theoretical term). If the organizational stability of a university is adequate in that it does not risk upheaval in the wake of innovations or their failure, it can develop paradoxical strategies for change, or at least leave significant room for them in its overall strategies.

The danger is that these paradoxical strategies may tend to fragment the institution into largely autonomous units which communicate poorly with each other, or that such strategies lead the entire university to take serious unwanted risks. The central leadership of the institution should thus make the nature and thrust of its efforts very clear so that they are perceived as a management system, with limited means and time available for different projects, as well as evaluation procedures. The paradoxical model is not a simple form of totally unordered *laissez-faire* that is inspired by faith in the virtues of spontaneity or disclaims any overall strategic ambition. It is about creating the conditions for creative disorder. Accordingly, application of this model helps to make structures and operational procedures more flexible, and inspire concerted effort and in-depth critical examination of sometimes entirely different points of view regarding change.

The *dynamics underlying norms* play a key part in this. The wide variety of experience involved, as well as the discussion and conflicts associated with it, should enrich collective learning about acceptable new norms and give rise to fresh coalitions more partial to openly innovative institutional policies. The leadership is also prompted to clarify its vision, to critically assess its effectiveness and to learn how to manage paradoxical strategies.

## 2. *Methods of formulation: priorities, balance*

2.1 The aim of policies affecting the entire institution is naturally horizontal, which is not so in the case of the different action strategies undertaken by those responsible for sectoral activity

These strategies require a common framework defining policy directions which are conducive to grouping some of the former together, or the development of synergies between them. In this respect, some central policies may concern groups of activities (*sectoral policies*), or certain general functions, such as information systems, the hosting of students, staff mobility, evaluation and the “Europeanization” of activities and exchanges (*operational policies*). The Third Part of the book will illustrate this problem area.

However, in applying the “subsidiarity” principle which governs university life, local strategies (including those of the faculties, schools, departments, research centres and specialized services) are normally implemented by the decentralized bodies. Within their different areas of responsibility, they manipulate the specific mechanisms for change. The institutional policies of the university are thus defined to guide these local strategies. They legitimize them and enable them to develop.

Any policy is expressed via priorities it sets itself (its *focus*), the *balance* to be maintained between them and the kinds of means to be deployed (or not). These means are not all physical, and may take the form of institutional norms or points of potential development.

The choice of means will be discussed no further, since the aim of the entire evaluation procedure is to detect the key strategic advantages of the university, its operational impairments and shortcomings, and new ways forward for the future, and thereby to define the strategic potential for development. By the end of the evaluation phase, the SSG has to have included in its institutional policies, the direction to be taken as regards priorities, balance, incentives and restrictions on means. It will have made choices.

## 2.2 *Focus*

Determining priorities is natural in any strategic management, including the priority to be given to measures (procedures, structures, relations, means, evaluations) whose main aim is to allow decentralized bodies greater initiative in determining their specific strategies. As a rule, however, central priorities are concerned with aims of long-term activities, structural modifications, policies regarding means, and policies for monitoring and quality of institutional relevance.

They can give priority to ways of going about things (or not): this might mean rejecting some forms of activity, the use of certain means, resources, or legal forms of operation and services – at least where there has been no prior consultation with central bodies in accordance with agreed procedures. The reference to a common framework is above all necessary when the institutional norms of the university are of an entrepreneurial kind as, for example, in the creation of partnerships or firms to exploit patents, or to conclude research/development contracts, develop human mobility or launch new local services. In such instances, some might prefer to speak of central restrictions imposed on local strategies – a question, perhaps, of vocabulary. In fact, any priority settled at a higher level of responsibility is a restriction. But the ideal of a democratic voluntarist university as discussed in the First Part of this book inclines us to use of the word “priority” in a more flexible sense.

Be that as it may, it would seem that local initiatives can have a strategic impact in the development of the institution viewed as a whole. They should naturally be taken into account in institutional policies which, as ever, must maintain the flexibility required for innovation.

## 2.3 *Balance*

The idea of balance is more complex, especially in that it often refers to qualitative processes expressed in terms of proportions.

This concept expresses the strategic sensitivity of the institution, its concern to explore new activities or new forms of operation and resources. “Balancing” amounts to a kind of *flexible institutional policy* well adapted to the complexity of strong strategic decisions, provided that the

practice of strategic management and its methods of leadership have proved credible; or, in other words, that its general intentions are taken seriously and translated into active strategies.

These specifications regarding balance are generally expressed in terms of the comparative evolution of various different situations. For example, “the development of lifelong education for adults should, in ten years, reflect a gradual trend towards continuing education activities at least as important as those associated with initial education”, or “private contractual financial resources should not exceed a third of public resources” (or vice versa); or “efforts to improve the quality of teaching as compared to efforts invested in research will have to be substantially stepped up in five years and give rise to special relations”, etc. Maintaining these balances presupposes careful monitoring of the comparative development of such points and decisions regarding changes in direction, in due time.

To sum up, the university expresses its general attitude regarding the limits to its development in so far as they affect different elements of the strategic domain. In relation, therefore, to some of these elements, or groups of them, it specifies the kind of balance it would like to preserve, in terms of the proportion of growth, or “production” of services, or of means, or in more general formulae which map out ongoing development so as to provide points of reference for subsequent deliberations or, yet again, in granting special means to certain initiatives. These balances will affect comparative rates of development, relative efforts to be invested in change and the different kinds of learning to be achieved within the institution.

Naturally, these balances should be taken into account in implementing policies for the promotion of quality, and expressed in operational terms so that change can be measured.

### 3. *Procedural and structural flexibility*

3.1 As already noted, uncertainty about the future leads to efforts to identify possible transformations in terms of flexibility or, in other words, the ability of the institution or its constituent bodies to adapt, innovate, seize new opportunities, even where unforeseen, and to “learn” new practices and appreciate their significance as development potential.

This flexibility may be secured by changing the internal organization (operational rules, norms) in order to alter, even if only temporarily, the allocation of responsibilities, roles, resources, and methods of evaluation and remuneration, with respect to the plans to be implemented, individuals to be associated with a project, its time-scale, and the resources earmarked for it.

Another kind of *organization, in the form of a matrix*, in which the parties concerned are positioned within a variety of different structures in accordance with their activities, facilitates communications and the exchange of experience – in short, co-ordination – while making the monitoring of activities more complex and uncertain. This type of organization is entirely appropriate to a university structure in which the agents involved intervene, as a rule, in different programmes (courses for initial and postgraduate qualifications; education of young people and further education for adults; standard activities and activities in networks and partnerships; classical education and training provision, or research and services within a firm linked to a university, for example).

When the university is substantially committed to *networks and partnerships*, it is vital that its regulations are conducive to the mobility of resources and individuals among associates, as a condition for the acquisition and transmission of fresh experience. Yet those taking part in co-operation schemes should still be ready to latch on to the specific experience of others, to comprehend and transpose it and, in any event, use it to criticize their own practice. Herein lies the importance of adequate regulations as regards staff services, the use of outside agents, the possibility of distributing activities between university staff and those of partners (in terms of studies, placements, research, services, communication and resources).

3.2 More generally speaking, it may be considered that any practice (structure, resources, operation or norms) which favours experimentation (pilot structure, circulation of its results and



evaluation of this action and its effects, exchange of experience) should be seen as a “plus” from the standpoint of flexibility. As a result of its exemplary nature and its capacity to mobilize initiative, good leadership is often the best guarantee that structures and operation will be made flexible so as to respond to new projects. The problem is to enable these experimental structures to exist long enough for a new experiment to be properly completed, in such a way that they can be effectively evaluated, alongside more conventional structures capable of benefiting from the pilot lessons. Everything depends on the specific circumstances.

Modern analysis of complexity attaches great importance to the flexibility of structures and communications in innovation processes. It is usual to speak of *pre-chaotic organization* in an environment with initiative, where there are few regulations and which is tolerant *vis-à-vis* ambiguity, open to uncertainty, inappropriate conduct, and experimentation, and rich in non-organized communications. Reminiscent of a research environment, “creative chaos” is no stranger to our universities – at least in their most creative activities.

For many years, the term *organized professional anarchy* has been used to describe university organization. Be that as it may, academic activities aimed at large numbers of people, particularly in education and training, are generally orthodox, standardized and regulated. The natural segmentation of universities, including their omnipresent decentralized norms with little hierarchy, as well as individualism invariably mixed with some conservatism, are hardly conducive, however, to totally unrestrained communication. At least medium-term programming is widespread, and budgetary procedures remain strict since they are linked to publicly-controlled State funding.

Several authors go even further, and consider that adaptation of structures is only *one process of change* among many. Maybe, but everything depends on the time needed for adjustment. By definition, a structure tends to inertia because it is customarily strengthened by regulations, convention and precedent, as well as consolidated opinions and interests. Furthermore, a well-established structure is based on networks of personalized relations rooted in mutual trust, which constitute privileged lines of communication, whether formal or otherwise. So a change in structures is generally a cumbersome complicated process requiring much energy on the part of the organization. A structure is rarely inclined to spontaneous adaptation, except when it has become so intolerably inflexible that it completely cuts off worthwhile opportunities for many of its members, including the most influential. In such cases, one may observe the creation of parallel *unofficial* working structures; or the non-respect of customary regulations; or yet again, the adoption of experimental formulae that are accepted because of their ‘pilot’ nature.

However, fully committed strategic management can put a change in structures well and truly onto the agenda, and even make it a priority issue. The University of Louvain-la-Neuve did this during its first strategic reform in the 1980s. Moreover all major public reforms have been structural reforms.

With strategic management which encourages norms for flexibility, it is possible to maintain existing structures whose in-depth transformation would be too long or difficult, while still altering – via exceptional procedures, or practices not open to question – the regulations or conventions governing their operation, their internal or external relations or the methods by which their resources are allocated (for example, from centrally managed funds, or associated foundations).

3.3 Finally, it should be pointed out that the potential for change at institutional level undoubtedly depends on its distinctly different forms of potential, but also on *interdependence and synergy* between them – relations which have to be fully clarified and strengthened by means of adequate policies. For example, good organization of libraries and the information resources system condition the effectiveness of teaching methods reliant on the initiative of students and the exercise of their autonomy; effort invested in training young researchers will make it possible to revitalize the skills potential, and so forth. In evaluating such different kinds of potential, it is instructive to highlight these interdependencies, and to demonstrate that the best way of preserving them is to exploit them more effectively.

#### 4. *Policies for quality*

4.1 All too often, fresh policies are formulated when important events occur, in an *ad hoc* irregular way. Change is conceived in relation to an isolated context. Examples include the nomination of a new rector, or a new central Board or Senate; the preparation of a multiannual action programme in conjunction with budgetary discussions with the governing authorities; the acquisition of new key buildings or facilities which require a general redistribution of activities; or a serious crisis in the area of recruitment and resources – indeed, any serious crisis in the work of the institution.

But strategic management implies *sustained action in time* which is spread across all activities. It calls for an organization capable of supporting effort and drawing on lessons to be learnt from experience and disseminating them. These policies for the *ongoing enhancement of quality* are the most appropriate framework for a formulation or general reformulation of policies, for the very reason that they include common evaluation procedures which are part of a scenario for change inspired by future-oriented initiatives.

It would seem therefore that the quality of an activity is nothing other than the way it compensates for the unsatisfactory aspects and *shortcomings* of its outcomes, with respect to its *aims*. One of the most serious obstacles to quality management is difficulty in formulating objectives that reflect clear *operational* goals in terms enabling identification of implementation activities, and in specifying its evaluation criteria. This applies not only to real “quality” activities but all other services. This is the meaning of policies for “total quality” spoken of, in particular, in the world of business. Yet the concept is rarely employed in universities, except perhaps in assessing their administrative routines.

A general policy for quality within an institution requires each body responsible for its different programmes to formulate its specific objectives, by stating exactly the nature of the development it is aiming at, regardless of whether this potential can be achieved immediately, or calls for the introduction of adequate strategies. A general policy also requires each such body to specify its *performance criteria*, explaining how it proposes to measure quality and to enumerate those criteria that will complement the customary indicators (including examination successes, promotions, publications and awards, public image). Meanwhile, for the university as a whole, considerations of this kind are the justification for its institutional policies.

Thus, by means of transparent practice over a long period, it introduces, in the light of experience, *quality norms* in all activities for which it is responsible. As a result, it sees that its evaluation activity is co-ordinated in a coherent recognized system, whose aims are clearly understood by all. It prevents the *succession* of different evaluation practices being perceived by those concerned as harassing or inquisitorial, in which case members of the university might become apathetic about evaluation and decline to co-operate fully with the aim, on the contrary, of avoiding it or compensating for its outcome. Such practices would only compromise the integration and integrity of the institution.

Nowadays, evaluation methods in most countries are subject to public regulations which to some extent enable universities to evaluate themselves. In general, even public evaluation activity provides for a *self-evaluation phase*, and monitoring of the use made of its results. The public evaluation body may thus influence the general policies of institutions and globally evaluate particular sectors, duties and practices of universities. This is the case in France.

In other countries, the State authorities which have delegated to university bodies the task of evaluating quality, make use of the results to reformulate their own public policies for higher education, or to re-examine the allocation of budgetary resources to institutions or some of their own bodies. Such is the case in Great Britain where evaluation and its financial consequences are widely publicized and on the Internet. In fact, in all countries, there is some form of established *link* between evaluation and differentiated resource allocation, simply as a result of

communicating the outcome of evaluation, even though theoretically the two processes are independent.

4.2 True to its voluntarist conception of the ultimate role of universities and convinced that autonomy is merited where it is fully exercised, the CRE (Association of European Universities) has since 1994 offered its members an institutional evaluation process spread over one year. At the request of those institutions that wish, the CRE sends out a team of three university heads, rectors or former rectors. On the basis of a self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of a given institution *per se*, they attempt to determine the way the quality of academic provision is ensured, and the activity of staff members monitored, as well as the incentives offered staff; and they also try to understand how activities are organized, with respect to what aims to respond to what development strategies. Their overall task is to assess the governance of the institution and to identify forces of renewal and obstacles to change, in order to evaluate the capacity of the university for transformation. In short, the CRE seeks to understand *how strategic management works in institutions*, and to make its member universities aware of their potential for growth in a society in which they are both active and proactive partners. The intention is to help universities assume full responsibility for their activities by identifying practical means for achieving their different academic and social commitments. This book has integrated, in a synthesis, lessons derived from this exercise.

## CONCLUSION GENERALE

As we have seen, in speaking of strategic management, one is positioned within a logic of *collective dynamic action*. In fact, the methods of strategic management, exercise of leadership, control of collective change, policies for quality and institutional evaluation and collective learning processes are inseparable elements, as they represent different facets of the same basic approach. This global vision is at the heart of strategic management.

There are different ways of bringing it to fruition, different styles – especially as regards leadership – which ensure that the agents for change are credible and create a climate of confidence and participation. We have simply illustrated a general kind of approach which constantly stresses the variety of aspects of change and their mutual interaction. It is hoped that the approach will help management staff at each university to revitalize their institutions in accordance with their leadership potential and the problems to be resolved.

By way of a return to biological wisdom and as the Rector of the University of Louvain recalled, change must be quick enough to be credible and slow enough to assimilate information and accumulate the energy and experience required for its acceleration.

# ANNEX 1: HEADINGS IN THE STRATEGIC FIELD: ILLUSTRATIONS

## NATURE AND ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

Universities have to interpret their objectives with regard to mass education (positioning of their courses in a system of continuous education; relations between initial training for young people and education for more experienced adults; the place of part-time or intermittent study, and of study options with respect to a standardized core; participation in in-company training programmes, etc.). For the foregoing, one has to consider the following:

### *Accessibility of courses*

conditions governing *entry* to studies and subsequent progress; methods of selection, guidance and individual support to students and others who attend courses; student grants and lifestyles – methods of student assessment and validation of knowledge acquired through experience (*skills and competencies*); new subject areas for development, updating of knowledge, which is recognized through the award of diplomas, in the course of professional life.

*N.B. – Opening up activities (programmes, methods, life at university) for students most of whom may soon become full-time or part-time wage-earners, or alternating work, education and training and even leisure-time activity, is a strategic challenge, a good solution which may contribute significantly to the integration of basic-level courses in a continuing education system.*

### *Conceptions and systems related to teaching practice*

- *criteria for the coherence of programmes.*
- *the focus of knowledge:* identification of the subject matter and operational skills that education is expected to cover; know-how, attitudes; relations between general education and specialized education and training, basic education and professional training, scientific and technical education and education in the arts and humanities; the scope of multidisciplinary courses.
- *general education of the mind:* analysis, synthesis, communication, interest in applying knowledge; cultural development, affinity with the arts; student involvement in social practice.
- *preparation for working life:* professional aptitudes and attitudes at work, preparation and support for entry into professional life; career guidance; training for work in small or medium-sized units; general continuous refinement and updating of skills for each specialized area; the multicultural dimension of work and social relations.
- *course evaluation methods:* co-ordination of courses and teaching activity, lessening the course workload to encourage autonomous work by students; methods of assessment and exams; internal/external audit of education activities and ways of monitoring its conclusions; student evaluation of course organization and the way this evaluation is used; the part played by training services in the career of teachers, teacher training and retraining/refinement of teaching practice; development of research focused on teaching practice.

## BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH ACTIVITY

### *Academic/scientific policy of universities*

- *liaison between education/training and research:* development of courses and staff recruitment; the impact of the information system on research activity and resources.
- *policy geared to excellence* (critical mass, quality, experimental structures) and the development policies of relatively weak sectors

- the positions occupied by “free” and contractual research, respectively; policies regarding “niches” of excellence, selective thematic research policies; central funding, funds for innovation; internal evaluation of quality; the importance attached to competitive performance.
- the position of research in the humanities, social sciences and arts; the importance attached to problems of the environment, health, and world development; and to the contribution of the university to the construction of a European area for education.
  - the form and extent of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research; incentives to become involved in them.
- postgraduate and doctoral training for research or education via research: graduate programmes, specific courses for graduates and postgraduates; doctoral schools, academic/scientific publications; involvement of students in investigative scientific activity and their participation in activities of the research bodies of the university.
- the importance attached to recruitment of teacher-researchers and to their career development; to attracting and supporting young researchers; recognition of research in career development; liaison between academic/scientific policies and career and recruitment policies.
- documentation and organization of the university information system for research purposes: gathering of information on performance in applied research, and its insertion into the data banks of the university; systematic information on access to the sources of research support bodies (European Union, different international foundations, national and regional bodies); the policy for circulating this information and the way it is used.
- organization of the quality evaluation of research, and the use made of its conclusions.
- the policy for mobility of staff members with a view to their academic enrichment and the renown of the university.

#### *Applied research policy*

- varying measures of differentiation between basic and applied research; involvement of users in the definition and monitoring of applied research; funding principles governing applied research and activity to exploit innovation.
- development activities: development contracts; general rules for concluding application contracts and finalizing modes of external funding; share of money from contracts earmarked for general university finances; rules governing publication.
- technology transfer policies: industrial and scientific parks, industrial incubators, creation of new companies and partnerships with existing ones; relations with banks and risk capital companies; university/industry foundations, university foundations/professional and social organizations; policies governing patents and licensing; market research; setting up of operating companies.

#### NATURE OF SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

in the form of responses to its expressed needs, and involvement of the university in activities of regional, urban and local development, transmission and popularization of knowledge for the public at large.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF CO-OPERATION RELATIONS

with other institutions or other organizations active in research, particularly *professional, regional, urban or local associations*; the development of *consortia* between these different parties in order to carry out projects.

- policies governing partnership and participation in networks: rules relating to participation and how it should be managed, with a view to preserving the specific features of university research; substantive reports, integration within the information system of the university; rules governing the mobility of resources and persons.

- problems linked to the *involvement of partners* from firms and professional and social bodies in educational responsibilities.
- relations with *secondary schooling* and technical training.
- co-operation relations with *interactive multimedia* organizations.

## POLICIES FOR EVALUATION

and for the ongoing promotion of quality, in all university activities, and exploitation of the information and conclusions of evaluation procedures (so-called “total quality” policies).

## MANAGEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- policy regarding the estate of the university: regulations for managing its financial estate; buildings and facilities (expansion, upkeep, security, caretaking); methods of allocating availability, ways in which facilities are used to satisfy university needs and provide community services; establishment of appropriate estate accountancy procedures.
- budgets and allocation of financial resources, centralization and decentralization of financial decisions, budgetary co-ordination committees, rules governing financial processes; budgets for the support of innovation, *liaison between the budgetary and strategic management* of universities, methods of resource reallocation.

## POLICIES FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

- general policy for staff development and management; policy related to demographic trends in the staff population; definition of *rights and obligations* of staff (career services and development, evaluation, chairs and tenure, termination of employment, residence, advisory activities, contracts, patents and remuneration for innovation, application of labour law regulations and public statutes); rights and obligations of students and others who attend courses; operation of an “*ombudsman*” system; professional and “service” *mobility*, mobility within networks and partnerships; teacher training and retraining; alternated career activity (teaching, leave for professional activity).
- *social policies* for students and staff: improvements in the working and social environment (grants, renovation and provision of facilities in professional premises, security regulations, accommodation, employment services, sports, premises and resources for student activity within the institution, facilities for organizations of former students).

## STRUCTURES AND COMMUNICATION

- principles of *structural organization* in universities: relations between policies and structures and between structures, operation and resources management; rules governing internal decentralization and co-ordination; principles regarding the entrepreneurial structures of universities.
- *university government*: collegial and professional; direct supervision by the rector; nature and tasks of the *rectorial team* and possibly the SSG; the strategic role, in management, of boards and central committees and of their non-university members, of administrative management, partners and stakeholders; principles for the designation of principal managers, by election or nomination (deans, departmental directors, directors of research, heads of administrative and central services); the role of university government in the development of evaluation and monitoring of its conclusions.
- *structural flexibility*: amendments to statutes, procedures for simplifying and rationalizing structures; possibility of creating interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary matrix-type structures,

partnerships, structures for experimenting with new activities; willingness to accept informal structures; general rules for the transformation of structures and the creation of new roles.

- organization and transformation of *information systems* within universities.
- internal and external *communication policies*, monitoring the public image of universities; policies regarding relations with the governing authorities.

## INTERNAL CULTURAL DYNAMICS

This is concerned with all strategic practices of the university, with a view to confirming or modifying certain institutional norms, such as:

- *new forms of leadership*; making managers and administrators more fully aware of processes of cultural dynamics;
- expanding the *participatory role of stakeholders* (managers, staff, students, members of networks and partnerships); scope for experimentation with new roles, incentives (making structures and regulations more flexible, resources, career paths, various honours, position in communications); more systematic implementation of quality improvement policies;
- *cultural activities* (arts, sports, debates, meetings, information material) for members of the university and in some cases the public; changes in programmes in order to increase cultural interaction between science and technology, the humanities or social sciences, and the arts.
- *institutional research* practices regarding the internal working of the university, and participation of researchers in evaluation procedures.

## RELATIONS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA SYSTEMS

Academics are frequently requested to contribute in their capacity as experts to media activity. But universities may also consider that they themselves can become involved in the strategic development of institutional relations with these media.

Bearing in mind the importance of the media, particularly in the form of interactive multimedia, in the cultural and educational development of society, there may be a case for more systematic co-operation with them on the part of our institutions, in ways to be determined. Institutional policies of this kind would no doubt enable them to make the most of these new technical possibilities to improve the quality of their services and to be more clearly conscious of the competitive strategies of these organizations, especially given the prospect of our societies developing new relations between work, training and leisure-time activity.

From the cultural and educational standpoint, universities could also in this way help to enrich the services multimedia organizations offer the public or, at least, exert some influence on their activities, as an integral part of university responsibilities. For example, they might promote more widespread critical reasoning and recourse to scientific method and procedures, greater cultural awareness, the practice of intellectual synthesis, wider debate on values and meaning, and transmission of "collective memory". The media are in fact subject to their own limitations due to public demand, cultural restrictions (reason and emotion), temporal restrictions and commercial and financial constraints which, together, result in communications that are more targeted and commercially segmented, as well as more fragmented and technical, and increasingly centred on the question of how leisure-time is to be spent. Sound regular co-operation between universities and media organizations, might make their respective strategies more interdependent to the general cultural benefit of society. At least, one is entitled to hope so.

However, as in any *strategic alliance*, it is essential that each partner has an identity and clearly grasped institutional policies – both internally and externally. Because of the foreseeable concentration of means available to the media industry and the power of its action and influence on social culture and norms, the entire university system could respond by outwardly presenting a firm collective identity, by paying attention of the public image of its cultural commitments and

by giving consideration to new forms of partnership, experimenting with them in a reasoned way.

#### INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION AND EUROPEANIZATION

- systematic development and monitoring of the international dimension in the activities and operational methods of institutions: research and international training programmes, foreign languages, receptivity of universities to foreign cultures; human mobility, partnerships (curricula, diplomas, written information material); evaluation criteria, allocation of resources to international activity; measures to ensure good interaction between various policies and forms of experience with a view to integrating them within general university policy development.
- creation of *European study centres* within universities, responsible in particular for assessing progress in the Europeanization of their activities and facilitating their integration in institutional development strategies. Such centres might also serve as centres for observation and analysis of the construction of Europe, thus indirectly contributing to the emergence of a *European citizenship* (research and documentation, European linkages, organization of on-campus conferences and debates enabling the greatest possible number of students to follow the progress of European unification and its problems, the solutions applied in different countries to problems of common interest or the development of the role of the Union in the world).

#### UNIVERSITY LIFESTYLES

social policies regarding students and staff; quality of living conditions; various social services; sports and cultural services.



## ANNEX 2: THE MOST CUSTOMARY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS

The list of different kinds of potential may be organized in accordance with classical headings: education and training, research and service activities; organization and structures; relations and communications; resources (means and norms). However, it is intended here to express all desired and desirable activities in terms of resources.

### HUMAN RESOURCES CAPACITY

Age pyramid of staff and prospects of demographic renewal; ability to appreciate new skills needs so as to apply new strategies; prospects for fresh recruitment by discipline, number and level; international and intra-European openness in terms of human mobility.

#### *Within education and training activity*

- general aptitudes and motivation of students and others who attend courses; human and social study conditions.
- scientific, academic and teaching aptitudes of teaching staff; teaching methods; methods for teacher retraining or updating of skills; ways of evaluating the organization of teaching (coherence and quality); experience in adult education; ability to train in areas considered strategically suitable for the future.

#### *Within basic and applied research*

- scientific and academic aptitudes; possibility of conducting research; capacity for technological application and transfer; ability to involve those who make use of research, in its general policy and evaluation; possibility of involvement in quality partnerships and networks; possibility of expanding multidisciplinary activity.
- methods of quality evaluation of research, and the possibility of drawing conclusions from it for the distribution of responsibilities and resources; measures intended for young researchers.

### PHYSICAL RESOURCES AND AREA AVAILABLE

possibility of obtaining new premises, or reallocating premises already available.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

possibility of reallocating resources as part of a rationalization of budgetary activities and procedures; possibility of increasing general public resources or those secured via public contract with the State or local authorities; possible increases in private funding (enrolment fees, service contracts, sale of services, donations and legacies, loans); possibility of channelling resources into innovation.

### RESOURCES INHERENT IN RELATIONS

prospects for better relations with the governing authorities allowing for more intricate negotiations on aims and resources; international and intra-European initiatives; prospects for new partnership contracts and co-operation relations with various bodies – whether competitors or otherwise; development of internal relations (relations with different categories of staff, unions and student representation; development of the university public image and relations with bodies representing public opinion).

## INFORMATION-BASED RESOURCES

- general auditing of the information system as regards facilities, the organization of information resources and the culture governing their use by members of the university.
- development and regular updating of information potential, increased access to databases, monitoring of their integration into overall policies for higher education, at both national and European level.
- definition of development responsibilities in the decentralized bodies of universities and allocation of central resources for the development of their information systems, including the retraining of staff.
- policies concerning facilities for computer-related activity and telecommunications; organization of equipment in internal and external high performance networks; cross-sectoral educational technology transfer in universities.
- ease and extent of multimedia access for teaching and research (lectures, information resources, databases, software); possibility for the development of computer-assisted activity.
- policies for training and encouraging students and staff to use multimedia and produce a variety of teaching aids and services in this form for the local community; policies for the reorganization of study and research with respect to these new media.
- possible co-operation and partnerships with interactive multimedia organizations.
- distribution via exchange, or on a commercial basis (franchising or joint ventures) of media services developed by universities.

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

as vectors of strategic management.

This potential concerns:

- the methods of government and leadership;
- relations between management and administrative tasks;
- structural flexibility.

