

## Editorial

This is the first issue of our second academic year and I hope you will continue to enjoy the papers we publish. I have confidence that we can continue to attract high quality submissions which contribute to our aim of encouraging good practice in management education. As we enter 2002, a number of Higher Education policy topics are being clarified. The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has recently set out the resources and priorities for higher education for 2002-03 and 2003-04.

Cliff Alan, LTSN Programme Director, has draw our attention to three important areas of concern for academics generally and our subject area in particular: increased direction and prescription; future policies on teaching funding; and quality enhancement. He notes that the HE policy domain will be dominated by increased direction and prescription which will increasingly change our teaching experiences. You may find it interesting to read the recent Secretary of State's letter to HEFCE (at HEFCE's website <http://www.hefce.ac.uk>) setting out the Government's priorities for the next year. It is very prescriptive and focuses on targets, with widening participation and employability issues being central. Similar guidance will be directed at the other funding councils. It is anticipated that the funding councils will increasingly expect the LTSN to demonstrate how we are contributing to these key policy priorities and BEST would welcome your views on these issues. There is an opportunity for BEST to collate your views as subject academics and to feed them back to their influencers and decision makers. Comments should be sent to: [best@uea.ac.uk](mailto:best@uea.ac.uk)

Similarly, HEFCE's recent report on Future Demand and Supply in HE is an important document which will shape future policies on teaching funding. This is out for consultation and so again, a subject-based response to some of the issues in the report would be welcome, (see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news>)

Quality enhancement is still a major issue for most of us with UUK Council and the funding bodies presently having discussions on quality enhancement policy. As the new arrangements for Quality Assurance emerge LTSN is trying to raise the level of discussion on QE and inform policy development. LTSN Subject Centres can play a role in maintaining a subject focus through subject based overview reports and possibly by helping create networks of institutional reviewers and external examiners. Again, we would welcome your views on this and LTSN will continue to engage with the funding bodies, UUK/SCOP and QAA on these matters.

Most of us are also involved with the Transparency Review, which looks at the amount of time spent on teaching, administration and research. As it gathers data, it is possible that the degree of cross subsidy between funding allocated for teaching and the amount of time spent on research will become clearer. One way to make sure there is a link between research and

teaching is to investigate the learning and teaching process, using recognised research methods. This moves us away from anecdotal evidence and provides a basis for justifying our activities. It may, or may not, also prove that good research supports and improves the learning experience. All of these issues are becoming of increasing interest to the government and institutions.

The results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2001 will be published on Friday 14 December, and by the time this journal is published you will know your scores. Everyone I talk to seems to think that their School or Department has improved their research skills and output since last time and are looking for improved results. It does not take much to realise that if a normative distribution is followed then many people will be very disappointed by the results. The results will be published on the RAE web-site, [www.rae.ac.uk](http://www.rae.ac.uk) and most of us will already have studied the ratings and sympathised with or congratulated our colleagues in other business schools.

Many of these topics might form the basis for an article highlighting the subject-based issues. Despite the importance of business management to most universities, other faculties, with different priorities, often tend to dominate internal funding allocation and institutional responses. Surely we should be using our management skills and theories to influence the various stakeholders in Higher Education, rather than being unwilling participants in change decided by others? If any Deans or Heads of Departments have an argument or issue they would like discussed then the journal would be happy to help stimulate the debate.

One of the ways to explore the relationship between teaching and learning, the different elements of quality, and the use of research in innovative education is at the BEST 2002 conference to be held in Edinburgh in April 2002. We have already received some interesting proposals for presentations and are anticipating that acceptances will be sent out early in January. Places at the conference are still available as we go to press but do get your booking form in quickly as this very popular venue is filling up fast. Full details of the conference will be found on our web site: [www.business.ltsn.ac.uk](http://www.business.ltsn.ac.uk)

This issue of the Journal again provides some provocative and informative papers. The first paper by John Simmons and Paul Iles examines performance appraisal systems for academic staff and their implications for management education in particular. After a definition of 'intellectual capital', they look at the operation and effectiveness of such systems and their relationship to stakeholders. They hypothesise that the extent of acceptability and effectiveness of performance appraisal is directly related to the perceptions of the appraised as to how far the criteria are under their control. Simmons and Iles examine both the design and operation of performance appraisal systems for academic staff and the responsibilities faced by managers of educational institutions who have to initiate and monitor them.

The second paper discusses why and how undergraduates select courses in a modular system. Dr. Carole Howorth uses empirical methods to study three specific clusters of students and the reasons behind their selections. She identifies three main drivers behind choice and examines the results of these drivers, some of which lead to deep learning and some which do not. She recommends that lecturers should bear in mind that students have differing reasons for selecting one module rather than another. They should consider ways of increasing the level of deep learning by exploring alternative methods of assessment and increased student involvement.

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Karen Hilliger and Sue Roberts approach the topical question of key skills. They explore information literacy as a skill and how it can/should be embedded in undergraduate programmes. They argue that it should be included within the undergraduate curriculum, especially within a marketing curriculum, given the importance of information management to marketing professionals. Their paper looks at a particular working model and assesses its results.

Our final paper is from Roger Bennett who discusses the attitudes of lecturers towards the new teaching methods in both information technology and group-work. The assessment uses discriminant functions to identify and categorise the significant variables that relate to users and non-users. His paper also investigates perceptions of barriers to and motivators of lecturers' adoption of new teaching methods, and the information support they utilised.

I hope you enjoy the diversity of the papers both in this issue and over the year and that they have prompted you to reflect on your own teaching and learning experiences. I look forward to meeting many of you at Edinburgh.

Professor Keith Fletcher  
Editorial Director  
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