

# Autonomy – fit for purpose?

# The Capacity building agenda

- \* *Support the modernisation, accessibility and internationalisation of higher education in the eligible Partner Countries;*
- \* *Support eligible Partner Countries to address the challenges facing their higher education institutions and systems, including those of quality, relevance, equity of access, **planning**, delivery, **management**, **governance**;*
- \* *Promote voluntary convergence with EU developments in higher education;*
- \* *Enhance **management**, **governance** and **innovation** capacities, as well as the **internationalisation** of HEIs;*
- \* *Increase the capacity of national authorities to **modernise** their higher education systems, by supporting the definition, implementation and monitoring of reform policies*

# Context

- \* Mass participation – Higher Education a “public good”
- \* Political, economic, social imperatives – competition **and** collaboration
- \* Pace of change – scientific, technological, social, economic, political
- \* Need for globally competent, effective, aware graduates
- \* Internationalisation – global market, MOOCs, transnational education, partnerships
- \* European Policy and funding

# The Choral response?

Diversity of objectives and drivers has produced a chorus from –

- \* the European Commission,
- \* the Bologna Process,
- \* Governments,
- \* Universities



# “Autonomy”

# Autonomy – the Government perspective?

- \* To deliver their agenda
  - Value for money – accountability
  - More graduates - improved graduate employability
  - Social inclusion
  - Competitive, entrepreneurial, international institutions
  - ‘Impact’ research
  - Quality, efficiency, effectiveness

# Autonomy – the University perspective?

\* To be fully self-governing and responsible for:

- Finance
- Curriculum
- Admissions
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Human Resources
- Research
- External Relations – including the business community
- Internationalisation – including partnerships
- Collaboration **and** competition

# Autonomy: Government – Universities?

- \* Major implications for – Government – University – Stakeholder relations *and* for **governance**, **management**, **leadership**
- \* Objectives differ – converge – conflict
- \* As long as Universities receive substantial public funding they will be subject to external governance



# External Governance?

## Government (Ministry)

- \* Sets wider economic, social, political agenda
- \* Establishes sector policy, objectives, outcomes, performance indicators
- \* Allocates funding
- \* Establishes parameters for autonomy

# Autonomy and external Governance?

- \* Defining – respecting boundaries - adjusting to new relationships requires:
  - Effective **strategy** - medium - long-term
  - **Professional**, ‘sophisticated’ staff
  - **Abandoning** prescriptive regulations
  - Allowing/encouraging **funding diversity**
  - **Not prescribing** internal structures
  - **Not intervening** in senior appointments
  - Political leaders who resist the temptation to intervene!

# Autonomy and internal Governance?

- \* “The framework in which an institution pursues its goals, objectives, policies, in a coherent and coordinated manner;
- \* Provides legitimacy for executive decision making;
- \* Concerned with decision-making structures and their terms of reference;
- \* Exercise of autonomy with responsibility, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency”.

## Governing body

“**Unambiguously** and **collectively** responsible for oversight of **all** aspects of University life and work”.

*This includes: -*

- \* University Mission – Policy – **Strategy** – aligned with Government strategy
- \* Appointment of senior officers
- \* **Finance**
- \* Curriculum – admissions – quality assurance and enhancement
- \* **Human resources** – research – estate management – audit – legal compliance
- \* Partnerships – national – international

- \* **Ensuring** that senior managers implement policy and manage the institution effectively and efficiently
- \* **Critical review** of management information
- \* Willingness and ability to **challenge** the executive appropriately and effectively

# Governance, Management, Leadership

- \* Good governance – fundamental for the autonomous institution
- \* Vital to distinguish between
  - **governance** – **management** – **leadership**
- \* Tendency to confuse and interchange
  - **management**, **leadership**, **governance** and
  - to focus on **management** and **leadership**
- \* Governance – no single model, complex, evolving

# Governance models?

- \* **Democratic?** – elected, representative, collegial
- \* **Corporate?** – business/enterprise models – external members
- \* **Unitary** – Senate – often large, representative, collegial – but may be – conservative, introspective, risk averse, not performance oriented
  - \* strong sectoral (Faculty / Departmental) interests
  - \* strong constituency allegiances – academic, non-academic, student
  - \* not necessarily conducive to good governance
- \* **Dual** – a governing body (Council) with overarching responsibility
  - + Senate responsible for academic matters

# Management

- \* Operates within policy framework and agreed processes and procedures
- \* Concerned with:
  - effective, efficient **implementation** of policy
  - **quality** of services for internal and external stakeholders
  - collecting, analysing, presenting **integrated management information** / data on all aspects of University activity



# The Rector – pivotal leadership role

- \* Traditional – Rector formally responsible to and chair of Senate - unlikely to be challenged
- \* Appointment process often ambiguous
- \* In an autonomous institution with good governance structures the **role of the Rector changes**
- \* Need for **clear division of responsibility** between
  - the running of the Governing Board and
  - executive responsibility for running the University

- \* The roles of Chairman of the Governing Board and Rector (Chief Executive) should **not** be exercised by the same individual
- \* The Rector - **interface** between the Governing Body and the University – **accountable, advising, implementing policy, managing**
- \* **Leadership** critical
- \* Appointment process also critical

# Understanding Autonomy

\* EUA scorecard – four dimensions:

- Organisational autonomy
- Financial autonomy
- Human Resource autonomy
- Academic autonomy

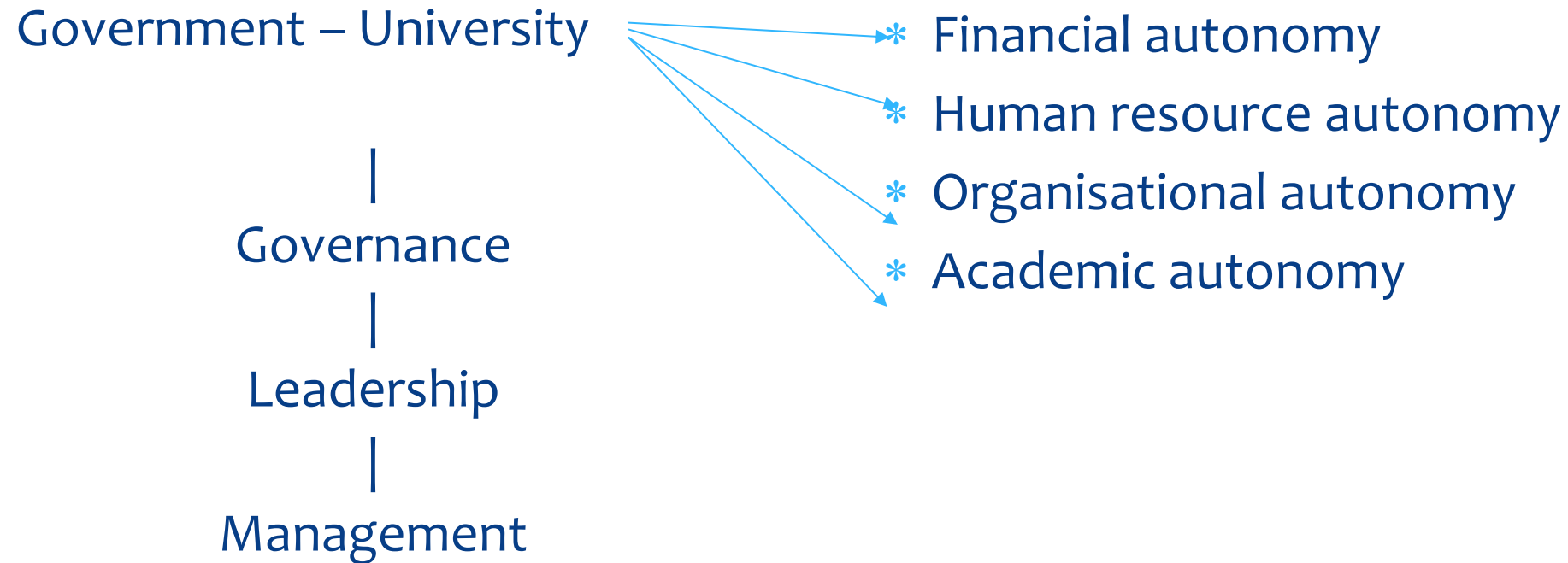
# Autonomy interfaces

- \* EUA scorecard provides helpful insights but does it convey the complexity – challenges – and need for integration of the autonomy interfaces?:
- \* Government – University
- \* University management – University staff
- \* University staff – Students
- \* University – Business
- \* University – International

# Challenges of Autonomy – and capacity building?

- \* Government or Institutions?
- \* Structures or People?
- \* Change or Conservatism?

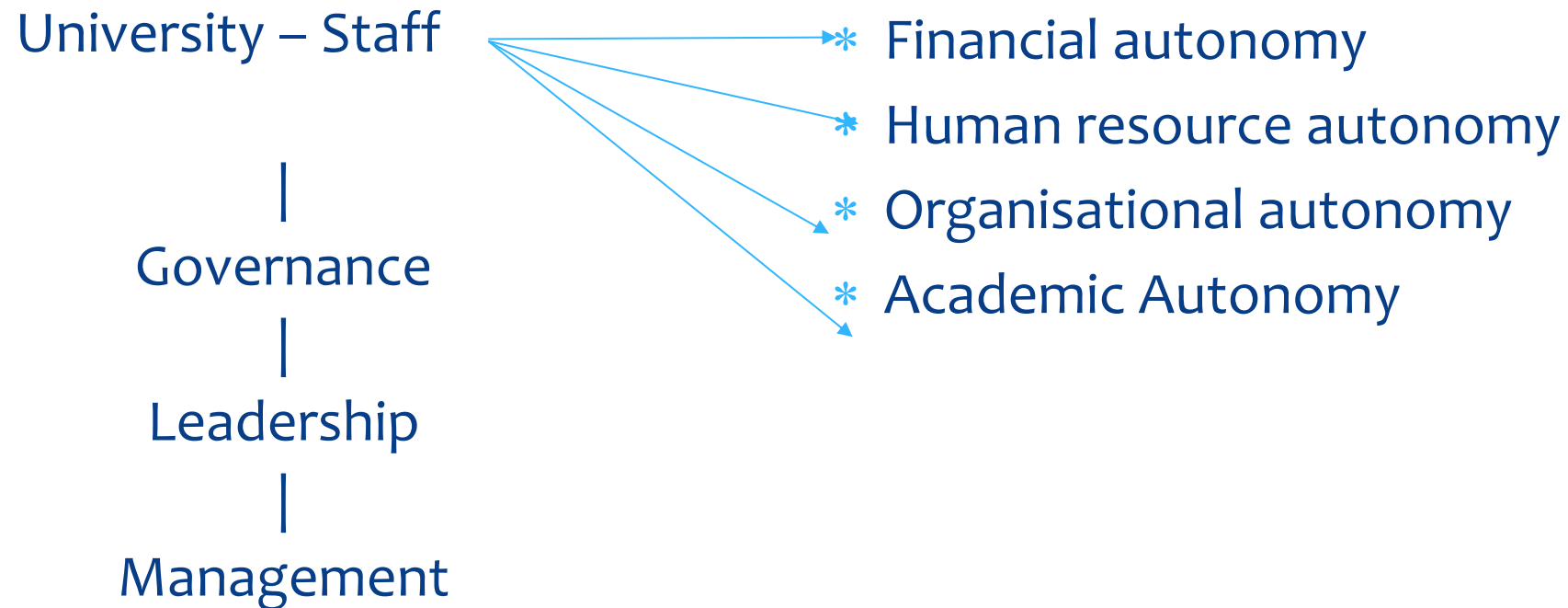
# The autonomy interface mapping challenge



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# The autonomy interface mapping challenge



# Challenges of Financial autonomy

- \* **Dependence** on public funding – Ministry restrictions
- \* Financial **competence / professionalism** of
  - \* Governing body
  - \* Leadership
  - \* Management
- \* Ability to generate **surplus/“free”** funds - attitudes to fees
- \* Capital - Property **investment and management expertise**
- \* Effective ‘results driven’ internal **resource allocation**
- \* External **competition**
- \* Internal **competition**
- \* **Academic suspicion** of the commercial dimension

# Challenges of organisational autonomy

## External governance relations

- \* Multiple Ministries
- \* Oscillations in policy and strategy
- \* Unwillingness to “Let go”
- \* **Regulating** rather than **facilitating**
  - Structures
  - Membership
  - Senior appointments

# Challenges of organisational autonomy

## \* Governing body

- **engagement?**
- **composition** – external / internal / ex officio members?
- **size** – maximum **20**?
- **appointment** by– election – application - nomination?
- **expertise** in:
  - human resource management?
  - finance?
  - organisation?
  - higher education?
  - governance?
- **code of practice** – written procedures
- **training** and **development**

# Challenges of organisational autonomy – Governing body

- strategy and planning?
- holding the executive to account?
- performance review of senior management?  
and – the governing body?

## Review and reform of University structures

- is the Faculty / the Department the appropriate structure for modernisation?

# Challenges of organisational autonomy

**Leaders** – Rectors – Deans – Administrative heads

- \* Quality? – experience? – training?
- \* Entrepreneurial?
- \* Providing direction? – Promoting change?

***or***

- \* Seeking consensus? – Protecting status quo?
- \* Effective understanding of:
  - \* Human resource management
  - \* Organisational structures – integrated management – management information/data
  - \* Finance
  - \* Academic and research development

# Challenges of human resource autonomy

- \* Professional
- \* Addressing **all** staff - academic- research- administrative- technical- support
- \* Commitment to – quality enhancement – appraisal – effective recruitment and retention
- \* Pervasive staff development and training
- \* Dealing with poor performance
- \* Developing fair rewards structure
- \* Engaging with students
- \* Understanding the academic and research mission



# Challenges of academic autonomy

- \* External constraints
- \* Slow response to **change**
  - social, technological, scientific, economic
  - and to **demand**
    - student – employer – government - public
- \* Student centred learning - curriculum inflexibility
- \* Quality assurance and enhancement
- \* Inter-institution collaboration and competition
- \* including MOOCs, OER
- \* Internationalisation – mobility – curriculum – partnerships

## Post script

- \* HEFCE's January 2013 grant letter from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills highlighted the **lack of diversity** among institutional governing bodies, and the relatively low proportions of women, people from a black or minority ethnic group and disabled people in senior management positions in the higher education sector. It asked HEFCE to continue working with the sector and Equality Challenge Unit to address these longstanding issues.
- \* Building on this past work, in September 2013 HEFCE brought together the agencies representing the sector's leadership and governance, for a summit on **diversity** in higher education **leadership and governance**.

**Does this apply to us?????**

- \* <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2014/news95708.html>



Thank you