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ABSTRACT

This book examines concepts of institutional mission in the context of British further and higher education (F/HE), especially in incorporated further education and "mixed economy" F/HE establishments previously under local education authority control. It urges adoption of participative methods of mission establishment, procedures for operationalization, and autonomy for significant groupings within the institution, and establishes a rationale for the adoption of strategic perspective. Part 1 analyzes the mission concept. Chapter 1 considers the concept of institutional mission; chapter 2, why the concept of mission has become important to the F/HE sector; chapter 3, the process of establishing a mission statement; and chapter 4, claims for mission. Part 2 reviews several methods of mission development. Chapter 5 examines mission establishment by interest groups and the impact of the process on college staff; chapter 6 examines stakeholder views of the nature of mission; and chapter 7 presents a workshop method of mission development that maximizes staff involvement. Part 3 focuses on strategic approaches to management of F/HE. Chapter 8 describes a method of operationalizing mission in Australia through strategic planning. Chapter 9 summarizes the discussion on mission and proposes a strategic management model for managers in F/HE. (Contains approximately 100 references.) (DB)

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Graham Peeke

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Contents

Introduction

The overall purpose of this book is to examine the concept of mission and its applicability to the British further and higher education (F/HE) scene. Specifically, this means the incorporated further education and 'mixed-economy' further and higher education establishments previously under local education authority (LEA) control. The subject matter of this book is also highly relevant to sixth-form colleges and the new universities.

Mission establishment, which many initially perceived as part of an academic process, has become associated with the managerial ethos that is pervading all sectors of British education. What can be construed as a process which encourages academic peers to discuss their fundamental beliefs and values, to share their perceptions of the key purposes of their institutions, and through discussion and debate come to some consensus about these purposes which guide the management of the institution, is rarely perceived this way by teachers today. For many, mission establishment has been revealed as part of the managerial approach that has swept further and higher education, and which has the effect of: reducing the influence of teachers on the management of their institutions; reorientating F/HE from a producer-led to a consumer-led ethos; and narrowing the difference between educational and business organizations. In this sense, the mission concept can be seen as part of a wider policy initiative which seeks to alter the whole ethos of F/HE.

Given this context, it is important to look critically at the mission concept and see what part it may play in the future management of the sector. The importance of the concept has grown throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. What started as encouragement to institutions to produce mission statements, has grown into the adoption of strategic management for the whole sector of post-school education. With the power of funding imperatives backing up the strategic perspective, the managerial approach seems firmly established as part of the new culture of F/HE. Mission establishment is at the core of the strategic process, and while mission and strategy remain fundamental to the management of F/HE, it is crucial to examine how the processes can best benefit those who work and study in the sector.

Four key aims can be identified in this book. First, to undermine the

extant concept of mission by showing that the claims made on behalf of the process need considerable qualification before they can be accepted. Additionally, that the context of mission establishment is important in examining the development and implementation of mission. Also, to draw attention to the existence of a plurality of missions in educational organizations that has important consequences for the notion of an institutional mission. Second, to suggest how to make the concept more viable through the adoption of a participative method of mission establishment, procedures for operationalization, and the use of broad dimensions of mission agreed with the core of the organization, but which allow autonomy for significant groupings throughout a college. Third, to produce a rationale for the adoption of a strategic perspective within the sector. Fourth, to focus attention on some educational issues at a time when managerial issues have tended to dominate.

This introduction provides a brief context for the chapters that follow. Part 1 of the book consists of four chapters which analyse the context in which the concept of mission has arisen, and evaluates the claims made on behalf of the procedure. In Chapter 1, 'Mission: Definition and Claims', two fundamental questions are addressed: What is institutional mission and what claims are made on its behalf? Chapter 2, entitled 'Mission and Change', considers why the concept of mission has become relevant to discussions about the contemporary F/HE sector, and what the features of the mission concept are. Chapter 3, 'Mission in Practice', seeks to answer three main questions: How can institutional mission be established? What are the characteristics of an effective mission statement? And which aspects of the mission procedure are most effective in promoting change in colleges? Chapter 4 evaluates the claims for mission and is the first of three chapters set in the fieldwork base of a newly merged institute of art and design.

Part 2 of the book concentrates on 'Methods of Mission Establishment', examining the application of various methods in the institute of art and design and in a large 'mixed-economy' college. Chapter 5 examines the method of mission establishment by interest groups and the impact of the process upon college staff. Chapter 6 is primarily concerned with a survey of stakeholder views of the purpose of the institute. The results suggest the existence of dimensions which underlie mission statements, and which help to 'glue' together the individual missions of participants. The survey reveals differential support for some key aspects of institute provision, and is suggestive of a gap between the developing consumer-led approach of management and the vestigial producer-led ethos of the staff. Chapter 7, which examines a workshop method, demonstrates how the involvement of college staff can be maximized and how a workshop method can be used to develop mission and extended to assist in its operationalization.

Part 3 is entitled 'Towards a Strategic Perspective' and focuses on the clearly emerging need for a strategic approach to the contemporary management of further and higher education. Chapter 8 describes a method of operationalizing mission in Australia, through a strategic planning approach,

and Chapter 9 summarizes the discussion on mission and explores its implications for managers in F/HE, and for further research. A strategic management model is proposed, linked with devolved management structures.

'Mixed-economy' further and higher education colleges are generally a neglected area in the literature on education management. The case studies discussed in this book were chosen in order to focus on such institutions, which are outside the mainstream of higher education provision. A major reason for this interest is the breadth of mission such colleges pursue. However, the issues arising out of the research described here are relevant to a wider readership with interests in further education and sixth-form colleges and traditional higher education provision. All institutions are now corporate institutions, seeking to clarify and project their missions to prospective students. All institutions are subject to the decisions of the funding agencies who are urging providers to adopt a strategic approach, to facilitate student access and to ensure value for money from public funding.

Part 1

Context and Claims

1

Mission: Definition and Claims

The purpose of this initial chapter is two-fold. First, to examine what mission is, and second, what claims are made on its behalf.

Definition of mission

There are several interpretations of the term 'mission' in the management and education literature. It is difficult to establish a definitive definition partly because the term has been used differently, and partly because it has been associated with different spheres of activity such as strategic management, leadership and education management. In the simplest definitions, institutional mission involves the establishment of an 'enduring statement of purpose that distinguishes one business from other similar firms' (Pearce 1982). Establishing institutional mission is usually seen as a process, a key part of which is the development of a mission statement. Such a statement may be defined as:

> . . . a charter that defines the basic business or businesses in which the enterprise will engage, the types of products it will make or the services it will provide, the markets it will serve, and perhaps how the company will conduct its affairs (Brown 1984).

This definition introduces the market as an important element in mission establishment, a theme which will be reiterated frequently throughout this book. The concern with the market can be traced back to Drucker (1973), for as David (1986) remarks, 'current thought on mission statements is largely based on guidelines set forth in the mid 70's by Peter Drucker'. Drucker's (1973) definition of the mission of business is firmly customer-orientated:

> To satisfy the customer is the mission and purpose of every business. The question 'What is our business?' can, therefore, be answered only by looking at the business from the outside, from the point of view of customer and market.

The definitions above all originate in the corporate context, but definitions of mission in the educational world appear very similar. Caruthers and Lott (1981), writing about American higher education, state that a mission statement 'should tell what an institution is and what it is not', and Davies (1985) writing about British universities notes that 'mission is the most fundamental and stable account of the type of institution it is, or should be'. These definitions suggest that the concept of mission differs very little from that used in business. It will be argued in this chapter that the concept of mission establishment as promoted in British further and higher education is similarly business-orientated, in that it reflects a major concern for the customer and the market.

The impact of the mission concept in British post-compulsory education has lagged behind that of the USA. Pratt and Silverman (1988) observe that most of the case study educational institutions discussed in their research, did not have mission statements and those that did 'did not discuss relative priorities' and 'did not agree them throughout the institution'. By the 1990s, however, the use of mission statements appears much more widespread. For example, by 1991, Earwaker was able to comment on the mission statements produced by all the British polytechnics.

The problem with definitions such as those noted above is that they fail to express adequately the type of activity that can occur in the name of mission establishment. In some instances, the need for mission statements to help address the issue of priorities, to assist management in strategic planning and decision making, and play a part in measuring the achievement of purposes, has meant that the act of establishing and implementing institutional mission has come to signify major organizational change. This may involve deciding what activities the organization should be involved in, seeking consensus on these activities, deciding what indicators should be used to assess progress towards carrying out these activities effectively and efficiently, and managing the changes necessitated by such procedures.

This detailed list of activities probably fails to describe that which occurs in the name of mission in most British post-compulsory educational institutions. In such establishments, the development of a mission statement may be a cursory activity, one that does not involve the majority of the members of the organization and which has very limited impact upon the management of the college. As Pratt and Silverman (1988) remark:

> In fact, the literature suggests that there are few examples of the kind of formal 'mission statement' discussing long term goals and objectives in British Universities and our findings confirm that this is also true for public sector institutions. What we did find was that many colleges and polytechnics did have some sense of institutional priorities which guided decision making and the choice of policies, but this was rarely in the form of a formal document discussed and approved by the institution as a whole.

This view of mission statements as not influencing the strategic management of an institution is not limited to educational organizations, for as Goold and Campbell (1989) observe, 'the popular demand for missions and policy statements does not prove their worth', because they are so bland as to be applicable to almost any organization and because 'they are not evidenced in actions of management' (Bowman 1990). The link between mission statements and strategic management is a key one, because a number of writers on strategic management (e.g. David 1986) consider that a mission statement is the first step in the strategic management process.

Strategic management is distinguished from operational management, which is concerned with managing a part of the organization within the context of an overall strategy. According to Johnson and Scholes (1989):

> Strategic management is concerned with deciding on strategy, and planning how that strategy is to be put into effect. It can be thought of as having three main elements within it . . . There is strategic analysis in which the strategist seeks to understand the strategic position of the organisation. There is strategic choice which is to do with the formation of possible choices of action, their evaluation and the choice between them. Finally there is strategy implementation which is concerned with planning how the choice of strategy can be put into effect.

The clarification of mission is an important part of strategic analysis, and where strategic management is practised effectively within an organization, it can be expected that the mission will become influential in guiding organizational action through the process of strategy implementation. It is likely, however, that strategic management is not yet widely practised within British further education at least, and that the mission statements of most colleges have failed to impact strongly on organizational processes.

The claims for mission

Despite these pessimistic observations, a number of positive claims have been made on behalf of the mission process in the literature. These are that the process aids the establishment of a clear sense of purpose, that it assists communication and decision making, that it facilitates marketing and aids evaluation activity, and that it helps in responding to contraction. These claims are explored in more detail below.

First, establishing a mission should encourage the development of a clear sense of purpose. This is because mission establishment necessitates identifying the fundamental *raison d'être* of an organization, and also specifying its likely future intentions. For an organization to have a clear sense of purpose is to clarify the very nature of its existence. All decisions, plans and acts that are carried out can then be consistent with the organization's mission. A sense of purpose can provide a firm direction and facilitate

self-determination. The latter was advanced by the management of one former polytechnic as a key reason for the generation of a mission statement: 'It was now felt, however, that a public declaration of what the polytechnic stood for and what it wished to become was vital in determining its future: in deciding for itself rather than let others decide for it' (FEU 1988).

Allen (1988), in his study of university goals, supports this view by considering that perhaps the best justification for drawing up a mission statement, is that it allows an institution to direct its affairs in line with the new age, rather than being shaped by the forces of blind fate.

A second claim made on behalf of the process is that it facilitates decision making in the organization. Caruthers and Lott (1981) suggest an important role for institutional mission in aiding effective decisions: 'Experiences at our case study colleges have demonstrated that a well conceived review process, a reasonably explicit mission statement and ongoing systematic planning greatly strengthen campus decision making processes'. They argue that unless choices are evaluated against the mission statement, decisions can frequently lead to academic drift and the erosion of a sense of unifying purpose.

A third claim is that the mission process acts in facilitating communication. Mission statements can aid communication with several important constituent groups of the organization. These groups include the organization's own staff, for as Cochran and David (1986) observe: 'A communication breakdown often exists between strategy formulators and strategy implementers, a well written mission statement can enhance mutual understanding between these two groups of individuals'. The authors suggest that the process could facilitate a more open management style within an organization, because of the emphasis in drawing up a mission statement on staff consultation. Mission clarity may also aid the institution in representing itself to external bodies and consequently in obtaining resources. The general public, too, in a time of declining confidence in public organizations, may be more favourably disposed towards a college that attempts to communicate clearly the reasons for its existence.

Fourth, it is claimed that a clear mission can aid evaluation activity. As Ball and Halwachi (1987) remark: 'If meaningful discussion of the performance of an institution in higher education is to take place it is necessary to understand what tasks the institution is undertaking and what objectives it is pursuing'. The development of a mission statement involves the identification of key purposes and objectives, thus facilitating the evaluation of the institution in achieving its objectives through measurement of the progress being made towards meeting them.

Fifth, mission statements clarify marketing strategy. This is because the distinctiveness arising out of an examination of purpose can help to target and attract a clientele to an organization. In summarizing the findings of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, Davies (1985) notes that a willingness to exploit market opportunities was one of the characteristics identified as enabling institutions to prosper in recession.

These are all general claims made on behalf of the mission process; however, it is also claimed to be beneficial in specific circumstances, such as the management of contraction. Christ-Janer (1980) sees the existence of institutional mission statements as essential in dealing proactively with contraction:

> . . . at first our institutional reaction to these unpleasant realities was to depend upon the natural attrition of faculty and staff, reduce a little here and a little there . . . Then as institutions we began to think in terms of anticipatory actions . . . It is in the selection of alternative courses of action that the mission statement comes in to its full import . . .

While management of contraction clearly involves more than mission clarity alone, as is evident from the literature (e.g. the work of Davies and Morgan 1983), an important element appears to be 'a sense of institutional initiative or "master of our own destiny" feeling within the institution'.

The mission process may be viewed, then, as a process which promotes planning, aids decision making and communication, and also facilitates marketing and evaluation strategies. In short, the process may be viewed as a powerful method of promoting organizational change. Does the notion of mission in practice live up to these claims? As noted earlier, maybe not. For example, if an institution's mission is conceived and written by a small group of senior managers and never communicated to the rest of the employees, it is highly unlikely that the act of mission establishment will facilitate communication within the organization, or contribute to the development of more open management. Similarly, if the ideas and practices enshrined in a mission statement are not 'evidenced in the actions of management', it is unlikely that the statement will have much influence on decision-making processes. And if the statement is so bland as to be applicable to almost any organization, it is not likely to assist the organization very effectively in its marketing strategy. The claims made for mission, then, are likely to depend to a large extent on how mission comes to be defined, the operationalization of the mission statement and the quality of the statement produced, rather than on the act of creation of a mission statement alone. Bowman (1990) echoes this view about the importance of the process, when he states:

> . . . it is my belief that value from the mission statement idea comes firstly from the processes management has to go through in drawing one up. . . . so even if the mission statement ends up in everyone's wastebasket, there will still be beneficial effects resulting from the thinking and analysis involved in drafting it.

A more detailed appraisal of the claims for mission is conducted in Chapter 4. In Chapter 2, it is argued that the idea of establishing mission in public organizations (e.g. colleges) is being seen as more and more important to

their ability to change and survive, for increasingly the funding of public institutions is dependent upon them becoming more consumer-led, and upon the clear definition of tasks and the evaluation of performance in their achievement. The development of a mission statement is increasingly being seen as the first step towards this new culture, because it emphasizes the importance of the market and sets out the purpose and aspirations of the organization.

2

Mission and Change

The first purpose of this chapter is to explore the context for change in post-compulsory education and the links between this context and the use of the mission concept. Second, to consider the applicability of mission to British further and higher education establishments, and third, to examine the origins of the mission concept in the various approaches to the study of organizational analysis and change.

The context for change in post-compulsory education: Promoting a consumer-led sector

The 1980s found post-compulsory education under attack from central government. Early in the decade, Weaver (1983) talked of education in general, and higher education in particular, as facing a crisis. At that time, he cited the difficulty of meeting the high expectations of 30 years of expansion, the unease of employers and the apparent lack of interest by government in educational policy making, as all contributing to a sense of lack of confidence. While the unease of employers regarding the responsiveness of education as articulated by a range of government reports continued throughout the decade, the apparent lack of interest in educational policy making did not continue, and the 1980s may be regarded as important years for such policy making by central government. Throughout the 1980s, a stream of government-initiated reports and papers alluded to the unsatisfactory nature of post-compulsory education. For example, in a 1985 Green Paper on the development of higher education into the 1990s, the Secretary of State suggested that higher education had failed to contribute effectively enough to Britain's economic performance and stated that 'the future health of HE – and its funding from public and private sources – depends significantly upon its own success in generating the qualified manpower the country needs', and that there is 'continuing concern that HE does not always respond sufficiently to changing economic needs' (DES, 1985).

A report by the Audit Commission (1985) into both advanced and non-advanced further education, stated that there were opportunities for securing

substantial improvements in efficiency, and cited four main areas for value improvement opportunities: better marketing of courses, tailoring teaching resources more closely to demand, better cost recovery and tighter control over non-teaching costs. A report by Her Majesties Inspectorate (DES 1987a) into non-advanced further education identified a number of managerial deficiencies, and the Department of Education and Science (1987b) report, *Managing Colleges Efficiently*, acknowledged the scope for improvement in efficiency and stressed the necessity for carefully defined objectives, which take into account the needs and wishes of the sector's constituent groups.

Against this background of criticism and suggestions of inefficiency and lack of responsiveness, the government also gave some praise, together with further comments on weaknesses in the management of the system. In a White Paper on higher education (DES 1987c), it was stated:

> Previous chapters have indicated the range of sound achievement in recent years; there is much to be proud of in all sectors of higher education in this country. But they also draw attention to weaknesses in the management and structure of the system.

Similar statements were made about the further education sector in a Green Paper published a few months later (DES 1987d), in which the adaptability of the colleges was noted, but with the rider that there was still scope for further reform.

One of the primary reasons for this sustained critique of further and higher education appeared to lie in the government's policy of reducing public expenditure and seeking to improve value for money in public sector institutions. Pratt and Silverman (1988) noted:

> A central concern of government education policy in the period covered by this study (1983–85) was the need to reduce expenditure. This derived in large part from the adverse economic circumstances that affected the UK as well as most of the Western world, but in this country was intensified by a clear policy view that public expenditure needed to be constrained to enhance the opportunity for the private sector of the economy to develop.

A reduction in public expenditure meant that the only way quality of educational provision could be maintained or improved, was through the more effective use of the resources that already existed.

Inherent in the government's critique of F/HE was a model of deficit. Kushner (1985) identified three stages to such a model: first, a shortfall is identified; second, culpability is established; and third, a remedy is designed and legitimated. The shortfall in the existing provision of the post-compulsory sector was judged to be that of lack of responsiveness, failure to provide value for money and ineffective management. How accurate a picture of the sector did this judgement represent? No concrete evidence was produced to support this argument, but it is likely that with regard to lack of responsiveness for example, the criticism was too sweeping, as Kedney

and Parkes (1985) demonstrated in their report on the responsiveness of further education. However, British F/HE has had a tradition of being provider-centred, and as Theodossin (1986) remarked:

> ... in Britain, educational establishments are very much in the business of marketing (and selling) courses, certificates, diplomas and degrees. Indeed, the process of constructing these products leaves the institution scope for doing little else, since the designation of aims and objectives, content and structure, teaching methods and assessment is completed before the potential student has been sighted, never mind recruited.

This producer-centred ethos was at odds with the government's desire to increase the use of market mechanisms as a means of stimulating responsiveness and controlling public expenditure, and helped to establish culpability for the shortcomings of lack of responsiveness and efficiency, both with the institutions and with the culture of education at large. Post-compulsory institutions were seen to be deficient in terms of their curricula and their staff. Government curricula initiatives such as the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI) – which extends from the later years of schooling into the early stages of further education – National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative, are all examples of government-initiated moves to render the further and higher education curriculum more vocational. As Weinstock (1976) commented, in terms of staff deficiency, there was a perception by some educators of a remoteness from, and a disinterest in, the world of work:

> Teachers fulfil an essential function in the community but, having themselves chosen not to go into industry they often deliberately, or more usually unconsciously, instil in their pupils a similar bias ... And this is quite apart from the strong though unquantifiable impression an outsider receives that the teaching profession has more than its fair share of people actively politically committed to the overthrow of liberal institutions, democratic will or no democratic will.

Such a perception of teachers helped to justify the efforts of policy makers to stop education being controlled by providers, who can be portrayed as being remote from the 'real world' and pursuing their own self-interests, and to allow consumers to be more influential. In addition to these notions of curricula and teacher deficiency, there also appeared to be a notion of cultural deficiency of education in general.

This cultural deficiency consists of a number of interrelated criticisms of the inadequacy of education. Ball (1990a) articulates these criticisms in relation to schools, but they may equally well be applied to post-compulsory education. In summary, various government pronouncements accused education of:

- Failing to instil in students the habits, attitudes and self-discipline which employers require from their workers.
- Leaving students unprepared for the technical demands of the workplace.
- Perpetuating a bias towards the academic and away from the practical.
- Failing to teach students about the economic importance of industry to society.
- Failing to develop skills of entrepreneurship and enterprise.

Together, these institutional and cultural deficiencies can be seen to constitute the culpability of F/HE. What remains is to design a remedy to make up for the deficiency. The remedy that emerged may be construed as an infusion of corporate culture to compensate for the deficient educational culture. Commercial notions like responsiveness to the marketplace, management, and efficient and effective operation came to feature prominently in discussions of educational organizations. These ideas formed the context for the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Despite being a major piece of legislation affecting every area of state educational provision, some have argued that post-compulsory education received scant consideration in the framing, debate and eventual final form of the Act (NATFHE 1988). However, Green (1991) argues that the Act introduced to F/HE the same notions of the marketplace that it did to schools, where it emphasized increased choice through 'opting out' and open enrolment. In addition, delegation of financial responsibilities introduced a business ethic into educational management. With regard to F/HE, Green (1991) commented:

> Plans for higher and further education also reflect the desire to return education to the market place. The new funding councils for the universities and polytechnics are required to have a majority of industrial representatives and plans to fund the universities on a contract basis are another way of introducing market competition into the system. Similarly the colleges are now to be controlled in all essential matters by new governing bodies composed mainly of local industrial interests and they are being encouraged to seek private funding for 'self financing' courses.

The Act laid the groundwork for the establishment of a business ethic of operation for colleges. The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 reinforces this ethic and confirms the extension of corporate status to all sixth-form and further education colleges, and the establishment of a central funding body for further education along the lines of the Higher Education Funding Council.

How effective was the 1988 Act in introducing an educational market? Ball (1990a) comments:

> At the heart of the Act is an attempt to establish the basis of an education market. The key provisions of the act replace the principle of equal access to education for all with the principle of differentiation in

the market place. In order to appreciate the ways in which an education market is being established by the ERA several pieces of the act have to be put together and linked to previous Conservative education policy. The elements of this market are choice, competition, diversity, funding and organisation.

Choice was extended through the principle of open enrolment; competition through regulations relating to the publication of results and tests; diversity through the encouragement of a greater variety of schools and training providers. Proposals on funding such as per capita funding and the use of vouchers also introduce the idea of cash exchange for services, which because they impact directly upon the income of the producers, replicate financial exchange, a key aspect of a 'real' market. Finally, the introduction of budgetary autonomy in schools and colleges implies a model of organization in which governors become boards of directors, and headteachers and principals become chief executives. Educational establishments become more like businesses, with their primary focus on the profit-and-loss account, and with a much greater emphasis on the market whereby pupils (or their parents) and students become consumers.

The key element in responding to the market and operating efficiently and effectively is that of objectives. Organizations cannot market themselves effectively unless it is clear what is being marketed, what particular blend of educational offerings and services are being provided to the consumer. In addition, the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency pursued by the government necessitate objectives. Effectiveness is then defined as the success of an institution in meeting its objectives. Efficiency means achieving objectives while giving value for money. The establishment of institutional mission, in the strategic planning literature, was seen to be 'essential to effectively establishing objectives and formulating strategies' (David 1986), and thus has come to be closely associated with the drive for efficiency and market responsiveness. The notion of institutional mission, then, has become inextricably linked with the reorientation of F/HE towards a consumer-led *modus operandi.*

This is not the only perception of the concept of mission, however. As discussed later in this book, individuals who work in educational establishments have their own sense of mission; they have decided for themselves what their purposes are in their work with students and what qualities they wish to develop. The concept of an institutional mission was welcomed by some as an opportunity to share and debate academic purposes, and perhaps come to a consensus about the nature of their institutions in a changing world. There is little doubt also that many in colleges welcomed the emphasis on objectives because of the greater explicitness of purpose their definition results in. Such explicitness has a number of benefits, as discussed in the previous chapter in the section entitled 'The Claims for Mission'.

In summary, the political and economic climate of the 1980s was an

important factor in persuading colleges to re-examine what they did, for whom, and how efficiently they did it. Attempts to improve efficiency cannot be begun without a clear notion of what an organization is trying to achieve; consequently, the challenge to colleges involves the review of fundamental purposes and frequently a reorientation to the market as a key part of their response to the critique of the 1980s. The establishment of institutional mission involves such a review and is closely linked to a market ethos, and may be viewed as part of an overall strategy to change the culture of F/HE.

Like many other managerial techniques, the origin of mission establishment lies in corporate life rather than in education. As may be gathered from much of the preceding section, the existence of mission statements is closely linked with marketplace orientation, something with which British F/HE has not been very concerned. This contrasts with the practice in the USA, where a system exists whose 'defining characteristics relate to an underlying commitment to marketing' (Theodossin 1986). Given the close links between the mission and the market, it is appropriate to ask whether the mission concept is applicable both to educational establishments as a whole and to British F/HE in particular. These concerns are addressed in the next section.

Education and mission: Are they compatible?

The concept of mission may fit well with the commercial context of a market-led, profit-orientated organization. Such organizations are generally used to management control and a series of managerial approaches to operation, such as management by objectives. They are generally autonomous organizations, accountable only to shareholders in terms of profits and dividends. Responsiveness to the market and other environmental factors, such as changes in technology and economic conditions, are essential for survival. Organization members are more 'used' to being managed, and may share a clearer idea of what the organization exists to do – for example, to produce a particular product or service range and to make a profit. Lines of accountability are often clear and concepts like strategic planning are familiar if not always successfully applied. Finally, the success of these organizations in achieving their goals can often be measured fairly easily through profit levels and productivity rates.

How much convergence is there between this 'ideal type' of commercial organization and a F/HE establishment? It is argued that such establishments share a number of 'peculiarities', which may render them very different from commercial conceptions of an organization. Such peculiarities include: a separation of units and a high level of teacher autonomy; unclear goals, unclear technology and fluid participation (Cohen and March 1974; Turner 1977); a producer-led ethos (Theodossin 1986); and difficulty in specifying outcomes (Cuthbert 1987). In many respects, these features of

the educational organization appear to conflict directly with a number of key features of mission establishment. For example, the importance of goal-setting as set against the existence of unclear goals; strategic planning and outcome measurement set against the difficulty of specifying outcomes in education; and a market-led orientation versus a producer-led orientation. In addition, aspects such as the fluid nature of the service provided, and the notion of educational imperialism – or teacher knows what is best for you – are also key characteristics of educational organizations, which may influence how valid it is to apply the concept of mission to them.

The issue of teacher autonomy, or professionalism, is an important one in the context of mission establishment. Ball (1990a) argues that the application of managerial techniques to education results in a professionalizing discourse:

> . . . which allows its speakers and its incumbents to lay exclusive claims to certain sorts of expertise – organisational leadership and decision making – and to a set of procedures that casts others, subordinates, as objects of that discourse and the recipients of those procedures, whether they wish to be or not. Like other professional discourses, management produces the object about which it speaks – organisation. Here, however, the professional claims of management are set over and against those of teachers, and those of organisation against autonomy.

The managerial approach with which mission establishment is often linked, is accused of deprofessionalizing teachers by removing responsibility for decision making and vesting leadership in a new cadre of managers. This is construed by advocates of managerialism as the only proper way to organize education decision making, as opposed to other approaches, such as collegiality. Avis (1991) eschews this view and argues that contemporary education policies have involved an attack on welfare state professionals, by accusing such professionals of protecting their vested interests. This behaviour is seen to 'jeopardise the smooth running of the market and to place a block on the development of the enterprise culture' (Avis 1991). In addition, career paths in these professions have led practitioners away from professional considerations towards management commitments. The managerial stance aims to maximize efficiency and productivity and leads to the proletarianization of professionals by removing policy and decision making from them and placing it in the hands of 'managers'.

Any argument that a managerial perspective involves an attack on teacher professionalism rests on the assumption that teachers see themselves as professionals and can be defined as such. Ribbens (1990) surveyed the literature on professionalism and appears to conclude that the list of professions is not fixed, and that occupations form a continuum of professionality with a number of occupations aspiring to the status of profession. He quotes Parry and Parry (1974) in stating: 'the teaching profession have been deeply influenced by a conception of occupational ideology and organisation we shall call professionalism'.

Teaching, then, may not fit an ideal type definition of a profession, but it is likely that teachers see themselves as operating in a professional manner. However, because of the increasing influence of the state in education affairs, Ribbens suggests that the notion of the 'dependent professional' may be a more appropriate term because increased control over teaching, both by regulation and by the market, decreases the autonomy of teachers and their claim to independent professionalism. The more these influences extend into education, the more the role of teachers may become reduced to that of either producer or deliverer. Both models imply a decreased claim to professional status and may be expected to meet the resistance of teachers. Overall, the changing status of teacher professionalism leading to a status nearer to that of dependent professional, is more consistent with the mission philosophy than that of the fully autonomous professional.

The idea that educational establishments have unclear goals has already been referred to. Business organizations may be much freer to determine their goals than a F/HE establishment. Who determines such goals in this sector of education? The staff, students, governors, external examining and validating bodies, central government, employers? Formal influence over the goals of an establishment is split between the college governors, the principalship and the academic board. Although each group has different formal aims – for example, the governing body: the general direction and conduct of the curriculum; the principal: internal organization, management and discipline; the academic board: planning, coordination, development and the oversight of academic work – each is able to influence the goals of the college.

In addition, external examining and validating bodies have considerable influence over course content, assessment and in some cases methods, and consequently organizational and operating procedures. The staff are an important source of possible alternative goals, for formal forums and examining bodies may propose goals with which the staff of the institution may not agree. These circumstances suggest that clarity and consensus over the goals of F/HE establishments is indeed problematic. However, strong forces exist which are pushing F/HE colleges towards a clearer definition of their goals and objectives. As a consequence, although the notion of establishing goals and objectives in educational organizations is more problematic, the funding agencies are exerting more and more pressure on colleges to do so.

In industrial and commercial organizations, the outcomes of the organization are usually clearly visible. Products and services can be more easily measured, as may profits. Consequently, success in achieving the mission is also relatively easy to assess. In education, the specification of outcomes is a far more complex activity. There appears to be little consensus among those who work in such organizations about what the outcomes actually are. Could it be the student, the course, the qualification, or the learning experience? This situation is further complicated by the fact that those who exercise some control over the goals of colleges also tend to take different outcome measures as significant. The tendency for funding organizations

to look for measurable outcomes has led to conflict between those who opt for quantitative measures, such as examination results, and those who seek to establish the importance of qualitative measures of experience, such as 'added value'.

Despite these difficulties, there is evidence that F/HE is becoming more outcomes-focused, both in curricula development and management practice. The drive to express student learning in outcomes which aid such curricula developments as modularization, competency-based approaches and the accreditation of prior experiential learning, is evidence of the increasing concern for outcomes at the teaching/learning interface. The current concern to develop and apply performance indicators is evidence of an outcomes orientation in management and institutional evaluation.

British F/HE has been characterized as producer-led (Theodossin 1986), having evolved outside the marketplace. Some of the reasons for this are that products have traditionally been designed without consulting consumers: consumers are not really consumers in the accepted sense of the word, because the cost of their education is largely met by the state in the form of central and local government and by employers. Additionally, British students have traditionally not been involved in surveys of client satisfaction and there is a conspicuous absence of after-sales service. All this confirms the producer-led ethos of the British system, and suggests that the concept of mission which involves defining distinctive competences and marketing them to consumers, may not fit comfortably with British educational establishments.

However, as Theodossin (1986) suggests, developments like modularization, credit accumulation and open access involve an increasing market orientation. Ball (1990a) agrees, while adding that it is part of a deliberate government policy to reduce the role of the producer lobbies:

> The education policies of Thatcherism have involved a total reworking of the ideological terrain of education politics and the orientation of policy making is now towards the consumers of education – parents and industrialists; the producer lobbies are almost totally excluded.

Education is a service, and a service which to some extent is not fixed, given the way that education is delivered in separate classrooms and the variety of classrooms in which delivery occurs. It is largely intangible and therefore it is difficult to measure its transfer from teacher to taught; it consists primarily of social interactions, and therefore each transaction is to some extent unique. In addition, education is dispersed and local, and therefore difficult to ensure quality control. And the student (or customer) is a participant in the production of the service, and thus the service is a negotiated one between teacher and student. The mixture of teacher attitudes, skills and motivation, and student expectations and behaviour, results in a multiplicity of unique interactions in which the 'product' is realized. What consequences does this have for the concept of mission in education? Primarily, it implies that teachers have considerable autonomy to pursue

their own objectives and that consumers have less opportunity to determine the mission through market mechanisms.

However, as in other service contexts, this need not render the concept inoperable in the education context (see, e.g. Normann 1984). This is because consumer participation in education operations can be enhanced by such strategies as: interactive video, greater consumer involvement in the diagnosis of client need, and the use of open learning systems in which clients can function largely independently of producers. All of these are being actively promoted in the F/HE sector under the banner of increased access, responsiveness and student self-determination.

Within the education service, attitudes that could be described as akin to educational imperialism can be a powerful influence upon teachers' attitudes towards market need. Consumers in the market may demand a style or type of provision that the providers argue is not what they really need. This overriding of students' expressed desires, on the basis of the argument that the teacher is in a better position to determine needs, can be interpreted as a kind of imperialism that undermines the clients' self-determination. Such an attitude on behalf of teachers can be seen as the same kind of discourse of 'derision' that managerialism can be accused of. An imperialistic discourse that locates educational decision making with the professionals in this case, rather than as a joint activity with students.

Christopher and McDonald (1991) argue that 'it's a common fault in marketing to fail to realise that customers do not always attach the same importance to product attributes as the vendor'. Thus educational services are often offered on the basis of features that the teacher considers important. If such an imperialistic attitude is common among teachers, then it is clear that the relationship between education providers and the market is fundamentally different to that which exists in other spheres of service provision. This may have major consequences for a market-related concept such as institutional mission.

Together, the points discussed above relating to the applicability of the mission concept to British F/HE suggest difficulty in popularizing and applying the concept. However, as discussed in this and preceding sections, there is evidence to suggest that a cultural change is being promoted in British F/HE aimed at creating a consumer-led ethos, in which establishments are much more responsive to the needs of the market both in terms of its products and services and in offering value for money to consumers. The mission concept, then, may be one which does not fit comfortably with the British form of further and higher education, yet which becomes more appropriate as the consumer lobby finds a stronger voice, and begins to influence relationships even more within the educational organization.

Features of the mission concept

It is difficult to trace the exact origins of mission establishment either in business or education. One of the earliest references to institutional mission

occurs in the writing of Selznick (1957). Selznick considered the definition of mission and role of an organization as one of the key tasks of leadership. He saw the definition of mission as needing to take account of the 'internal state of the polity' and external expectations that determine survival. In referring to external expectations, Selznick was emphasizing the importance of the market in the same way as Drucker (1973). Selznick noted the link between mission and military uses of the word, and drew on a number of reflections on administration and leadership during the Second World War to illustrate his ideas on mission. This suggests a likely origin of the term in reference to clarity of purpose of military units and operations. In the preface to his book, Selznick acknowledged his debt to colleagues in the RAND Corporation. This organization was influential in the development and introduction of a number of techniques relating to organizational planning and operation in the USA during and after the war, such as the critical path method and management by objectives (MBO). It seems likely that the notion of mission establishment shares a common heritage with these techniques. Caruthers and Lott (1981) certainly linked the notion of mission establishment with techniques of rational planning such as MBO.

The likelihood of a common heritage in rational management techniques is reinforced by tracing the elements of mission establishment to their origins in various approaches to organizational analysis and change. In order to do this, it is necessary to review some of the literature on organization theory. In this literature, many paradigms and organizing principles are employed to make sense of the vast array of material which has been produced on the theme of understanding organizations. A similar resort to principles of classification will be used in this section to provide a logical and coherent exposition of the various theoretical perspectives on the study of organizations and techniques for promoting organizational change. This section does not constitute an attempt to provide a comprehensive review of organization theory and consequent strategies of change, but a brief overview.

Prior to this, however, it is useful to describe the mission process in a little more detail so that its roots can be clearly identified in the various perspectives that follow. Institutional mission involves the establishment of the fundamental purposes of an organization. The process of developing mission can be seen as involving a number of stages. The first of these is the development stage, during which thought is given to the fundamental goals of the organization: What is it that the stakeholders in the institution want now and in the future? This stage can involve consultation with stakeholder groups, and a number of methods such as surveys have been developed to achieve this. In some instances, management acts on behalf of the stakeholders to interpret and synthesize these wishes. The second stage involves the production of a mission statement which defines the essential business of the organization. The form of mission statements varies enormously, and the characteristics of such statements are discussed in Chapter

Table 2.1 Approaches to organizational analysis

Approaches				
Classical	*Human relations*	*Systems*	*Phenomenological*	*Strategies*
Scientific Management		Operations Research Methods		Rational-empirical
	Organization Development			Normative re-educative
			Political and Anarchic methods	Power coercive

3. The third stage is that of mission implementation or operationalization, in which the elements of the mission impact upon the processes of the organization in order that all organizational acts are consistent with the mission. This stage may involve the development of specific objectives and strategies derived from the mission, and the use of indicators of performance to measure if the organization is fulfilling its mission. Finally, the mission should be subject to regular review to ensure its applicability to the changing environment and market conditions within which the organization operates.

A prime purpose of this section is to 'deconstruct' the mission concept and trace the origins of its various features. In this way it becomes possible to identify any inconsistencies inherent in the concept and discover any weaknesses in the idea. It is possible to discern four major approaches to the study of organizations, although organization theorists are not likely to agree on the universality of such a classification. Neither are they likely to agree on nomenclature. Nevertheless, the following terms are used to describe the four approaches considered here: classical, human relations, systems (which can incorporate contingency theory under its general heading) and phenomenological (under which anarchical and political approaches are subsumed).

These four main approaches are located along the horizontal axis of a grid which will be used to locate the various techniques of analysis and change to be discussed in this section. Along the vertical axis of the grid are located the three broad strategies of change identified by Chin and Benne (1969), which they call: rational-empirical, power coercive and normative re-educative (Fig. 2.1). These approaches and strategies will be defined during the consideration of each of the techniques for promoting change discussed below. Table 2.1 summarizes these techniques and locates them in the theoretical approach which informed them, and the strategy that underlies their operation.

Scientific management is a management strategy which is usually considered to be part of the classical approach to the study of organizations, and which employs a rational view of human behaviour and thus fits into the rational-empirical paradigm. This paradigm rests on an assumption that human beings are rational, and will change their behaviour if it can be proved to them empirically that change will result in a better way of operating than that already in use.

In essence, the proponents of scientific management such as Taylor (1911), Fayol (1949) and Urwick (1947) claimed that effective management resulted from the creation of a hierarchical management structure, clear lines of authority, delegation of responsibility and specialization. Management draws up goals for the organization, sets up plans for implementing the goals, breaks down into a series of separate functions the activities necessary to ensure goal attainment, and reviews goal achievement. Consequently, the management of change viewed from this perspective involves management in deciding what change is to occur, delegating down a well-defined chain of command what change is necessary in terms of tasks and roles, reviewing the changes for which the subordinate is responsible, and recording and measuring the amount of change that has occurred. This approach is closely linked to the bureaucratic model of organization advocated by Weber (1948), in which he stressed that authority should be vested in a managerial role in an organization hierarchy, rather than in a person. Formal rules and standard operating procedures restrict the arbitrary exercise of authority and allow an organization to be run on a rational basis.

Scientific management, then, is a rational process. It is assumed that any proposals for change initiated by management are in the interests of the organization and that as long as such changes are effectively planned, organized and coordinated they will occur. The assumption underlying the rational-empirical strategy of change is that human beings are rational, and will follow their rational self-interest when changes are explained to them which appear to benefit the organization, and which enable them to complete their tasks more effectively.

However, a fundamental shortcoming of any technique rooted in this tradition is that human beings may not always behave in ways which are perceived as rational by organization managers. Nor are organization managers able to exert the authority they might wish over members' actions, to ensure that the content and quality of individual behaviour is commensurate with their wishes. This is particularly so in educational organizations, where most activity takes place within separate units – for example, the privacy of the teacher's classroom, by teachers working autonomously. Individuals are clearly capable of exercising personal initiative and discretion which could be in contravention of organization policy, and networks of informal relationships build up which can sustain and promote contrary visions of organization goals, priorities and practices. Indeed, in many higher education establishments, such varied perspectives are enshrined in the notion of academic freedom.

However, while scientific management does not provide a clear guide for modern management, its emphasis on such functions as planning and goal-setting is important, and identifies some elements of an effective strategy for the promotion of organizational change. It is clear that the emphasis on rational planning in scientific management is shared by the concept of mission establishment. As in scientific management, mission establishment involves the setting of goals or objectives for the organization and implies the construction of plans to ensure that the objectives are met, although the latter is not necessarily the case, as observed earlier in this book.

Further techniques based on rational assumptions, but this time located in a systems perspective on the organization, are some of the techniques that can be grouped together as operations research techniques, such as management by objectives (MBO) and programme planning and budgeting systems (PPBS). Van Dusseldorp *et al.* (1971) define operations research as taking a systems view of the organization, and operations research tools as vehicles for the provision of feedback to the system.

Systems theory conceptualizes an organization as analogous to a biological organism, with inputs – conversion processes such as teaching and learning, management and administration – outputs, and a feedback loop linking environmental reaction to the output, back to the input and the conversion processes. A specific characteristic of the systems view is its emphasis on the interrelatedness of the various parts of the system. Change in one part of the system necessitates change in all the other parts also.

The link between scientific management and operations research tools is clear when it is seen that techniques such as MBO and PPBS are based on the principles of determining objectives, planning for achievement, monitoring and evaluation. Baron (1978) describes MBO in tertiary education settings as involving: the definition of objectives at various levels of the college (whole college, departmental, sectional, individual); the working out of key result areas for groups and individuals by management; the specification of standards of performance by management; and regular managerial reviews of objectives and activities. A danger of the systems view as a whole, and MBO in particular, is to ignore the importance of the individual in the system. MBO emphasizes the importance of managerial objectives, and in reality MBO is probably a management tool which involves the specification of objectives by management and the imposition of these objectives on organization members. In his critical review of the managerial approach to tertiary education, Baron (1978) emphasized the importance of involving staff in the specification of objectives, if MBO is to have any chance of being implemented successfully in educational organizations. Often the objectives developed are not seen as appropriate by staff, plans for implementation are not considered realistic, and measures of achievement are not well developed. Brooks (1980) sees MBO as a failure, because of the lack of participation of staff in formulating objectives and work plans, and concludes that 'long lasting change can only be effectively brought about when the changes are accepted and "owned" by all those in

the organisation who are affected by new work programmes and systems of operation'.

Programme planning and budgeting systems adopt a similar strategy of objective formulation, except that the costs involved in achieving objectives are calculated on a historic basis and a financial plan for each area of activity is developed. This allows the operation of a budgetary planning cycle, leading to the more effective control of costs. Regular evaluations of cost projections and objectives seek to hone the system and make it more efficient in its deployment of resources. Van Dusseldorp *et al.* (1971) comment that in education: 'Important throughout the planning and implementation of PPBS is the involvement of people at all levels in the educational organisation'.

Both MBO and PPBS were designed as management tools to aid the efficient operation of the organization; both stressed the importance of establishing objectives, but took the nature of these objectives as unproblematic assuming that management would establish them in the interests of the 'system'. Efforts to establish these procedures as part of education managers' repertoire have highlighted the importance of the involvement of staff in objective-setting, otherwise there appears to be no clear link between the existence of objectives and organization members' desire to implement them.

The concept of mission establishment has a number of similarities to that of management by objectives. It involves the establishment of goals and sometimes the setting of objectives and may also be the start of a process which results in individual management plans, whereby managers are responsible for the achievement of a group of objectives which contribute to the achievement of the overall mission of the establishment. It differs from MBO in that the system of achieving objectives is not as all-embracing. Key result areas and performance standards are not always specified for individuals, although some attempt may be made to establish objectives for subunits within the organization. In mission establishment, involvement is usually seen as a key part of the process, unlike early attempts to introduce MBO, which were manager-led. As wide a constituency as possible is recommended for consultation in the formulation of the mission, and for some writers the process of thinking and analysis involved in mission establishment is seen to be as important as the eventual mission produced. Clearly, however, the notion of mission establishment draws on the same rational management traditions as those described above.

The next two organization change strategies can both be located in the normative re-educative paradigm as opposed to the rational. Organization development (OD) is a technique of promoting change that is rooted partly in the human relations approach to organization and partly in the systems approach. The human relations view involves developing and sustaining the cooperation of individuals within the organization in order to promote more effective functioning. A basic assumption of organization development is that real change in organizations can only be achieved through

change in the beliefs, values and attitudes of those who work in them. Thus the change effort is focused on the members of the organization and employs a normative re-educative strategy, in that it is assumed that change will occur only if 'the persons involved are bought to change their normative orientations to old patterns and develop commitments to new ones that involve changes in attitudes, values, skills and significant relationships' (Mercer 1988).

Some OD practitioners such as Argyris (1964) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) emphasize the importance of conceptualizing the organization as an open system influenced by its environment and characterized by interdependence between various groupings within the organization.

Organization development tends to operate on a 'medical' model, which emphasizes diagnosis of problems, action planning, intervention strategies (treatment) and evaluation. The intervention strategies take the form of educational techniques, such as teaching problem-solving skills, process reflection and group facilitation. A key assumption underlying all OD strategies is that individuals must be involved in change for it to be successful. Argyris (1964) argues that effective organizations are those that successfully integrate the needs of the organization with those of the individuals in them, and the way to do this is through the enlargement of the concepts of structure, control, task and leadership to accommodate far greater participation. Bennis (1969) comments on the importance of a sense of ownership of organization objectives throughout the workforce, and Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) see as a primary objective the need to get organization members involved for desired change to occur.

The major drawback with organization development and contingency approaches such as those proposed by Lawrence and Lorsch and Woodward (1980), which later OD practitioners embraced, is their treatment of conflict. Although organization development is concerned with bringing conflicts out into the open, the approach assumes that individuals will eventually adapt their values and behaviour to the needs of the organization. Similarly, contingency theory takes for granted, in its notion of organization features adapting to the nature of the environment in order to maximize the effectiveness of the organization, that individuals will adapt for this purpose also. This assumes a congruence of goals between the individual and the organization which may well not exist. The notion of institutional mission also involves an assumption of eventual reconciliation of individual goals with the goals the organization needs to pursue in order to survive. Its advocacy of institutional purpose assumes that eventual consensus is possible and that any mission which emerges has the agreement of all those in the organization. Political or conflict theories of organization see this assumption as an inherent failing in these approaches, which fail to take account of the political nature of organizational behaviour, in which individuals and groups seek to further their own interests through bargaining for resources and power.

Two important aspects of mission appear to have their origin in

organization development and contingency approaches. The first is the emphasis on participation; the second the need to be aware of developments outside the organization and the importance of responding and adapting to changing environmental conditions. An important part of the mission process is consultation with all stakeholder groups of the organization, which includes groups external to the organization, such as employers and local community members.

Some organization analysts talk of organization culture – those assumptions and beliefs that are shared by organization members and which shape the way that the organization deals with internal processes and environmental pressures. Schein (1985) believes that leaders help create and sustain cultures and that as a result they are also able to change them once the dynamics of the learning process within the organization are understood. Culture can aid or hinder the creation and fulfilment of an organization's mission; consequently, mission can be more effectively promoted by developing an organization culture that encourages debate, tolerance and variety. As Beare *et al.* (1989) comment:

> An increasing number of the writers in organisation theory and in educational management/administration in particular have adopted the term 'culture' to define that social and phenomenological uniqueness of a particular organisational community – be it a factory or a hospital, a bakery or a school – and which comprises numerous intangible and symbolic elements (such as values, philosophies and ideologies) as well as those which are more tangible, and are given behavioural and visual expression.

This concern with the phenomenological uniqueness of organizations leads to a consideration of the next strategies for analysis and change to be considered, which are part of the power coercive perspective. This is a conflict view of change which, according to Dalin (1978), has had only minimal impact on educational change strategies. The underlying assumption is that change is based on power and occurs due to the compliance of those with less power to the changes proposed by those with more power. Anarchistic and political perspectives fit into this category because of their radical, alternative views on decision making, and because they eschew formal, rational decision-making procedures which ignore both the 'accidental' and political nature of decision making.

Cohen and March (1974) characterize anarchic organizations as possessing three characteristics: problematic preferences, fluid membership and unclear technology. Turner (1977) considers that: 'If we look at the college of further education or polytechnic, it is possible to see all three characteristics represented strongly'. Turner notes that it is a matter of common observation that colleges are very unsure about their goals and that different organization members often have widely different goals; thus problematic preferences are a reality for colleges. Fluid participation is also evident through the ever-changing student population, encouragement of members

of the public to use college facilities such as libraries, sports facilities and meeting rooms, and the varied commitment of staff to the college itself. Turner argues that all teaching institutions work with an unclear technology because teachers are hard put at the end of the day to know what their students have learned and how the learning has occurred.

Turner (1977) argues further that once a college is viewed in this light, then much thinking on educational management becomes obsolete. Techniques such as MBO and PPBS, standardized rules and techniques, well-defined powers of decision making and authority within a hierarchy, can be rejected because they are inflexible and do not recognize the true nature of decision making in an anarchic organization which necessitates adaptive short-term decision making handled by the 'man on the spot'. He also rejects collegial management because of its emphasis on consensus, which tends to minimize risk-taking, so essential to organizations operating within a turbulent environment.

The corollary of this is that once decision making is freed from formal procedures, and is vested in autonomous staff with full discretion and delegated powers, it becomes a highly political activity. Institutional micropolitics begins to determine organization direction as self-motivated individuals and groups use their decision-making ability to promote their own mission. Some of the practical techniques suggested by Cohen and March (1974) for managing in an anarchic organization certainly appear to have a manipulative element to them, in that they are tactics for ensuring that decisions are made which reflect the wishes of the user of the strategies – for example, the tactic of providing 'garbage cans'. A concrete example of a garbage can is the first agenda item in a meeting. This item – whatever its nature – is likely to attract an assortment of issues currently of concern to meeting participants, often resulting in much abstract argument. They thus absorb a great deal of energy. Garbage cans can be used to draw the garbage away from issues considered important by the tactician, and placed much lower down the agenda, thus making it easier for decisions on these issues to be implemented.

Cohen and March (1974) consider that overall objective-setting (as in the mission process) can be a first-class garbage can, in that the process is viewed as socially important and is general enough to attract a whole range of issues and concerns. While organization members are occupied with this plethora of issues, managers can go on making decisions which facilitate their own concrete objectives.

Viewed from the anarchical perspective, the predominant ethos of the organization is unpredictability. Thus there is no rational way of promoting change in organizations. Change occurs through the random 'collision' of problems, people and solutions, and consequently change strategies can be implemented which have no rational basis. This would seem to argue against the concept of mission, because whatever mission is developed, it would constantly be usurped by decisions made in different parts of the organization by various individuals which did not reflect the logic inherent in the

mission. This may not be a deliberate strategy, but a reflection of the fact that decision making in colleges is largely a random activity.

The implication of this for the mission process is that either no mission is established, and thus the organization stands in danger of drifting in no particular direction, or management has to exert considerable attention and energy to ensure that decisions are taken congruent with the mission. This may explain developing concern over the day-to-day operationalization of the mission and attempts at 'manager proofing' through the use of management plans and personal action plans. An alternative explanation is to use the concept of loosely coupled systems (Weick 1976) to explain how the existence of missions can co-exist with autonomous elements which allow more flexibility and self-determination. In this scenario, an organization can have an overarching mission which expresses core values and principles, but which allows sub-groupings the freedom to take actions independently, as long as they are broadly congruent with the underlying principles of the mission. The sub-groups are thus 'loosely coupled' to the 'core' of the organization.

Political tactics, like anarchical techniques, can be seen to be rooted in phenomenological approaches to the study of organizations. Slater (1985) states that:

> Political approaches are based on a phenomenological schema, whereby initiators and supporters of change are seen as one or a number of individuals and groups, each with its own construction of reality and frame of reference.

The practical result of these competing frames of reference is what Hoyle (1982) describes as micropolitics: 'Micropolitics embraces those strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests'.

Mangham (1979) has a more pragmatic description of this phenomena when he describes the political perspective as based on 'man's evident capacity, and occasional ardent desire, to screw his fellow man'. What the political perspective focuses on, then, is the way in which organizational processes such as decision making are affected by the thoughts and schemes of individuals and groups. Organizational behaviour is perceived as the product of negotiation, bargaining and manipulation between individuals and groups, which is influenced by the power and skills of the individuals and coalitions concerned. Where power is shared, change becomes more difficult to implement. Mangham argues that in order to promote change, individuals and work groups need to develop the interpersonal skills which will enable them to negotiate more effectively. Such skills include manipulation and manoeuvring, cheating and exploitation, assertion and confrontation, support and help, encouragement and facilitation.

With regard to the mission process, political perspectives suggest that any attempt to establish the mission of an organization will become a forum for the exercise of power and influence by key individuals and groups, and that

any statement eventually produced will reflect the interests of dominant groups within the organization. This could be management who use their authority to push through a mission which reflects their view of what is appropriate. Laycock (1982) comes to this conclusion at the end of his investigation into the establishment of mission in a polytechnic, and Bowman (1990) acknowledges that the logic of mission statements is not always evidenced in the actions of management:

> For instance, the mission statement stresses the importance of customer service and caring for the environment, but the manager's behaviour reinforces a different set of priorities, like cost control and capacity utilization.

This suggests that consensus over the mission will never be achievable because of the plurality of interests that exist in an educational organization. This plurality exists because there is a constant struggle going on over the allocation of resources that mitigates against rational activity based on mission guidelines. Because no coalition is ever sacrosanct, the dominant coalition that may initially have held sway over the mission statement, may not be able to ensure continued supremacy. Davies (1985) suggests some conditions under which mission statements may have a more direct influence on organizations, which may mitigate against the political activity of groups. He suggests that in a highly competitive environment where an organization has a tradition of institutional self-determination and comprehensive planning, mission statements may have a more direct influence on everyday policy.

The process of establishing mission may be seen to have antecedents in a number of the approaches to organizational analysis and change discussed in this section. The process emphasizes the importance of planning and of objective setting in order that the organization has a major role in deciding its own destiny. The involvement of all constituent groups – including those in the external environment – in deciding the mission is considered essential. The need for regular review to ensure the continued appropriateness of the mission is advocated. In addition, the process of mission establishment itself can be seen to be as important as the product, in that it encourages a climate of debate, thought and analysis.

Mission establishment draws on the principles of rationality and goal-setting embedded in classic approaches to organizational functioning, but differs from this approach in its emphasis on involvement of organization members in the planning process. Similarly, the key difference between mission establishment and operational research tools, such as MBO, characteristic of a systems view of organization, is the emphasis on participation. Organization development also emphasizes participation and assumes that a reconciliation between the needs of individuals and those of the organization is possible. This consensual view is implicit also in the concept of mission. The importance of consulting all stakeholder groups on the mission of an organization has been 'borrowed' from the contingency view of

organizations. Both the anarchic and political approaches provide a potent critique of mission, because of their emphasis on the interests of individuals and groups in promoting their own ends. These may well be at odds with the management's 'rational' view of the direction and values of the organization. These latter approaches are critical of the assumption of rationality and consensus embedded in the other approaches to organization analysis and change.

Mission establishment is a multi-faceted concept. It involves many ideas which have roots in a number of perspectives on organization analysis and change. Because of this, various groups and individuals may respond to the concept differently, selecting those aspects of the idea which appeal and rejecting others. In addition, responses to the concept may not lie in its own particular qualities, but in ideas inherent in the concept which have existed in organization behaviour for years.

3

Mission in Practice

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how mission establishment is conducted, what the characteristics of an effective mission statement are, how mission statements influence organizational processes, and what aspects of mission establishment encourage or support change in these processes.

Methods of mission establishment

The literature that exists on methods of mission establishment is not particularly comprehensive. There are few studies which focus directly on the process of mission. Rather, there exists a number of studies which have a bearing on the process. Hoyle (1986) believes that conventional research has had little to say about constructing and conveying mission because management theory and research has tended to focus on the more concrete aspects of management and not on the idiographic. As acknowledged in Chapter 2, the concept of mission is a multi-faceted one involving a number of aspects. Perhaps the key element in the process is that relating to goal- or objective-setting, and it is this aspect which has received most attention in the literature, primarily through attempts to develop procedures for the establishment of institutional goals.

Before examining the various methods of mission establishment, it is useful to consider Caruthers and Lott's (1981) description of a procedure for the establishment of institutional mission. They describe a seven-stage process for conducting mission review:

1. To establish the readiness of the organization to initiate the process. In particular, managerial commitment to the activity is essential.
2. To clarify the reasons why the review is taking place. Usually it is to enable the organization to plan more effectively for the future; sometimes the need may have arisen out of specific circumstances, such as a period of contraction or the development of a new role. The creation of a new organization is also a pertinent time for clarifying purpose.

3. There is a need to organize the review process and establish the methodology of the investigation.
4. It is important to plan for maximum participation by all organization members. Caruthers and Lott (1981) comment: 'The benefits derived from participation in mission review may be as important as the product itself'.
5. It may be appropriate to determine the level of analytical support needed for the process. For example: What is the institution's capacity to respond to a changed definition of needs? Is it necessary to conduct an environmental assessment to check for such factors as employment trends and level of local competition for students?
6. Plans need to be made for facilitating maximum communication about the rationale, progress and results of the review to all organization members.
7. It is necessary to update the mission periodically in the light of developments affecting the college.

Comprehensive as this may sound, it says little about the methodology of mission establishment, referring only to the need to decide on method during phase 3 of the process. Like much writing on the value of mission, there appears to be an assumption that once the mission has been established, it will be embraced by all organization members and will influence future organization plans and procedures. Caruthers and Lott (1981) provide a useful overview of the process, but no practical guidance on method or change.

What practical methods are advocated to develop mission statements? Three main methods are suggested in the literature: (1) establishment by committee or group, (2) establishment by survey, (3) inferring or eliciting mission from decision analysis and interviewing. Broadly, the methods function as follows. Typically in the first method groups representing the views of various departments or sections within the organization generate their own view of the institution's mission or purpose. These views may then be discussed with other groups and with management. Following discussions, the management team seeks to establish some consensus about the mission from the various views of the sections. The major disadvantages of this approach are that the mission process is dominated by management, the statement that is ultimately agreed may not carry the support of all organization members, and only those working within the organization have had the opportunity to contribute to the process. Variations of this method exist which are even less democratic than that described. In such instances, a senior management group may determine the institution's mission without reference to those working within it at all.

The report of the Further Education Unit's educational audit project (FEU 1988) describes a method of mission establishment by groups. The report concerns a study carried out at Lancashire Polytechnic into the development of performance indicators relating to the aims of the polytechnic's

mission statement. The development of the mission statement involved three stages: initiation of the process by the director, whereby each school or section met with the directorate to discuss a statement of purpose; production, when 47 responses were produced as a result of the initiative; and reconciliation, when a working party identified key common areas in the responses presented to the academic board. Following spirited discussion of these common areas by the academic board, the working party was requested to produce a draft mission statement which would be managerially usable in that the aims expressed in the mission statement would be measurable, observable and have targets built in. In addition, progress towards these targets could be assessed. A fourth stage was initiated to produce performance indicators relevant to each aim. This is an interesting explanation of the process the polytechnic initiated in order to produce a mission statement. In addition to elaborating on the method of mission establishment by groups, the report suggests that operationalizing the statement through the development of targets and performance indicators is necessary for the statement to be managerially useful.

The survey method is one that has increased in popularity over the last few decades, especially in the USA, although some interest has been shown in the technique in the UK. Typically, the method involves the administration of a standard questionnaire to various constituent groups of the organization. Usually respondents are asked to specify what goals they think the organization is pursuing and what goals they think it should be aiming to achieve. Analysis ascertains any clustering of opinion around certain popular goals and achievement of these goals forms the basis of the mission. The initial impetus for such surveys in the USA came from Gross and Grambsch (1974), although more recently the initiative has passed to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton with the development of the Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI). Even more recently, the work of Doucette *et al.* (1984) in producing the Community Colleges Activities Survey (CCAS) – a survey which employs the concept of activities rather than goals – has shed doubt upon the operational value of the IGI.

Fenske (1980) appears to have been instrumental in shifting the focus of mission review towards the establishment of activities rather than goals. In his view, goals relate to values, which are too vague to provide a basis for action by organization members; hence the link between translating values into actions affecting decisions and attitudes is tenuous. Doucette *et al.* (1984) describe a technique designed to overcome the problem of relating goals to behaviour. The technique involves the construct of activity. Groupings of specific activities which contain the characteristics of both goals and objectives form the basis of the mission statement. Activities are defined in terms of the services provided by an educational organization, the rationale for these services and the clientele served. An elaboration of the development of the various survey approaches follows.

One of the earliest works in the field of establishing goals in educational institutions through the use of surveys is that of Gross and Grambsch (1974).

Their aim was to describe the social structure of universities as formal organizations and to this end they surveyed the faculty and administration of universities via a questionnaire that sought information about the perceived goals of the universities (what they are and what they should be), who the perceived power holders were, and what relationships existed between administrators and faculty. The goals they discovered involved the protection of academic freedom and the achievement of a variety of support goals related to the careers of faculty and administrators. This was an early indication of the lack of congruity between the personal goals of individuals and groups, and the educational goals of the university.

The pioneering work done by Gross and Grambsch in investigating university goals demonstrated that surveys can be used to ascertain some useful data about the goals of academic institutions. In particular, the kind of goals being pursued, the level of satisfaction with them and the degree of consensus regarding the goals. Unfortunately, the authors did not address the issue of what to do once the goals are identified. Consequently, there is no discussion of how goal establishment might be used to help promote and manage institutional change. Gross and Grambsch's work was useful in its attempts to clarify goals *per se*; in addition, they set the agenda for research into the purposes of higher education in the USA for the next decade.

Following on from Gross and Grambsch is the work carried out at the Education Testing Service and reported by Peterson and Uhl (1977). The instrument developed at the ETS was the Institutional Goals Inventory. This inventory shared a number of similarities with that developed by Gross and Grambsch. The basic version of the IGI consists of 90 statements of goals, and respondents are asked to indicate how important each goal is in their institution and how important each goal should be. Widespread use of the IGI has been made in North America and elsewhere, and several versions of it exist to measure goals in different types of educational organization.

The inventory was originally developed to help reconcile the conflict regarding goals perceived to exist within institutions; for example, whether the institution should emphasize academic learning or vocational preparation, and how quality of provision could be maintained in the light of demands for wider access. The goal statements in the inventory were developed in the following manner: 'We relied on our collective judgement as higher education professionals to identify goal dimensions that we regarded as currently of high importance in the broad post-secondary education community' (Peterson and Uhl 1977). Such judgement was influenced by previous work on goals, for example that of Gross and Grambsch. The IGI is envisaged to be used as part of a larger institutional effort to review and revise goals that is participative and collects data from sources other than just the inventory.

The shortcomings of the IGI itself as a method of mission establishment in the British context, are that the instrument is lengthy and culturally specific in its references to the American higher education system and its

concerns. Like Gross and Grambsch, Peterson and Uhl's (1977) primary concern in designing the IGI was the establishment of institutional goals. They were not concerned with the management of goal achievement within institutions, or the process of reconciliation of differences between groups.

Dissatisfied with the general trend in goals research, Doucette *et al.* (1984) sought to establish an alternative conceptual framework for the study of purpose. While this approach had at its heart the use of survey methodology, it also represents an attempt to promote change through its focus on linking goals with individual behaviour. Consequently, this work will be discussed in detail in the next section on promoting change.

Some attempts have been made to use the IGI approach in Britain. One of the first was carried out by Norris (1978), in a small-scale study at the University of Leeds. The aim of Norris's work was to 'encourage debate on the relationship between goals, project selection, resource allocation and performance criteria', with particular reference to the Centre for Computer Studies at the University of Leeds. Norris considered that no allocation of scarce resources to teaching and research would be valid unless the goals underlying the provision were understood. Consequently, he wished to establish the goals of the Leeds Centre. Norris used a modified version of the IGI with a pilot group of thirteen respondents. Although he sought permission to carry out a larger scale study following the pilot, no support was forthcoming, so his investigation was abandoned. Norris identified possible conflicts in the four areas of vocational preparation, contract research, research in social science and university governance. Apart from his adaptation of the IGI, Norris's study is of little value because of the restricted nature of the research and the lack of discussion of the method used or the results obtained.

Laycock (1982) also used a modified version of the IGI at North East London Polytechnic. Goal statements were generated by reference to the polytechnic's statement of intent, discussions with the staff, from a pilot study and also included some statements not seen as consistent with polytechnic policy to act as check items. The results of the survey suggested that the majority of the staff believed that there could be no responsible planning without goal definition and that concern with establishing goals was more apparent higher up the educational hierarchy. In summing up the rest of the results, Laycock (1982) states:

> Undeniably there is some disquiet at the institution concerning its governance, its research policy, its relationship with the local community, its ability to respond to a changing economic world and the extent to which it can provide a comprehensive range of post-experience courses.

Having completed the study, Laycock (1982) was faced with the problem of what next, and acknowledges the 'inherent difficulty in evaluating the translation of higher education goals from ideology into action'. As he acknowledged, the goals discovered can be viewed merely as 'flags of rhetoric'

and that rational decision making based on the existence of goals is a rare thing. Rather, he postulated a political model where organizational purpose is determined by commitments made by organization members in the course of bargaining for resources. Laycock accepts that the mere existence of an agreed set of goals does little to affect the day-to-day processes of the polytechnic.

Allen (1988) is critical of the adaptation of the IGI for use in Britain. Apart from raising the question of what use institutions make of IGI results, Allen considers the IGI questionnaire 'far too long and in many other ways inappropriate for use in a British context'. Following a survey investigation of the goals of British universities, which provided little useful information, Allen proposed his own procedure for clarifying goals. This included the following stages:

1. Using published sources of data and interviews, seek answers to questions related to: (a) the goals of the environment and (b) the goals of the specific university. Allen suggested what these questions might be.
2. Ascertain which university activities have been given additional resources and which have had resources taken away.
3. Analyse what the university is actually doing in terms of courses offered, research undertaken, etc.
4. Ascertain if any evaluation of progress towards goals is being carried out (use of performance indicators, assessment of teaching effectiveness, employers' opinions of graduates, etc.).
5. Use the information gathered to produce a draft mission statement, or to modify an existing statement. This could be further refined to produce goal statements for individual departments or courses.
6. Finally, review the process and ask yourself if you are satisfied with the goals of the university, and if not, what are you going to do about it?

Allen's work stopped short of informing a debate about goals in higher education in general, and although a procedure for the establishment of goals was suggested, no consideration was given to the organizational processes whereby goals are translated into actions and policies which direct institutional life. As Allen (1988) himself stated: 'If you are not satisfied with the existing goals, you will have to consider how to bring about change. The implementation of change is outside the scope of this book'. What is interesting about Allen's work, however, is his idea of inferring or eliciting goals from practice, rather than from the use of surveys. By scrutinizing published information, resource allocation decisions and by interviewing, Allen proposed an alternative method rooted in practice.

In summary, three techniques of mission establishment are suggested: the use of standard surveys, the use of interest groups and through inference. Survey methods are popular in the USA and generally rely on the use of the IGI, or a derivative such as the CCAS. These instruments have been developed specifically for the use of higher educational institutions and thus could be put to use in this country, but for the culturally specific

nature of their content. Nevertheless, they could be adapted if it was considered that they have a value in mission establishment. Surveys have the benefit of allowing widespread consultation, including groups outside the institution but who are 'stakeholders' in it. There still exists, however, the potential difficulty of reconciling different views on the proposes of an institution.

Allen (1988) did not consider it appropriate to adapt American survey style approaches to the British context, partly because they are too long and partly because they still leave the question of what to do with the goals once established via the survey. Allen's more pragmatic method of goal establishment suggests the scrutiny of public statements and actions, followed up by interviews, to establish the goals of a university. Whereas a survey approach establishes goals and then looks to managerial action to validate the goals, Allen appeared to adopt a more practical approach, whereby the goals are inferred from managerial action. This latter approach has the disadvantage of not initiating a process in which the mission of an institution is discussed, something which a number of writers consider to be as beneficial as ascertaining the goals, or mission, itself; and of being dominated by management. However, it may reflect more accurately the real mission of the institution as determined by the most powerful groups within it.

Mission establishment by interest groups can be carried out more formally, as in the case of Lancashire Polytechnic. This method appears to generate more discussion and perhaps as a consequence more communication between groups within an institution. It may not permit such widespread consultation as a survey, yet because it is argued through the institution in a series of meetings, may result in a statement which can be more readily adopted and which is more realistically rooted in institutional processes. The actual use of methods of mission establishment are examined in Part 2 of this book.

This review of the methods of mission establishment shows that various methods exist to develop mission statements. Whether such missions actually affect the function and operation of organizations is much more problematic, and is discussed in a later section on promoting change.

Characteristics of an effective mission statement

It is clear from what has been said so far that the effectiveness of mission is linked largely to the process of mission establishment. However, there is a body of work which examines the effectiveness of mission statements themselves. This is useful to consider in order to ascertain whether any features of the statements are influential in determining their reception within an organization, and their impact upon organizational processes. This section summarizes the views of three different writers on such features and establishes seven core characteristics. These three views have been

selected as representative of a variety of writers who have sought to identify the necessary components of a mission statement. They are cross-cultural, representing British, Australian and American views.

First, Bowman (1990) from Britain states that a good mission statement might include the following:

1. A statement of beliefs and values.
2. The needs that the firm will satisfy.
3. The markets within which the firm will trade.
4. How those markets will be reached.
5. The technologies that the firm will use.
6. Attitudes to growth and financing.

He further adds:

> Good mission statements or 'visions' are inspiring and exciting. They need to be specific enough to act as a 'tie-breaker' (e.g. when it comes to the crunch quality is more important than meeting delivery targets), whilst at the same time it should be general enough to leave room for people to exercise initiative.

Beare et al. (1989), in an Australian book on school management, summarizes Brown's (1984) six principles of mission statements:

> First, it defines what we want to become, rather than what we are doing now. Secondly, it gives 'an appropriate criterion for defining the business', what category of enterprise this attempts to be. Thirdly, the definition must strike a balance between being too broad (and therefore vague) and being too narrow (and therefore too specific). Fourthly, it must not contain chaff, empty phrases and terms. Fifthly, 'all those who will be effected by it in a significant way ought to grasp its implications and be able to live with them.' And finally, the statement must be short, preferably fewer than 25 words.

David (1986), in his classic American text on strategic planning, comments that:

> Specifically, an effective mission statement can be viewed as having ten characteristic components. These components are identified below, along with the corresponding questions that a mission statement should answer.
>
> 1. Customers – Who are the enterprise's customers?
> 2. Products or services – What are the firm's major products or services?
> 3. Markets – Where does the firm compete geographically?
> 4. Technology – What is the firm's basic technology?
> 5. Concern for survival, growth and profitability – What is the firm's attitude towards economic goals?
> 6. Philosophy – What are the fundamental beliefs, values, aspirations, and philosophical priorities of the firm?

7. Self concept – What are the firm's major strengths and competitive advantages?
8. Concern for public image – What is the firm's desired public image?
9. Reconciliatory effectiveness – Does the mission statement effectively address the desires of key stakeholders?
10. Inspiring quality – Does the mission statement motivate and stimulate its reader to action?

Although as David (1986) states, 'statements of mission can and do vary in length, content, format and specificity', it is possible to identify some common strands in these various statements of effectiveness and summarize some core elements. For example, all three writers emphasize that the mission statement must specify what kind of enterprise it is; that is, what major products or services it will supply to the customer. In addition, all three stress the importance of making the statement 'speak' to the members of the organization, so that it is in line with their views, so that it inspires them. Several of the elements are held in common by two of the writers and are inferred by the third: the need to specify what markets the enterprise will trade in, and what its basic beliefs and values are. The characteristics of specifying technology, attitudes towards economic growth, and striking a balance between generality and specificity are mentioned by two of the writers. Condensing the points of major agreement enables the following characteristics of an effective mission statement to be summarized:

1. It should specify clearly the nature of the enterprise in terms of its products or services.
2. It should reflect the concerns of organization members.
3. It should specify the enterprise's markets and customers.
4. It should specify the beliefs and values prized by organization members that it wishes to communicate.
5. It should specify the technology in use.
6. It should specify the growth policy of the organization.
7. It should be general enough to be flexible, but specific enough to enable priorities to be established.

In 1987, Pearce and David obtained 61 mission statements from the American Fortune 500 companies. These statements were compared for content with a list of eight key components of mission statements derived from a search of the literature. These eight key components matched the first eight noted above from David (1986). The empirical work confirmed that all eight of the components were found to exist in the mission statements appearing with an average frequency of 66 per cent.

In a later survey, David (1989) analysed 75 mission statements obtained from companies listed in *Business Week's* publication of the top 1000 firms. Again, the statements were compared with a list of key components, exactly the same as that in the previous study, except that an extra component was added – 'concern for employees'. The results confirmed that the three

most common components of a mission statement in America's most successful companies were: concern for customers, definition of the firm's major products or services, and concern for public image. The applicability of these criteria to the mission statements produced by British F/HE establishments is questionable, given that they refer primarily to commercial organizations, and are largely influenced by the cultural context of the USA. The research discussed later in this book suggests different criteria of effectiveness for the British educational context.

Promoting change

The purpose of this section is to establish how the mission process might be instrumental in promoting change in organizations. It has already been suggested that in order for change to occur, the statements need to be evidenced in the actions of management and agreed across the institution. This suggests that strategic planning linked to the mission, and widespread participation in mission development, are two aspects of the process of promoting change. Hoyle (1986) suggests three possible reasons why missions fail in educational settings: when they fail to be converted into practice, when they fail to involve or convert staff, and when they fail to interpret the environment correctly. I intend to look at the various facets of the mission concept and analyse their impact upon organizational procedures. The facets, as established in Chapter 2, are: goal- and objective-setting, assumption of consensus, participation and market orientation.

Goal- and objective-setting

One study which attempted to analyse the problems of translating goals into action was undertaken by Romney (1978). He used the IGI as a basis for a survey that 'posed to respondents a long list of questions about what their institutions' goals should be and how progress towards those goals should be assessed'. The survey was administered to 1150 people at 45 different American colleges and universities. The results indicated that there was widespread agreement on what the institutions' goals should be, and on the criteria for assessing progress towards these goals. There was also much scepticism about the value of the kind of performance indicators currently used in education.

Romney (1978) acknowledges the limitations of his work when he states that much research is needed regarding the translation of general goal statements into measurable, observable objectives. He also recognizes that in addition to the views of faculty and administrators, those of students and local community members are also important. In essence, Romney's study is really an example of a modified use of the IGI in that the instrument

itself is the main focus of the study. There is no attempt to look at the process of goal establishment, or to examine the process by which organizations try to achieve their goals, other than to suggest that performance indicators should be established through consultation with faculty that can assist in the measurement of progress towards mission achievement. Implicit in the notion of performance indicators, however, is the idea that someone is responsible for achieving the goals or objectives set within the institution and that these can be measured and progress towards achievement assessed. Part of Romney's proposals for translating goal establishment into organizational action and change involves realizing goal achievement through management planning and measures of achievement.

Doucette *et al.* (1984) believe that the application of goals research to practical management has largely failed. This is because attempts to relate goals and missions to more concrete and useful objectives have been unsuccessful, because there is an assumed relationship between establishing qualitative goal statements and achieving quantitative objectives which is more apparent than real. As a consequence, goals do not reflect the reality of individual behaviour, and therefore the challenge to link institutional goals to individual behaviour still exists. Doucette *et al.* argue for an alternative approach involving the use of the construct of activity. Activities are defined in terms of the services the institution provides and the clientele for whom the services are provided. This construct combines the intention of goals and the measurability of objectives.

The validity of this approach was tested in a study of the missions of community colleges in Arizona (Richardson *et al.* 1982) and further developed in a later study of the missions and priorities of universities in Arizona (Richardson *et al.* 1984). The purpose of the first of these two studies was to define the colleges in specific operational terms and to assess the support provided for these operational missions by the various constituencies of the colleges. Defining the mission in operational terms involved a review and development process that culminated in the production of the Community Colleges Activities Survey (CCAS). The survey was administered to the colleges' various constituent groups – that is, state legislators, state boards of directors of community colleges, governors, college administrators, faculty and a random sample of registered voters.

This research model was slightly modified for the second study by the development of an additional survey which sought the views of students. Both projects produced manageable lists of activities, which formed the basis of mission statements for the colleges and universities which were stated in operational terms (twelve for the community colleges and ten for the universities). Richardson and co-workers' research shows that missions can be established using the concept of activity rather than goals. Because activity combines both the intention of goals and the measurability of objectives, it is more likely that the mission can be operationalized, because of the greater degree of specificity. Some examples of activity statements follow:

- *Mission element*: Providing courses and associate degree programmes to students who are of college age and older.
- *Example activity statement*: Offer credit courses, certificates and degree programmes in business and public services, agriculture, technologies, health services and other occupational areas to adult students older than traditional college age to prepare them for jobs in these fields.
- *Mission element*: Providing special support services and programmes for students with high academic ability.
- *Example activity statement*: Offer special academic courses and programmes and special support services to students with high academic ability to attract them to the community college and to encourage excellence.

The work of Doucette, Richardson and colleagues focuses primarily on the utility of the concept of activity in generating mission statements and does not explore how mission statements, or the process of their construction, can promote change in organizations. It is assumed that statements written in activity terms reflect more clearly the intentions of the colleges and allow for more concrete decision making. The existence of a mission statement is accepted as sufficient to act as a basis of institutional management if it is developed using the concept of activity. What is useful in terms of this review is the acceptance that mission statements need to be capable of more effective operationalization if they are to be managerially useful.

Although Allen's (1988) work on university goals described earlier outlines no explicit strategy for implementing goals, his goal establishment procedure suggests a strategy of developing goals for individual departments and courses within an institution, and developing performance indicators to ascertain how successfully a university is achieving its goals. Again, this suggests that action on goals may only occur when the goal statements are operationalized through the use of management planning strategies.

Each of the examples discussed so far emphasizes the importance of operationalizing missions or goals so that they influence managerial action. It is clear that the existence of goal or mission statements alone is not sufficient to ensure their impact upon the processes of the institution. Each study recommends more specificity and more measurability. The studies are suggestive of a rational management planning approach as the key to promoting change through mission establishment.

Consensus

The mission concept is based upon an assumption of consensus in that the notion of institutional mission implies a mission for the whole institution to which all members subscribe. As discussed in Chapter 2, the political perspective postulates a constant struggle over the allocation of resources and influence, which mitigates against consensus and rational action based on

mission guidelines. Viewed from this perspective, organizational behaviour is the result of individual and group application of power, negotiation and interpersonal skills, such as manipulation, assertion and facilitation. Only in a highly competitive environment, perhaps, may the struggle between groups be played down to the benefit of the 'whole' organization.

The likelihood that a political perspective represents a more accurate interpretation of the decision-making climate within an institution than consensus, is suggested by a number of features of the approach. Political perspectives are concerned with interest groups. Clear interest groups exist in colleges, whether bound together by status or by shared values and beliefs. The perspective assumes that conflict is prevalent in organizations, that power has a significant influence on decision making and that the goals of organizations are varied and contested. This is because the different interest groups each have their own set of goals which they attempt to promote as the prime goals of the institution. As Bush (1986) remarks:

> The focus on interests and the conflict between groups offer a persuasive interpretation of the decision making process in schools and colleges. For many teachers the emphasis on power as the major determinant of policy outcomes is convincing and fits their day to day experience better than any other model.

Empirical evidence of the influence of interest groups in educational organizations is provided by writers such as Marland (1982) and Ebbutt and Brown (1978). Ebbutt and Brown also confirm that various committees and other groupings in colleges are the forum for conflict between participants. Hoyle (1982) is particularly concerned that micropolitical activity between interest groups becomes an important focus in organizational analysis and also points out that different aspects of power operate within educational organizations. In the corporate sector, Campbell (1989) found that consensus over the mission was difficult to establish. He notes:

> One problem faced by these companies is that they have found it hard to develop a consensus in the top management team. This can lead to long delays in the development of the mission, to the creation of a compromise statement with more political content than philosophy, or to a half hearted implementation programme. It is apparent that creating a mission is more difficult than developing strategy.

If difficulty exists in developing consensus in the corporate sector, where the objectives of the enterprise are generally clearer than in education, then the problem of achieving consensus is likely to be even more acute in education. Additionally, Campbell is writing about consensus among a management team, and it is to be expected that the broader the constituency the more difficult the problem of consensus becomes.

Dominick (1990) describes the process of revising the institutional mission at Wittenberg University in Ohio, and concludes that because of the number of separate groups with legitimate, but often incompatible interests,

major efforts at consensus building are necessary. He describes widespread activity to develop consensus, including the use of seven task forces involving more than 300 hours of deliberation, the use of the IGI, and the use of the delphi technique – a method of consensus-seeking in a group setting – as an aid to develop the preliminary statement of mission. Not surprisingly, he emphasizes the importance of committing sufficient budgetary resources to underwrite the costs of such activity.

Participation

As indicated in the introduction to this section on change, Hoyle (1986) notes the failure to involve or convert staff to the mission of the institution as one of the reasons why missions fail. He cites the examples of Terry Ellis at William Tyndale School and Michael Duane at Risinghill as two leaders in the school sector who failed to ensure the participation of staff in the mission of their schools and who eventually lost the confidence of their various stakeholders.

Fullan (1982), in his comprehensive review of research into the implementation of change in education, similarly establishes participation as a crucial factor in the successful implementation of change. Fullan's work focuses mainly on the research done in the North American context on curriculum change in schools, but most of what he says seems to be applicable to the British context also. Fullan identifies a number of factors which are crucial to implementation.

With regard to the innovation itself, Fullan considers that for an idea to be successfully received, it must be subject to discussion by participants of the need for it and how it will affect practice directly. The implication of this for mission establishment is that participants in the institution must have the opportunity to discuss why a mission statement is to be drawn up and what impact the mission will have upon the processes of the institution and on classroom practice. With regard to factors affecting the success of the innovation within an institution, Fullan considers teacher interaction to be critical. He believes implementation to be much more likely to occur where there is a joint addressing and resolving of implementation issues. Interaction is an essential element because implementation of change is 'a process of learning and resocialisation over a period of time involving people and relations among people in order to alter practice' (Fullan 1982).

In the mission context, this implies that once the mission is established, in order for it to impact upon the processes of the institution, there should be an ongoing and systematic discussion of how the mission affects the institution, and the involvement of staff in any issue arising out of attempted implementation. At the policy-making level, teachers must be involved in helping to define the change (or in this context, the mission). Fullan's work advocates complete involvement in the change from its initial conception, need and impact, through to resolving problems of implementation as

they occur. His analysis is the result of a detailed study of research reports into the implementation of change and thus his recommendations come from a firm base of practice.

Participation in the context of mission establishment refers to participation in the whole process, from consultation on the development of the mission as a member of one of the stakeholder groups, to involvement in the drafting and approval of the mission statement, to operationalizing the mission through the development of objectives, strategies and performance indicators. Such a level of participation for all is likely to be problematic.

A number of other projects on mission establishment, both inside and outside the field of further and higher education, provide support for the belief that participation is essential for promoting institutional change. Chan (1988), for example, in a study at DePaul University in the USA, reports that for strategic planning to be successful in creating a climate for change, there is a need to broaden faculty participation, although they may not always wish to be actively involved. Chan (1988) comments: 'The articulation of a mission statement is a crucial first step in strategic planning. As the mission becomes the basis for decision making and priority setting, sufficient time must be allowed for faculty consultation'.

Dominick (1990) shows that revision of a college mission statement through a broadly participatory process can provide a sharper sense of direction and priorities, and be a powerful mechanism for institutional change. Hipps (1982), in a study of three American universities, noted the following as elements necessary for successful organizational change: definition of mission, participation, an emphasis on communication and process, and the merging of individual and institutional goals through this process. In a corporate context, Anderson (1987) emphasized a method of participative discussion on the content and impact of the mission as essential to answering the question, 'How can the ideals of the mission be translated into reality?' Finally, in a health care context, Gibson *et al.* (1990) conclude that commitment to the strategic direction of a hospital can be improved by involving more levels of management and increasing communication about the necessary actions to achieve the mission.

Despite the emphasis on participation, Slater (1985) suggests that there is evidence to show that teachers are ambiguous about it, perhaps preferring a veneer of consultation. This involves great show being made about the existence of participatory structures, but in reality teachers prefer to collude in the exercise of power by managers because it frees them from responsibility and lets them get on with the job of teaching. A contrary view can rest on the argument that the business of education – that is, the promotion of learning – is a participatory process in which the student or consumer helps to create the product. This participatory ethos in learning may lead teachers to expect the same ethos to dominate the administration and management of educational organizations. Much of the work that has been done on the importance of participation has been contradictory, and perhaps the situational view of participation is the most appropriate. In this

view, the degree of employee participation in decision and policy making is contingent upon the nature of the problems which the decisions are designed to address, and the environment within which the organization operates. For example, in a highly competitive market, freedom of individuals within an organization to pursue their own ends, or operate contrary to the values of the organization, may be highly circumscribed by the emphasis on survival.

In reviewing some of the literature on participative decision making, and noting the contingent view, Dennison and Shenton (1987) remark:

> On the evidence available, any intention of maximising the participative opportunities of all staff in every school setting represents wasted effort. Headteachers have different perceptions of what participation means to them, and individual teachers vary in their appreciation of what is happening in their own schools. Individuals also have different needs for participation and even for the same teacher these are issue-dependant.

In summarizing the material presented in this section, it seems clear that it is very important to offer the opportunity to participate in developing and implementing the mission if it is to have an impact upon the institution. However, it is perhaps unlikely that all participants will wish to be involved in all aspects of this particular activity.

Market orientation

In his article on leadership and mission, Hoyle (1986) remarks that the development of missions is more likely to be observed in private schools than in state schools. While suggesting that this might to some extent be due to the type of leader to be found in private schools, he also acknowledges that the competitive position of private schools in the marketplace, and their need to communicate their distinctiveness to parents choosing between various 'products', necessitates mission establishment. This suggests a link between the need to respond to the environment, or the market, and the nature of the organization. In the private school sector, the need to offer parents what they want results in changes in the schools themselves, both in terms of their organization and curriculum.

Mintzberg (1979) notes this connection between environmental factors and organizational structure. He suggests four broad types of organizational structure which result from differing environmental conditions. Centralized bureaucratic structures are associated with simple, stable environments. Decentralised bureaucratic organizations exist when increasing complexity is characteristic of the environment. A centralized organic structure is linked to changing environmental conditions where devolving decision-making responsibility to specialists assists in responding to rapid change. The degree of overall control retained at the centre is variable, and

in such times of change a key organizational issue is often one of centralization versus decentralization. When the environment is both complex and dynamic, decentralized organic organizations may appear, in which a considerable degree of devolved responsibility and authority to specialists occurs.

Changes in environmental conditions may affect not only organizational structure, but also the strategic manner in which organizations react. For example, it is highly likely that as market conditions become increasingly influential, devices like mission establishment become more common. When forced by market conditions to examine their 'product range' and marketing strategy, the development of a clear mission can be the first step an organization takes in conducting a marketing audit.

The kinds of environmental conditions that have influenced the F/HE sector in recent years include the demographic downturn and the value-for-money debate initiated as a result of government policy. In these circumstances, colleges are facing a smaller pool of 'traditional' students and less resources with which to operate. In order to ensure that they retain their share of the shrinking pool and attract new types of students (e.g. adults and full-cost students) the sector has developed an increasing interest in marketing and responding to the desires of the market. This gradually developing ethos implies a closer link between the nature of commercial and F/HE organizations.

The 1984 NEDC/MSC report, *Competence and Competition*, demonstrates a firm belief in the link between responsiveness and college survival and growth when it urges colleges to:

> . . . go to their potential customers with the offer of providing for their needs and wishes at times and in ways which suit the individual. They should 'market' rather than 'sell', and make customers welcome on their own terms rather than pressing them into college convenience. They should persuade people to look on the education service as an ally, counsellor and friend.

Such market responsiveness, the report argues, would result in major organizational changes, such as a shift towards a customized curriculum, involving modularization, open learning, a negotiated curriculum and more open access.

Kedney and Parkes (1985) make a strong case for the responsiveness of the further education service and indicate how a whole range of organizational changes have taken place as a response to meeting market demand. Such changes include flexible staffing arrangements and college calendars, cross-college and cross-authority coordination, the redevelopment of staffing and resource needs, flexible course construction and administration, tailoring courses to individual employer needs, and the updating of materials and equipment. The series of brief case studies in the report provide clear evidence of changes in college structures and practices as a response to market demand.

Conclusion

Very little has been written specifically on the process of mission establishment and how it might influence organizational processes. Consequently, studies of a closely related nature have been considered in this chapter with the aim of attempting to isolate those aspects of the process that might promote change in organizations. This analysis has revealed five key points. First, it is insufficient simply to develop a mission statement and expect the statement to impact upon organizational processes. As a number of commentators have suggested, too often missions are not evidenced in the actions of management. Second, some kind of rational management planning process is frequently suggested as necessary to operationalize the mission. Third, there is some doubt about the utility of such rational planning approaches given that organizational behaviour may be more realistically represented as the product of bargaining and negotiation between interest groups over the allocation of resources and influence. Fourth, consultation with organization members is considered to be critical in the successful implementation of change. Finally, responsiveness to market conditions is also instrumental in promoting change.

4

Assessing the Claims for Mission

This chapter reports on research conducted at an institute of art and design, in which the perceptions of college staff were sought as to the general claims made of the mission process, with reference to sense of purpose, communication, decision making, evaluation and marketing. These particular aspects were chosen because a review of the claims made for the practise of mission establishment in Chapter 1 identified them as benefiting from the process of mission review. Following mission establishment, the institute was used to ascertain if any of the organizational features noted above had been affected; in short, if change had occurred as a result of the process.

We begin with a brief description of the institute and the methods used for data collection. This is followed by a discussion on comparative frames of reference. The main part of the chapter examines those aspects of organizational processes at the institute claimed in Chapter 1 to be favourably affected by the mission process. Finally, we evaluate the claims for mission, in the light of the research conducted at the institute.

The institute in which this research was carried out was recently formed through the merger of a school of art (North Westland), primarily offering degree courses in fine art and graphic design, and a college of art and design (South Westland), offering a range of Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) diplomas at both national and higher level. For reasons of confidentiality, the college will be known as the Westland Institute (a pseudonym). In the institute's prospectus, the principal describes the college as providing 'a rare opportunity to create a free standing monotechnic devoted to the provision of excellence in Art, Design and Craft education . . .'.

This research was specifically carried out for personal research purposes. No consultancy relationship existed and I was not an employee of the college. The data were collected on the basis of a confidential relationship between researcher and respondents, and anonymity was guaranteed.

The research site discussed in this chapter is the same as that described in Chapters 5 and 6. This chapter is included in the first part of this book, rather than Part 2, because of its links with the claims for mission outlined in Chapter 1. The research reported here and in Chapter 5 was carried out during the academic year 1988–89.

Westland Institute was chosen as a research site because:

1. A mission statement had recently been developed.
2. As a recently merged college attempting to combine two distinct academic cultures, the issue of purpose was a key one.
3. The institute was of a manageable size and scope to attempt a study of mission with the limited resources available to a lone researcher.

Methods of data collection

Three main methods of data collection were employed: interviews, document analysis and the use of a brief life-history sheet. Interviews were conducted with 16 of the institute's 41 full-time academic staff, which included the principal and two vice-principals. Interviews were also conducted with the institute's chief administrative officer and librarian, making a total of 18 interviewees. The respondents were selected as key informants because they represented different status levels and academic areas within the departments.

Documents were also used as data, not personal documentation (e.g. diaries, letters, life-histories, etc.) but what might be referred to as historical documentary sources, albeit very recent history in most cases. A third method of data collection was the life-history sheet. The stimulus for the use of this technique and ideas regarding the format came from Burgess (1984).

The data presented in the following sections are primarily in the form of extracts from interview transcripts approved by the respondents. The themes that emerge from an analysis of the transcripts provide the structure for the presentation of the data and the extracts illustrate these themes. At appropriate points, documentary material is introduced to support or illustrate comments made in the interviews.

To enable the reader to identify the respondents and their positions within the institute's hierarchy, each extract is followed by the respondent's initials (changed to preserve anonymity) and grouping to which they belong. The 18 respondents can be grouped as follows: members of the directorate (n = 4); heads of department (HOD), including library (n = 5); fine art (n = 2); design (n = 2); diploma and diagnostic (D&D) (n = 4); and theoretical and extramural (T&EM) (n = 1).

Extracts from transcripts feature prominently in this chapter and in Chapter 5.

Comparative frames of reference

Before discussing the perceptions of the staff, it is useful to consider the concept of effectiveness. The reason for this is as follows. If the claims made of the mission process are valid, it is reasonable to assume that an institution will be more effective in its operations. Planning, decision making, communication, performance assessment and marketing strategies will all

have been improved. Together, the claims made of the process have the potential to improve institutional effectiveness. When the claims were discussed in Chapter 1, they were taken largely at face value. This chapter explores the validity of these claims.

In a report written for the Association of Colleges of Further and Higher Education (ACFHE) and the Further Education Unit (FEU), whose aims were to 'establish the feasibility of developing a set of criteria which will provide a viable and valid framework for an educational audit of Further and Higher Education', McAllister *et al.* (1986) concluded that although the literature on organization effectiveness suggests approaches to the study of the effectiveness of educational institutions, no clear way forward exists. The authors identified five categories of approach through which to gain an assessment of effectiveness: (1) the measurement of goal achievement; (2) an assessment of the organization's ability to extract resources from its environment; (3) an assessment of the functioning of the organization's internal processes such as decision making; (4) an assessment of participants' satisfaction gained from working in the organization; and (5) an assessment of the organization's impact on its environment and in particular its least advantaged members. Some of these are more concerned with notions of internal effectiveness (1, 3 and 4), others with notions of external effectiveness (1, 2 and 5). It is acknowledged that rather than talk about organization effectiveness, it is more appropriate to talk of 'effectiveness', as different constituent groups of the organization will have different conceptions of effectiveness. Despite these different elements of effectivenesses, the one most commonly espoused is the view that an organization is effective, in so far as it meets its objectives (category 1 above). This definition of effectiveness features in most government pronouncements about the efficiency and effectiveness of F/HE (e.g. DES 1985, 1987b).

Despite their disappointment with the state of the art of effectiveness measurement, McAllister *et al.* (1986) concluded that it would be possible to propose a set of procedures for conducting an audit of a college's effectiveness. The 1989 FEU report, *Towards an Educational Audit*, sets out these procedures and provides a set of probes or questions.

The audit report can be used as a cross-check on organization members' perceptions of the functioning of the college. An example would be the development of a clear sense of purpose, one of the benefits claimed to result from the mission process. If respondents claim that they are not aware of a clear sense of purpose for the institute following mission establishment, then an interviewer could draw the conclusion that none exists and that the mission process has failed in this respect. However, it may be that a clear sense of purpose does indeed exist and there is evidence to support this. The audit probes suggest the types of evidence that might exist in a college to support this belief. If no such evidence is available, then this adds greater weight to the perceptions of respondents. In other words, the probes can act to help confirm or refute the particular perceptions of respondents.

The inventory and its probes thus act as alternative indicators of the validity of claims for the mission process, which can be set against the perceptions of organization members. If the claims for mission are deemed invalid by members, then some element of cross-check can be gained by applying an audit probe to the same area. Correlation of response across the two measures suggests greater validity of the original perception. The probes therefore act as a retrospective, comparative frame of reference. Consequently, the probes will be referred to throughout the rest of this chapter to help assess the perceptions of the respondents.

Sense of purpose

The interviews suggest that perceptions of the clarity of the new institute's sense of purpose vary depending upon the viewpoint of the observer. This is consistent with a point to be made in the next chapter, in which satisfaction with the mission is related to status, as only members of the directorate were involved in its development. It was obvious from comments made by all members of the directorate that they felt that the purpose of the institute was quite clear in their minds. Typical of these comments is the following:

> We have obviously given this consideration in the directorate. We have in fact already defined the purpose within the mission statement, which has been submitted to governors and has been accepted. It's a clear and precise mission statement, it's not too lengthy and it outlines clearly the purpose of the institution. Basically we understand this college as being a centre of excellence for art and design in the locality, the region and in fact nationally, with ladders of opportunity all the way through the courses, etc. These are very clearly defined in the mission statement, which is, as I understand, understood throughout the institution. So we have got a clear purpose, yes. (L.H.: Directorate)

Despite the optimism of L.H., it was evident that there were many in the lower echelons of the institute who did not share this view. It has been suggested by Laycock (1982) that the higher up the hierarchy one is, the clearer the sense of purpose. This suggestion appears to receive some support here, for the statement that follows expresses a view repeated by many respondents (eight of nine) below head of department level:

> From within the institute, no idea of the purpose whatsoever, there's been no statement of purpose beyond the obvious, i.e. that we are creating an new institute and we are going to make it work. My own understanding of purpose comes from other sources of information like TV, media, Mrs Thatcher standing up and making speeches, etc., from that I conclude that the purpose is to save money, to rationalize, streamline, make efficient in their terms and I'm afraid I have a cynical view of it because I think it is a deeply political purpose. (R.K.: D&D)

This is an example of the cynicism with which the mission process was viewed by those staff who perceived consideration of the mission to be imposed from outside the institute in an effort to save money, dilute quality and raise money in the marketplace.

Four of five heads of department also felt that a clear sense of purpose at institute level was lacking. The following comment illustrates these views:

> I feel that I wouldn't be able to say with confidence that the institute knows where it goes. I think that there is a perception developing in which things are more clear, but I wouldn't think that the college as an institution knows it too well. (B.F.: HOD)

Despite the schism at different levels on the overall purpose of the institute, agreement appeared to exist among all respondents on the clarity of purpose at course level: 'there's a pretty clear understanding of what the objectives of courses are' (D.W.: HOD). However, differing approaches to teaching within the courses clearly existed. The often discussed tension between the vocational and the educational was frequently mentioned due, in part perhaps, to the hostile political climate perceived by college staff and noted in the discussion of context in the next chapter.

Ten audit probes relate to the statement of purpose and, from the comments made in the interviews, it became clear that at least two key criteria of clarity of purpose were not present at the time of data collection. The probes linked to these criteria are 'Is the mission or statement of purpose widely understood?' and 'Is the mission or purpose of statement "owned" by those affected by it?' It is suggested that this was not the case for the institute at the time of data collection. The remaining probes cover such areas as the involvement of various groups in determining purpose and the need to review and prioritize. As noted in the next chapter on the mission statement developed in the institute, none of these criteria were met, thus lending strong support to the participants' perception that no clear sense of purpose was shared within the institute.

A further sub-unit of purpose in the audit document was infrastructural organization. With regard to this, the question was posed, 'Does the purpose or mission statement direct the activities of each component element of the institutional infrastructure?' Two respondents made comments directly linked to this issue. For instance:

> I feel that at the moment, the routes to and from the policy are not as complete as they should be. The form of it is there, but operations of things like the academic board are, in a sense, not activated by that policy. (M.M.: HOD)

This suggests that organizational procedures were not linked to the mission statement and that the statement stands isolated from managerial practice. How far the statement influenced practices such as decision making and communication is discussed in the following sections.

Decision making

A comprehensive decision-making system appears to have been developed to serve the new institute, which involves course committees and assessment boards as the basic level of decision making, each committee being a sub-committee of the departmental boards of studies. The academic board is responsible for the planning, coordination, development and oversight of the academic work and is subject to the decisions of the governing body.

How was decision making perceived by the staff? In short, the perception was that the structures were (1) developing and (2) bureaucratic, in that they were too dependent on set procedures and the production of paper-work, and that action rarely resulted from committee decisions. Seven respondents recognized that it was early days for the new structures and they had to be given time to work. For example:

> It's fragmented to a certain degree, but again I'd go back to the fact that we're in early days. (L.H.: Directorate)

> There has been a lack of structure in the institution, so the fine art department was quite autonomous, like the design department was. There is an attempt now within the new institution, rightly so, to create a more cohesive overall management. I haven't been able to see the result of that yet. There are a few areas where I feel I have some criticism, but it's too early and I feel that I have to refrain. (B.F.: HOD)

In conjunction with the feeling that the new structures needed time in order to prove their worth, was the feeling that the structures were too bureaucratic and unlikely to produce results. Complaints from nearly two-thirds of the respondents were made about the volume of paper produced, and the lack of a clear focus, as the following quote illustrates:

> They don't work, unfortunately, there is confusion, the crux of the problem is that we've taken refuge in wads of paper, regulations, etc., but we're not thinking about basic issues. Meetings are used to rubber stamp things like course evaluation . . . The bulk of it is still tutors' reports from year one, term one and they're pretty bland.
>
> When you have a drink after work, you get the kind of discussions you should be hearing in meetings. You get people relaxing and saying, 'if we had more illustration in the first term, we could have cut the staffing in the third term and we could have had more trips. . . .', you know the sort of thing and it's quite productive, but it shouldn't be happening over a drink, it should happen in the meeting. (B.D.: HOD)

Two respondents referred to the idea that most artists are not at home with paper and that they operate far better in a visual medium; consequently, the 'culture' of committees and papers is an alien one. A more common complaint from a quarter of those interviewed concerned the perceived lack of action following on from committee decisions:

> At the meetings like boards of study and course committees which I attend, you can report something fully or put forward proposals, it's minuted, but it never gets taken further, it's buried. A lot of things are aired, but that's the end of it. (A.O.: Design)

One explanation for such lack of action may lie in the nature of decision making in academic institutions like schools of art, which can be characterized as organized anarchies. In such organizations, decisions are not made and carried out as a result of rational action, but action occurs when 'shifting combinations of problems, solutions and decision makers happen to make action possible' (Cohen and March 1974). In making recommendations for how to exercise leadership in an organized anarchy, Cohen and March (1974) argue:

> Energy is a scarce resource. If one is in a position to devote time to the decision making activities within the organisation, he has a considerable claim on the system.
>
> It is a mistake to assume that if a particular proposal has been rejected by an organisation today, it will be rejected tomorrow.

There is some evidence to suggest that the decision-making process within Westland Institute may be susceptible to such tactics, and the following comments appear to echo those of Cohen and March:

> There's a feeling that decisions get made through energy, if people are prepared to invest the energy then things happen, but I think it would be healthier in a very simple way, to define why things are important to the college and the budget should follow this and the appropriate administrative back up. (M.M.: HOD)

The following respondent had argued that it was best to go straight to the directorate in order for decisions to be made, as the committee structure did not appear to be very effective. When asked if decisions got made using this strategy, she replied: 'They seem to, if you just keep on, keep on at it, it just seems to happen. The formal structures aren't quite so helpful at the moment' (J.S.: T&EM).

The impression gained from the interviews was that while the institute's management were struggling to introduce more rational decision-making procedures, these had not yet changed the manner in which decisions appeared to be made. Consequently, the description of decisions arising out of a random collision of problems, people and solutions appeared more apt. The eight audit probes concerning decision making place emphasis upon a clear and widely understood decision-making procedure, which involves those at the lower levels of the organization and disseminates widely decisions that have been taken. These criteria are congruent with the respondents' perceptions that the institute's decision-making structures were not fully effective, given that these structures were at an early stage of development.

Consequently, participants were probably not fully conversant with the procedures and possibilities. It's clear also that a quarter of respondents below head of department level felt that they were not as involved in the procedure as they might be: 'They're fine if you attend them, I'm talking about staff who don't attend them. The only way I can get information is to interrogate my own course leader' (R.K.: D&D). Another suspected conspiracy in management style:

> I suppose meetings are really to inform us of what the directorate want to do, so the decisions are made before the meetings. I feel that . . . it's a common enough strategy, if you don't want to involve the majority in the decision-making process, then you make sure that all those things which are contentious don't come up on the agenda. (J.R.: D&D)

Communication

There appeared to be a planned system of communication developed to disseminate information, which is described in the following extract by a member of the directorate:

> What we've tried to establish here is a line management system where every decision that the directorate took, unless it was personal or somehow privileged information, we would distribute to the heads of department, for them to tell their colleagues within their department what's going on. So we thought that was an efficient way of doing it. Having said that it's not worked. There's been a stop there somewhere along the line. (D.I.: Directorate)

Most senior members of staff appeared to be aware of the system and of its limitations:

> The communication channels here rely heavily on heads of department and there's a lot of work laid on HODs now and not all of them have got principal lecturers in post, so those channels are very bad. The management have tried very hard to improve things, they've had a broadsheet printed and the academic board minutes and all the other minutes are available in public, but no-one reads them because, as they were not print-based, people don't trust them. (B.D.: HOD)

The majority of those below head of department level were distrustful of the professed desire to communicate:

> There is obviously a system being set up for communication to pass down the line, but it's fairly obvious that not everything will be passed down. There's been a sense here that the new directorate are making a lot of decisions behind doors that only some people are privy to. (E.C.: Fine Art)

Much rumour circulated around the time of the proposed merger and some bad feeling about consultation appears to have remained. One respondent commented: 'A lot of the negative feelings which have arisen over the merger have been because of lack of consultation' (A.O.: Design).

All members of the directorate and the heads of department appeared to be aware of the communication problem and tried to take steps to improve it. The following is an example:

> Those things that I've had to do have taken up a hell of a lot of time and I suppose some things have been neglected. I say all this, but I'm not getting around to communicating it all, so I'm depending on heads of department to communicate it and some HODs are more adept at it than others. So we've decided to issue a monthly broadsheet so that staff are up to date on what's happening and what's likely to happen. (P.S.: Directorate)

The audit probes relating to communication concern the use of multiple channels of communication to keep staff informed and ensure an adequate system of dissemination of information. It was clear, at this point, that these multiple channels did not exist and that the college had more to do to ensure adequate dissemination and to employ more channels of communication.

Evaluation

A comprehensive system of course evaluation exists at Westland Institute. Reports are written based upon a set of questions which are posed to heads of department, tutors and students. The reports are circulated and points raised in the reports are used in course committee and board of studies meetings. In addition to this, external assessment of the course occurs and summaries of the reports written by external assessors are also considered by the relevant committees.

A criticism of this system made by four respondents was that it is bureaucratic: 'the level of documentation has been diabolical, four pages when four lines would be sufficient' (P.S.: Directorate). More serious is the view expressed by two of the interviewees that the evaluation remains a paper exercise. For example:

> I think evaluation is a strange thing. There was a time when I refused to fill in any more evaluation reports. My reason for that was that I wasn't going to bother to do any more because I didn't feel that any of the things that I complained about or wanted to happen were addressed. What's the point of doing evaluation reports if nothing's going to happen, and I was told that we can't do everything at once. I wondered whether anybody actually read them. (A.O.: Design)

This complaint is echoed in the following comments, with the added rider that lack of follow-up may be due more to differing perspectives than inefficiency:

> It all goes down onto paper, it all goes into the file and thank God most people forget about it then, it's a paper exercise that we are asked to do. I think the act of writing it might actually make you think hard about what's been done over the year. It is a means of getting other people to understand your point of view. But then again, whether any points are acted on is largely in the lap of the gods, because so much of it is based upon philosophies and personal beliefs about what is good practice and what isn't, someone might say I don't actually agree with that so I'm not going to do it. (E.C.: Fine Art)

Other aspects of evaluation can include consumer perceptions of the product, as evidenced by data such as employment rates on course completion, and evaluation of the staff delivering the courses, often referred to as appraisal. In areas like fine art, employment rates are not seen by the staff as appropriate measures for courses which arguably are preparing students for self-employment as artists or sculptors. However, the staff argued that many fine art students do enter employment, but often after a period of time spent out of the traditional employment market. This may be because 'the teaching here can be too sophisticated to show immediate results; they need at least two years to focus on something because the experience they have here is very vast' (B.F.: HOD), or because students move into occupations which are not directly related to fine art, yet do require the exercise of a creative and flexible mind which can be attributed to the kind of experience and learning gained from a fine art course.

In the absence of employment rates, postgraduate course entry rates are often viewed as a kind of success indicator by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. In design, employment rates can yield useful data if they are collected systematically. Problems can occur with the reliability of the data: 'it is evident that those records (first destination statistics) are only as good as the response you get from students' (L.H.: Directorate). B/TEC level courses are primarily feeders for the more advanced courses like Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degrees, and again progression onto other courses is more of an appropriate 'success' indicator than employment rates.

The development of certain intangible qualities, extremely difficult to measure in an objective sense, were also seen by some of the staff as important indicators of the quality and achievement of the courses. These are referred to in the following extract:

> There is something else which is more intangible . . . there is an aspect of the course which cannot be evaluated entirely through the standard of the work, though that has to be the bedrock criterion. But it's not the only thing, what I'm about to talk about is something that is not

> quantifiable, spin-off benefits like personal development, personal growth, the quality of communication that takes place between staff and students and between students and students. Our job is to provide a sympathetic environment where art can be made and talked about. (C.H.: Fine Art)

While such qualities may be difficult to quantify, it is possible to set up procedures which record student development; for example, through a tutorial programme which can make use of individual student profiles. Student self-assessment can also be used. Together such techniques can record the development of 'intangible' qualities.

A large number of audit probes relate to the general area of evaluation of courses, student performance and satisfaction and staff development. Examples of some of these probes include: How does the institution review and monitor its courses? Has the institution a staff review system in operation? Does the institution monitor external satisfaction (e.g. employers, LEA, etc.)? Does the institution monitor internal satisfaction (staff, students)? Is student satisfaction evaluated? Is there an evaluation procedure relating to completions, drop-outs, attendance? Does the institution operate a comprehensive system of curriculum review and development? When the comments made by staff in the interviews are cross-referenced against probes such as these, then the institute appears to be developing an effective system of evaluation. Areas for possible improvement are the system of staff review and the monitoring of student outcomes and external satisfaction.

Marketing

Marketing and external relations involve a number of facets. Apart from the publicity promoting the institute, it also concerns the attitudes and responsiveness of staff, and relationships with schools, potential employers, funding bodies and the local community. In addition, it may be seen to include the quality of the curriculum offered to students as well as the experience of the students at interview. Respondents on the whole felt that marketing generally was not done well, although some aspects of marketing were effective. The following extract summarizes the view of the majority of respondents regarding the marketing issue:

> I think it [marketing] has been sadly lacking. The courses at the North Westland School of Art haven't changed, certainly in my period here. I feel that's short-sighted, we've stood still basically. We've developed a very good reputation nationally and our student work has proved itself, degree results have been excellent over the years and we've always had a demand for places that far exceeds supply, so there has been this complacency really. There's been no problem recruiting good students. We've got to sell ourselves to the local community, certainly contact with the local community at North Westland has been abysmal. At

> South Westland, the contact with the local community appears good. Now we're into a competitive situation, there are fewer students and we've got to attract those students and go out into local industry and sell ourselves there in terms of self-financing courses, consultancy, external commissions, etc. We've also got to go out into the marketplace and find out what people want. (L.H.: Directorate)

Problems in relating to the local community were perceived to have their origin in the lack of awareness of what goes on within an art school and in the traditional perception of art school students as 'bohemians and wasters' (P.A.: Design). The staff, however, were keen to refute this view:

> This is not true and never has been, the serious student has gone out and made big money for the country. In fact they've had to work more seriously to counteract this public reputation. Regarding the views of the local community here in North Westland, on the level of what they get up to, I think the community is mystified, they're not fully conversant with why a painter, for instance, is producing funny pictures which mean nothing to them. (P.A.: Design)

Also, some believed that an elitist attitude had pervaded at the North Westland site, which has mitigated against any regular contact with the local community. Clarity about the purpose of the institute might assist in marketing it to its various communities, but these comments suggest that no agreed image had been available to project.

A key aspect of the marketing policy, certainly at the South Westland site where practically all the students are recruited direct from school, is the relationship with schools. Considerable effort appeared to be put into developing this relationship, although staff acknowledged that there was always more that they could do:

> Part of my job, and a very big part, is liaising with schools to ensure that the right sort of message gets through. I've set up all sorts of groups, I've got a group working at the moment that was originally set up to examine admission procedures and I thought that was a lovely opportunity to find out what the teachers thought about the way we interview students, and it was an opportunity for us to devise a system which was seen and thought to be fair by the teachers in the schools and to inform them of the way we intended to go about selecting students for our courses. (A.M.: HOD)

Audit probes relating to marketing pose such questions as: Is there an institution marketing plan? What market intelligence sources inform the marketing planning? Is there a coherent promotional strategy? And how does marketing data inform course developments and course review activities? Measured against criteria such as these, the institute did not yet appear to be effective in the marketing sphere, and this perception is backed up by the respondents' views of the college's marketing strategy.

A number of probes also relate to external relations. These cover such considerations as whether or not the institution has positive links with schools, other local educational establishments, professional and examining bodies, the LEA and funding bodies. Another probe asks how the institute responds to local community and industry needs. Clearly, on these criteria, there is room for improvement in contact with the local community and industry, as suggested in the comments above.

The claims for mission

This assessment of the general claims made of the mission process as practised in Westland Institute reveals that the claims cannot be accepted at face value. The interviews reveal a number of issues which relate to the claims and qualify them. Each general claim will be considered in turn in the following paragraphs.

The first claim is that mission establishment leads to a clearer sense of institutional purpose, which enables an institution to determine its own fate more easily. However, where participants sense that the purpose they are being asked to adopt is not theirs, but a purpose imposed from outside the organization with which they may not agree, then the question of 'whose purpose?' becomes a key one. The majority of respondents below head of department level have expressed a cynicism about the latent agenda of mission establishment, which may be interpreted as the reorientation of the institute to enable it to become more market-led, and more efficient in terms of the utilization of resources. Because such features are perceived as cost-cutting, and detrimental to the character of art and design education, the establishment of institutional mission among those not in a managerial role appears to be associated with obliging those within the institute to adopt this agenda. This is in place of an opportunity to open up a fundamental debate about the basic purpose and role of the institute, which would reflect the concerns of all the key constituent groups. Where external pressures exist, which are seeking to influence the purpose of an institution, then the mission process may not serve to clarify purpose, but to confuse it by suggesting that an opportunity exists for participants to assert their own agenda, while having an agenda imposed upon them. This is likely to result in frustration and cynicism.

A second issue arises out of the claim that mission establishment helps to develop a clear sense of purpose. Such a claim can only be justified when the mission is linked to institutional procedures and thus actually directs decision making and other aspects of organizational behaviour. Clarity of purpose is exemplified through action; each action taken on behalf of the organization should illustrate its purpose. As was discussed in Chapter 3, it is insufficient merely to establish goals, objectives or missions and expect them automatically to impact upon the organization. The empirical work discussed in this chapter shows that the link between mission and practice

was not established at Westland Institute. Mission establishment alone does not lead to a clear sense of purpose. The mission needs to be operationalized in a way which leads to the elements of the mission influencing all aspects of organization practice.

The second claim made on behalf of the mission procedure is that it can assist decision making by providing a set of criteria against which choices can be evaluated. However, it is difficult to sustain this assertion if decision making is not judged to be a rational activity. Where decision making is rational, it is possible to see how decisions can be evaluated against the mission; but where decision making is the result of a political process, or an ambiguous process in which decisions occur due to an accidental convergence of people, problems and solutions, then the relevance of the mission to the decision is minimal. In Chapter 3, it was suggested that the assumption of consensus on mission is unrealistic and that a political process is more likely to feature in institutional life. In this chapter, the empirical work suggests that decisions made in formal forums were often not followed up. The gap between decisions taken in committees and the action or inaction that follows is often filled by political or pragmatic behaviour that takes no account of previous rational agreements.

The third claim is that mission establishment acts in facilitating communication. Again this claim needs to be carefully qualified. If the process is a participative one, then the claim to enhance communication may well be justified. If the process is a managerial one, then it is perhaps more likely that the process will lead to breakdowns in communication rather than improvements. This can lead to a lack of trust evident from some of the comments made by the respondents. The initial lack of involvement can be compounded by ineffective attempts to disseminate the mission once developed. If constituent groups are unaware of the mission, then it is difficult to claim that producing a mission statement has helped communication either within or outside the organization.

The fourth claim is that a clear mission can aid evaluation activity. This is because mission establishment involves setting some goals or objectives, and once these are established, it becomes easier to measure progress towards their attainment. However, this relies on the establishment of indicators of progress or performance and is therefore tied to the need to operationalize the mission, perhaps through some system of management planning. In such cases, responsibility for ensuring achievement of certain aspects of mission are assigned to various sections and individuals within the organization, who may have targets and time-frames to work within and whose success in achieving the mission may be measured. This style of strategic management was not evident within Westland Institute, and indeed follow-up evaluation activity of any kind was deemed poor.

The final general claim made on behalf of the mission process concerns clarification of marketing strategy. As a result of a mission process, an organization would have a clearer product or service to market. However, the links between mission establishment and a more effective marketing

strategy are not completely clear. If the mission produced reflects more the concerns of external agencies or management than it does ordinary organization members, then the likelihood is low that these members will actively promote it to the market. Market responsiveness of teachers may be more effectively discussed at the classroom level where the negotiability of the service provided to customers is more likely to ensure a match between service and demand than official mission statements. This may be particularly so with adult students, who are more able to articulate their needs and demands and thereby influence day-to-day classroom activity regardless of official doctrines of curricula or management.

The link between the mission and the development of a more consumer-led ethos in F/HE was discussed in Chapter 2, and it is clear that market responsiveness is a key feature of the mission process. However, the development of such an ethos relies on more than the creation of a mission statement alone. Along with this there must be a willingness on the part of teachers to change from being providers of a set service or product to listening to consumer requests and tailoring their products or services to meet these needs. While this has always occurred informally to some extent in the classroom, the creation of a real consumer-led ethos in F/HE involves curriculum, organizational and structural changes of a far-reaching nature. Examples of these include modularization, credit accumulation, accreditation of prior experiential learning, extended academic years, open learning, flexible provision, negotiated curricula, etc. Such changes may not be expected to occur without some resistance. Ball (1990a) associates these developments with a particular political ideology:

> The education policies of Thatcherism have involved a total reworking of the ideological terrain of educational politics and the orientation of policy making is now towards the consumers of education – parents and industrialists; the producer lobbies are almost totally excluded.

Thus it is likely that some may see developments such as those noted above as 'political', and therefore suspect. Others may resist the notion of too much market or consumer influence upon an educational establishment, charged with extending the boundaries of knowledge and introducing students to ideas and knowledge they may never have encountered before, and thus are unable to specify clearly what their needs might be. Similarly, such needs might be dismissed as ill-informed, or inappropriate to consumers' 'real', as yet unrealized, needs.

With regard to the claims made for the process, the responses have, on the whole, not supported these claims. Westland Institute was not perceived to have an overall clear sense of purpose, its mission was not widely understood or owned, nor was it linked to operational processes. A system of decision making was seen to be emerging, although it was felt to be bureaucratic, irrational and not always resulting in action. Additional channels of communication were required to ensure a more efficient flow of information. While evaluation procedures were also acknowledged as being bureaucratic,

there was a feeling that effective systems were being developed. Marketing was not seen to be done well; in particular, there was little contact with the local community and more effort was needed to promote the institute to local industry.

To take the claims for mission at face value is naive and simplistic. The claims can only be accepted if organization members believe they are free to establish a sense of purpose to which they can subscribe; if the claims are qualified by a number of prescriptions about the process of mission establishment relating to participation and operationalization; if assumptions of rationality in organization decision making are accepted; and if individual attitudes towards organizational and educational change are favourable.

Part 2

Methods of Mission Establishment

5

Methods of Mission Establishment 1: Interest Groups

This chapter examines one of the methods of mission development, that of establishment by interest groups, and assesses its utility in producing an effective mission statement and in promoting institutional change. The discussion is based on research work carried out at Westland Institute described in the previous chapter. The context for the mission establishment process in the institute is examined, as is the mission developed, the method used and its impact upon the organizational processes of the institute.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, a simple life-history investigation formed part of this research, and the results of this are discussed in this chapter as part of the exploration of the link between personal history and personal mission. The life-history is a personal documentary source. However, the limited scope of the exercise conducted in this study does not attempt to utilize the full potential of the technique as described by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989):

> The life history is usually collected over a fairly lengthy period of time and often supplemented with other observations and materials or documents pertaining to the individual. The life history is therefore constructed out of the researcher's recording and documentation of what the subject says as a direct result of involvement with that subject. It is a qualitative method designed to provide individuals with the opportunity of telling their personal stories in their own ways.

This suggests a bulky document produced over a period of time, involving lengthy contact with the subject. This was not the case in this instance. The purpose of using a life-history type method was to ascertain some retrospective data about how the respondents came to be doing what they are doing now, and how their past histories may have influenced their personal sense of mission.

The life-history sheets were analysed by correlating the education and experience of the respondents with their current role and their expressed view of their personal sense of mission. In this way, occupational history and expressed sense of mission in interviews pointed to strong links between

personal history and personal mission. This may have major consequences for any notion of corporate mission.

Context for mission establishment

It is highly likely that the manner in which mission development is implemented and received within a college will depend to some extent upon the particular context applicable to the organization at the time of development. During the interviews conducted as a part of this research, it became apparent that some of these contextual features were so powerful that they informed much of what was said in each interview. In this instance, the contextual factors can be summarized under three headings: (1) the recent history of the college; (2) local issues; and (3) national issues. Together these factors provide an important context for the comments made by participants and printed below. The existence of such contextual features draws attention to the specific nature of the mission process in each individual college.

Recent history

> This was a very badly run institution that was having a great party, and its over. (B.D.: HOD)

The academic year 1988–89, when these interviews were carried out, was a year of great change at Westland Institute. A new principal had been appointed, and structures were starting to take shape binding two separate colleges into a new institute. It also became apparent that the 'generous' funding the original art school had been receiving from the local authority would not continue, and that the new institute would start life faced with having to make substantial financial savings. Overshadowing many of the discussions with senior staff was the sense that the informality of the past was gone and while the informality had some benefits, it had led to a lack of structure which, with hindsight, had not been to the advantage of the college. The use of the term 'informality' is suggested by the impression received from the various respondents. This impression was of a college with no clear decision-making or policy-making structures, where people preferred to operate spontaneously and where decisions were rarely recorded or communicated to staff. The following comments substantiate this feeling of informality, which was noted by all heads of department originally from the North Westland Art School, as well as a long-standing member of the directorate and three departmental lecturers:

> In the old days it was unbelievably lax, I mean things got done, but if some people decided they wanted to do something it just got done on

the spot, that could be marvellous or it could have repercussions. (C.H.: Fine Art)

I'm quite happy to think that the directorate are now making decisions. I was not altogether happy about that in the past, it seemed to be a very *ad hoc* thing. (L.H.: Directorate)

Local issues 1

We realize at the present time that we are being topped up by the local authority to the tune of £300,000. We know that over a four-year period we have to lose that topping up. (L.H.: Directorate)

Coupled with informal organization, the college had existed until recently with generous funding from the LEA. The level of funding had allowed the college to operate with a staff to student ratio (SSR) of between 5:1 and 7:1. In the joint efficiency study report (DES 1987b), SSRs had been identified as an indicator of college efficiency and the report had recommended, albeit for non-advanced further education, that efficient colleges should have SSRs of 11.4:1 by the academic year 1990–91. The report also made the point that organizations reliant on public resources ought to show that they are giving value for money. As noted in Chapter 2, such reports have contributed to the climate of critique of post-secondary institutions. In this climate, the level of funding support could not continue, for in addition to the income received from the central body responsible for public sector higher education, the college was being topped up financially by the LEA, and no local topping up would be permitted under the new arrangements for financing higher education. Consequently, it was announced that this topping up would be phased out over the next four years.

The plan evolved within the institute to deal with this shortfall involved a reduction in academic staffing, and plans to become more consumer-orientated by generating more income through proposals such as profit-making summer schools and provision of consultancy services; in short, through a more entrepreneurial, market-led approach. The need to make reductions in academic staffing caused some uncertainty, and one member of a department seriously affected noted the bad feeling this had caused, as is illustrated by the following:

I should say that there has been a lot of bad feeling among staff who have felt uncertain in view of proposed cuts and that is quite understandable. The fine art area has eight full-time members; now we are sustaining three cuts as far as I know, three people out of eight must leave, that is a hefty, hefty cut. It's savage, there was a lot of musical chairs going on while it was established who should leave and who would stay and that was a difficult thing and its still not fully resolved. So there has been a lot of uncertainty and difficult feeling about. (C.H.: Fine Art)

Local issues 2: The merger

Closely associated with the need to promote efficiency as evidenced by the ending of the topping up arrangement and attempting to ensure value for money, the LEA decided to merge its art school with a smaller college of art and design to create a new institute. The main reasons for proposing the merger were as follows:

1. To give protection against serious cutbacks in advanced further education (AFE) as a result of national action, based on assumptions that small institutions offering AFE are inefficient and inadequate because they suffer from academic isolation.
2. To ensure that while an important contribution continues to be made to national course provision, a wide range of opportunities in art education continues to exist for local and regional students.
3. To make the most effective use of existing resources in the two institutions and in the process to seek to reduce current difficulties of organisation, accommodation etc. (County Education Officers Report to the Further Education Sub-Committee, 20 July 1987).

Formal designation of the merged institute occurred in September 1989, but structures to blend the two colleges were put into place during the preceding academic year. Consequently, talk of the merger infused all the interviews as they took place in the spring and summer of 1989. The dominant concern expressed by a third of the respondents was that the merger had confused, to some extent, the identity of the colleges and thus the new institute; the confusion resulting primarily from the different philosophies of the two colleges and the different organizational structures arising out of these philosophies. It is quite possible that the nature of the two different colleges can never be completely subsumed under one mission that has widespread support. The difficulties inherent in this task are acknowledged in the following remarks:

> Bringing them together is not necessarily as easy as it may appear, because there are two distinct ethos within the two institutions on their validation and their educational objectives. I think bringing them together requires a lot of detailed planning, and also explanation to people within the new institution so they can recognize what's new about the new college. It's not just a question of changing the name of the two colleges and issuing memorandum, its more than that. (D.W.: HOD)

The differences in client groups, objectives and validation resulted in different modes of teaching and organization. The following quote from one of the heads of department based at the South Westland site, refers to these and alludes to the possible difficulties in bringing the two college cultures together:

> I think the college in South Westland had established a kind of work ethic that was to do with the level of courses, mainly with 16-year-olds, demanding a particular kind of teaching practice. We prided ourselves on being teachers and organizers, therefore the structure tended to be very tight . . .
>
> There was an assumption at North Westland, when they were working out the new structures, that we would rebel against them, but we have been working with tight structures for years, it's natural for us to do so. Things like working out timetables, in North Westland it seemed very lax and here we had to account for every hour. So it comes as no shock to us, the things imposed by the new institute. (A.M.: HOD)

As discussed in previous chapters, the concept of institutional mission entails a consensus among different individuals and groups regarding the overall direction of an organization. This consensus may be even more elusive when two quite different establishments are being merged into one.

Local issues 3

> I think that North Westland is quite a traditional art school. (P.S.: Directorate)

This perception of the old school of art was held by a third of those working within it, although the term 'traditional' was rarely seen as derogatory; rather, it was seen to describe a kind of fine art course in particular, one 'that did not concern itself to an inappropriate extent with contemporary extensions of art through film and video' (D.I.: Directorate) or with 'the headlong rush for computerization' (A.O.: Design). Some of those within the institute supported the 'traditional' emphasis, whereas others were critical of it. This reflects a wider debate in art education as to whether principles or methods should dominate. Those in favour of principles argue that the basic principles of creativity, sensitivity, drawing and critical analysis should dominate artists' education, enabling them to express themselves in whatever medium they prefer. Those in favour of methods argue for the introduction of new materials and modern techniques, such as computer-aided design, as stimulants to creative work. Traditionalists point to the fact that good artists can transfer their skills to any medium if they have a grasp of the fundamental principles, and also suggest that modern techniques can disguise or enhance poorly conceived ideas. Modernists are critical of the traditionalists' apparent neglect of contemporary materials and techniques.

National issues

The national climate affecting higher education was alluded to earlier in this chapter in references to efficiency, cutbacks and the actions of the

LEA. In their interviews, at least half of the respondents saw central government policy as the main reason for the financial plight of the college. The following comment is an example: 'It's fairly obvious that the directorate is carrying out the brief they've been given by the County, which comes from the government' (J.R.: D&D).

Other facets of government policy seen as being destructive to the ethos of the art college were the encouragement of the enterprise culture, primacy of market mechanisms, and a consequent attack upon fine art which is perceived as antithetical to the operation of the market. In the following quote, a respondent attempts to explain what he finds difficult about market mechanisms:

> In art this means that if you produce a product by the end of the day, it doesn't necessarily matter that it's quality, if it sells, if it's viable in the marketplace fine, that's all you need to do. This negates to some extent the quality of experience the students get. You can produce people with skills, train people to do tasks quickly, techniques are easily taught, but what are not taught so easily are imagination, creativity, questioning, ethics, moral considerations. Some students will do anything if the money is right, but I think this is a consequence of the climate created by our present government. (P.A.: Design)

The feeling that the government is anti-fine art is well represented by the following remarks:

> From a fine art point of view, I think that there is quite a deliberate attempt to diminish the number of places available for fine art and I almost sense an attempt by this government to take the guts out of fine art, because they don't like its slightly subversive element, element of anarchy, rebelliousness and radical thinking. Good fine art courses have always had those elements in them. (E.C.: Fine Art)

The perceived unsympathetic attitude of government towards their vocation, which may also influence the public's limited view of art schools as 'tits, bums and landscape' (D.I.: Design) and 'dens of booze and sex' (A.O.: Design), formed a context for the views expressed by the institute's staff in this account. This was the basis for the scepticism of many of the staff about the concept of mission establishment. When asked about the mission of the institute, they referred to a mission that is imposed from 'above' or outside the college. A mission that entails serving the greatest number of students with the minimum level of resources. The resulting perceived dilution of quality was frequently viewed with distaste and sadness.

This brief consideration of contextual issues affecting the mission process at Westland Institute identifies a number of concerns which staff came to associate with the notion of mission establishment. These were as follows:

1. A developing concern with managerial issues such as policy, decision making, value for money and entrepreneurialism, at the expense of educational issues, such as the nature of the curriculum.

2. A suspicion that political ideology, which embraced such concepts as mangerialism and market orientation, was driving the mission process.
3. A concern as to whether it would be possible to subsume the two different college ethos's under a single mission statement.

How the mission was developed

The institute's mission statement, or statement of intent and policy (the institute's term), was drafted by a senior member of the college staff and discussed initially by the directorate. This group consisted of the principal, the two vice-principals and the chief administrative officer. The statement was thus produced by a powerful interest group within the institute. Two features of the group method are: (1) that it can be an interactive method that encourages debate both within and between various interest groups within an organization, and (2) that because the views of the separate groups are often reconciled by a management team, management ultimately dominates the process. The interactive nature of the process can be beneficial in facilitating change, as Fullan (1982) observes. The method used at the institute was not an interactive one and thus the process was completely dominated by management.

There was no initial announcement of the decision to develop a mission statement, no discussion of why it was considered necessary, no staff involvement in drawing up the statement itself and no concerted attempt, during the time of the research, to disseminate the statement to staff. The only opportunity for any faculty involvement in shaping the statement occurred when it was discussed at the academic board. However, as is made clear in the next section, there was no debate about the mission there. This was partly because it was presented in an atmosphere emphasizing consensus and integration in the newly merged institute, and partly because it was perceived as a management document that would have little impact upon day-to-day practice. The statement addressed primarily management issues and overlooked key areas of concern for teachers such as the nature of the curriculum. Perhaps for teachers the real mission of an educational establishment is delivered in the face-to-face interactions between teachers and students, where the negotiability of the service provided allows teachers to feel that they are engaging with the real purpose of the college, and that managerial pronouncements about mission are remote and perceived as 'window dressing'.

Why was the mission developed in this way? The answer may lie in the managerial approach adopted by the directorate. As discussed in Chapter 2, mission establishment may be associated with a deficiency model of F/HE, in which the remedy for the curricula and 'cultural' deficiency of F/HE lies in an infusion of commercial culture, whereby a managerial and market-led culture will be able to respond effectively to the needs of consumers and operate in a cost-effective manner. A danger of this approach

is that it can relegate the teacher to the role of the 'to be managed' rather than as a professional partner in the decision-making process. In discussing this 'new managerialism', Ball (1990b) comments:

> Management is clearly and unproblematically presented as the one best way for schools to organise and compete. Other models of organisation, based on collegiality or professionality (however vague and untidy these notions might be) have no place in this vision of schools. The headteacher is the key figure in the management scenario. The classroom teacher becomes an off-stage subject of management, there to be managed . . .

Some evidence of this attitude among the directorate can be seen in the statement of one of its members who was responsible for the original draft of the mission statement, that the production of the mission was 'not a democratic exercise' (M.H.: Directorate). Another comment by a member of the directorate illustrates an awareness of the developing managerial ethos:

> I hate using the jargon, but there's this awful business of the right to manage as opposed to democracy. Now I've worked in one particular college where democracy had gone awry. There were committees for everything. An individual's *raison d'etre* was how many committees you were sitting on . . . What I think is that you have to set up mechanisms where people feel that they can contribute to the debate and that their contribution is listened to, considered and valued. I think beyond that senior staff are paid to make decisions. (P.S.: Directorate)

In commercial organizations, participants may have few problems in accepting the mission espoused by management; but in education, where values and beliefs are so much a part of the process, this acceptance may be much more elusive. Participative mission establishment in a commercial setting, where everyone understands the purpose of the organization is to sell products or services and maximize profits, may seem superfluous. In education, where learning itself is a participative activity, expectations of participation in policy decisions can be high. Perhaps only in educational organizations, where personal values play an important role in organizational behaviour, is this such a key issue.

How the mission was approved

Following the statement's approval by the directorate, the mission passed through the college committee structure to the shadow governing body for formal adoption. The shadow governing body was a temporary governing body operating until the formal reconstitution of the governing body for the merged college, following the recommendations of the Education Reform

Act 1988. During its progress from draft to adoption by the governing body, the statement changed little. Within the formal decision-making forums, there appeared to be a high degree of consensus regarding the mission. This consensus can be observed through the comments of participants which are illustrated below.

As noted above, the statement was first discussed in the full directorate after being drafted by one of its members and no major amendments were made, for as another member of the group commented:

> This was a genuine attempt to analyse what we've got, build on the strengths, rather than concentrate on the weaknesses. For example, it would be very easy to say in the mission statement that in this computer age that computer-aided design (CAD) was going to be a big development, CAD will exist here, it has to because the students need it, but it will not play a high profile because we can't afford it. (P.S.: Directorate)

The desire to build on the institute's strengths and the cost constraints that it operated under, coupled with the particular nature of the college as a small monotechnic establishment, appear to have helped to ensure there was little debate regarding the nature of the statement at directorate level. There may also have been a feeling that the statement was being created primarily for the funding council and the LEA and that its ultimate shape would be determined elsewhere, and thus detailed debate was unnecessary. This feeling is expressed by one member of the directorate in the following remarks:

> We have to do it because the PCFC [Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council] want it. Unfortunately, because this is a local authority college, our mission statement will have to be subsumed within the authority's statement, so if the authority doesn't subsume everything we'll be in trouble. (P.S.: Directorate)

From the directorate the statement was referred to the academic board, where the theme of consensus continued, as evidenced in the following comment of an academic board member:

> The wording on it is something I could question, but as a statement of consensus it's a good statement and it's not really controversial, it's carefully avoided issues of major controversy, which probably is a good thing because it's pulling people together, rather than pointing at areas of dispute. (D.W.: HOD)

The lack of debate that the statement engendered in the academic board is noted in the following remarks from another member of the board, in discussing the progress of the statement through the committee:

> It was circulated at the academic board, I can't imagine why because nobody said anything, there was a feeling that there was no point in

saying anything, so I'm not sure why it was circulated at all, there were minor adjustments. (J.S.: T&EM)

The final approval stage for the statement was the shadow governing body, where according to the minutes there was 'general approval' for the mission statement. One member of the governing body stated that: 'A lot of the discussion about that document was about the priority order in which things appeared'.

The statement was given general approval as a result of the meeting of the shadow body on 14 March 1989. The minutes of this meeting record that the statement had been approved by the academic board and was required for the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC). One member of the governing body raised an issue relating to the need for the statement to become more than just a paper exercise:

> . . . indicated that the PCFC would monitor progress to ascertain whether the stated objectives as contained in the mission statement were being achieved and it was important for Institutions to retain credibility. (Minutes, Shadow Governing Body, 14 March 1989)

This minute suggests that there were some on the governing body who were concerned that the mission statement had been instituted as an exercise merely to satisfy the needs of a funding body, rather than as a genuine attempt to clarify the objectives of the new institute and aid effective management.

Overall, however, these comments by those present in the formal decision-making forums of the college confirm the impression that throughout the formal development and approval stage of the statement, discussion was limited to questions of wording and order rather than substantive issues. Also in these forums, there was considerable pressure for consensus over the statement produced.

The mission statement developed

The statement of intent and policy that was produced was as follows:

1. The Institute will maintain and build upon its reputation as a national centre of excellence and expertise in the specialist areas of the Arts, Design and Crafts at degree and equivalent levels.
2. The Institute will foster Art and Design in the Westland region and the UK; providing an environment for learning and practice.
3. The Institute will sustain and develop the long tradition of Art and Design in the County and the Region; however, it will be outward looking and will expand its links with similar national colleges and other institutions in the European Community.
4. The Institute will provide a range of courses in the specialist areas of Art, Design and Craft at FE/HE and PG levels.

5. The Institute will offer a 'ladder of opportunity' to students through varied modes of access.
6. The Institute will work with industrial, commercial and professional bodies and emphasise employment outlets for its students.
7. The Institute will form positive links with practitioners in the Arts, Design and Crafts; with other bodies concerned with the Arts, Architecture, Industrial Design and with the community in general.
8. The Institute will be responsive to developments and changes in demand, requirements, attitudes and opportunities from the secondary/tertiary education and professional/commercial/industrial sectors.
9. The Institute will maintain strong links with the schools, colleges and other educational establishments in the County and Region.
10. The Institute will operate a policy of equal opportunity and non-discrimination with regard to its intake and staffing.
11. The Institute will, wherever possible, make provision for students with special needs.
12. The Institute will develop and establish ways to enhance central and LEA contractual funding and additional sponsorship.

Reactions to the mission

All senior members of the institute who were involved in the discussions appeared to have a good understanding of the mission and were satisfied with the procedure, as the following comment (about the mission) illustrates: 'Yes, that was presented in draft form and then there was the opportunity to discuss it. If there was anything we felt we disagreed with, then there was the chance to talk about it' (A.M.: HOD).

However, staff lower down in the college hierarchy (below head of department level) did not feel involved in the process at all and a fair amount of suspicion was expressed about the statement. Of the nine staff members interviewed at this level, seven expressed concern about the process. The following is a typical example:

> There's a lack of communication, a lot of insecurity at the top means that they don't divulge as much as they should, so that particularly among the fine art staff they feel that the college is going over to some Thatcherite plan of education or policy. (J.S.: T&EM)

This difference of view was seen as worrying by one senior staff member who was not a member of the directorate: 'There is a gap between what happens at the management level and what happens at departmental level, that's the worrying thing. I don't think there is much sympathy from one to the other' (B.D.: HOD).

With regard to perceptions of the content of the statement, overwhelmingly it was perceived by college members as bland, eliciting such typical comments as: 'It's carefully avoided issues of major controversy' (D.W.: HOD); 'There's nothing you can dispute in it' (P.S.: Directorate); and 'The statement will certainly give some broad and general guidance' (D.I.: Directorate). The following is more detailed:

> It was a bit bland, it needed somebody to stamp a bit of personality on it, give it a bit of drive – it was very committeeish. Your next question is 'how are we going to proceed from it, how important a document will it be?' Well I don't think it will be, I don't think it'll change anything. I'm a bit equivocal on it. I think it was useful for people outside the school to look at, but as a tool to use within the school. I'm a bit uncertain . . . It's on file, but I don't particularly regard it as a key document. (B.D.: HOD)

Another important concern relating to the statement, voiced by a number of respondents, was its lack of widespread dissemination. Many respondents professed to not having seen the statement at all and a senior staff member acknowledged: 'I don't think the mission statement, in its final form, has filtered down to all people' (A.M.: HOD). Although the procedure involved in the construction of the statement was 'not a democratic exercise' (M.H.: Directorate), as a member of the directorate remarked, there appears to have been no determined effort to communicate the final form of the statement of intent and policy to all the staff and to attempt to ensure their commitment to it. The impression remains that the statement was developed as a bureaucratic exercise – bureaucratic in the sense that it was a paper exercise not linked to action or change in the institution, but produced as a matter of procedure to satisfy some external criterion such as the pronouncements of funding agencies.

Comparing personal and institutional mission

During the interviews that took place with institute staff and managers, individuals were asked what their personal mission was. This was solicited in two ways: first, by asking the respondents what was important to them about their work within the institute; and second what developments they would like to see. This was seen as giving a clue to the kind of direction they would like the college to take and the sort of activity they believed it should be involved in.

The sense of mission that evolved from the individual interviews can be categorized as follows. First, there were those replicating the purposes expressed in the official document:

1. To provide a ladder of opportunity.
2. To develop links with similar institutions in Europe, with schools, other

educational establishments in the area (e.g. the university) and with the local community.
3. To expand course provision into the crafts area.

Second, there were those amplifying some of the broader statements in the official document (OD) and providing more specific statements of activities:

4. Expansion of course provision at postgraduate level to provide both an MA in design and fine art (Item 4 OD).
5. To seek additional funding through the provision of: evening classes, short courses, summer schools, week-end courses, open learning packages (Item 12 OD).
6. To form positive links with the community through the promotion of more popular and accessible exhibitions at the college gallery and the provision of an appealing public lecture programme; and with practitioners in the Arts through the maintenance of a visiting artists scheme (Item 7 OD).

Third, there were those introducing issues not mentioned in the official document which advocated a more student-led or curriculum-led sense of mission emphasizing the development of certain personal and vocational qualities in the students:

7. To equip students to cope more effectively with the world outside college if they are to work independently: through knowledge of the gallery system, marketing, social security and sponsorship.
8. To develop the individual creativity of each student to the best of his or her ability.
9. To develop self-confidence, sensitivity and the ability to present ideas and information.
10. To develop a way of thinking, an attitude towards problems and circumstances, that can be used in their chosen career.
11. To create an awareness of the role of art and design in the society and an awareness of the value of the visual arts to society.
12. To forge a link between theory and practice, thinking and doing in creative work.

The similarity in a number of areas between the official mission and the personal missions may reflect the agenda-setting functions of college management. Even if the official mission had not been widely disseminated, ideas linked to it may have had common currency within the institute and informed, tacitly, individual views about purpose.

This method of eliciting mission through interviews is similar to that proposed by Allen (1988). It has a major advantage in that the mission is 'grounded' in the language and beliefs of participants and is more likely to affect the processes of an organization because it reflects what people are actually doing. Organization members deliver the mission in the course

of their everyday interactions with clients. Despite official expressions of mission, if these do not concur with the missions of individuals, it is unlikely that the 'official doctrine' will be delivered. Although missions elicited in this way may be more pragmatic, their major drawback is that they reflect the *status quo* rather than taking a proactive stance. The different elements of the mission may not be reconciled, thus creating conflict within the mission whereby different elements of an organization's mission may be in conflict with one another.

The key difference between these two expressions of mission is in the emphasis placed in the latter on the students and the curriculum. This latter section appears to amount to a curriculum entitlement for students. The official document appears to reflect only managerial concerns: reputation, liaison, response to change, funding. It is thought unlikely that organizations will secure the support of their members in their stated purposes if such purposes do not reflect the perceptions of the members of their key objectives in working with clients. It is possible to speculate on a number of reasons why this is the case: the nature of the managerial task and its concentration on policy, control and coordination rather than 'production'; infrequent contact with students; the differing personalities of managers and teachers.

Earlier in this book the uniqueness of educational organizations was mentioned, with particular regard to the negotiability of the service delivered to students, whereby teacher and student working together jointly 'realize' the service in each classroom on each different occasion on which they meet. This places teachers in a very close relationship with their students, which may render them particularly sensitive to the needs of their clients, in a way which managers may not be. Clearly, also, teachers' imperialistic stance can mitigate completely against such a symbiotic relationship. In a commercial context, institutional mission and individual behaviour may be entirely consistent, because that which is produced (goods or services) may present no challenge to organization members in the way that education, with its concern with values and processes, can. Education managers assuming the mantle of the commercial culture may become remote enough from the act of education to forget how involving it can be for practitioners.

Additionally, the blandness of the statement produced may reflect the difficulty inherent in blending together the two different colleges into one institute. One way of subsuming what can be seen as fundamentally different academic cultures and objectives is by creating statements about the new college that are so broad that they can be all things to all people, and different interest groups can read their own meaning into generalized phrases.

This analysis shows that while there is some consensus between the missions of the staff and the official mission of the institute, there are areas where the goals of the staff were not represented in the mission of the college.

Personal history and personal mission

An exploration of the nature of the link between personal history and personal mission is relevant at this point. This research shows a clear link between personal mission and respondents' past experience, as revealed through the completion of the life-history sheets. Fullan (1982) believes that there is considerable evidence to support the view that beliefs are learnt through experience. Three respondents acknowledged this link during the interviews, and the following is an illustration of this: 'I think any philosophy has to take into account experiences one has been through' (D.W.: HOD).

Two broad types of 'philosophy' emerged from the interviews – an educational philosophy and a vocational philosophy. The fine artists all espoused an educational philosophy represented by such comments as the following:

> I think primarily as an education establishment that it should offer students an education. I don't mean that in the traditional sense of preparing them for some role in the future . . . Students should come first and foremost with a passion for what they want to do. Art and design is a vocation in the true sense of the word. People want to do it because they have a talent for it and it's the only thing they want to do. Colleges of art should provide whatever is necessary to develop that talent. (E.C.: Fine Art)

All but two of the designers expressed a vocational philosophy:

> I have very strong beliefs that particular design subjects, fine art courses as well – we only have one fine art course – should be very conscious of education and training and that the training aspects should be geared to a known end. For instance, in design there are certain outlets that provide certain kinds of jobs. We try to keep on top of the type of work that is required so that our curriculum will be appropriate. (D.I.: Directorate)

Such a schism is common in education circles and has been current over the last few decades. More recently, it has been fuelled by the rise in unemployment and the allocation of blame to the education system for failing to deliver into the workforce the trained manpower the economy needs. Allen (1988) describes this debate as one of the six controversial issues that exist in relation to the goals of the universities, and while he acknowledges that there is no 'right' view about any of the issues, he is convinced that: 'Organisations which are united around an agreed set of goals are likely to be more efficient and more effective than ones which are continually at war with themselves and with their environment'.

Typically, individual allegiance to a particular perspective is formed through past experience. The usual career pattern experienced by artists is that of leaving art school, working as practising artists while engaging in

some part-time teaching, and eventually moving into full-time teaching. In contrast, designers typically enter employment on leaving art school, often for a substantial number of years, before moving into full-time teaching. Many do not enter teaching by the part-time route unless such part-time work has been undertaken while they are in full-time employment, or still actively employed as freelance designers.

Two exceptions to this pattern existed in the sample of respondents interviewed. Both were designers, yet one acknowledged a dual philosophy expressing a belief in both the educational and vocational aspects of art education, and the other came down firmly on the educational side. Both these respondents had features in their personal biographies which could account for these differences. The former had experienced a personal tragedy that had caused him to re-evaluate his life, and the latter had entered teacher training after seven years in industry, but before entering teaching on a part-time, then full-time basis.

Both of these perspectives illustrate personal missions linked to life-experience. It is possible to speculate that such views are deeply held and likely to be strongly adhered to despite the 'official' mission established for the college. Where the two missions converge there is likely to be agreement; where they diverge it is unlikely that individuals will seek to promote the aspects of college mission with which they disagree. These interviews show that there are key differences between personal and institutional missions, particularly in the area of curricular provision for students. This material suggests that the theme of consensus promoted in the official forums of the college and implicit in the concept of mission is an elusive one. Despite the emphasis on consensus, it is clear that no widespread consensus exists regarding the college mission outside the directorate, and that management did little to attempt to develop this feature. It also suggests that rather than seek to establish consensus, it may be more profitable to concentrate on accommodating divergence within an organization. Hoyle (1986) suggests that the link between personal mission and institutional mission can be likened to the concept of 'loose–tight' structures as described by Weick (1976). A loosely coupled relationship could exist between an overall college mission, with some freedom for individuals to pursue personal missions within the overall framework.

Effectiveness of the institutional mission

In Chapter 3, seven core characteristics of a successful mission statement were suggested. How did the official mission match up to these characteristics? In Fig. 5.1, the mission is rated against these core characteristics.

This comparison suggests that the mission developed was not a particularly effective one. Several areas in which it is deficient include its lack of consideration for the concerns of members, especially in relation to curriculum matters, its lack of clarity in specifying the college's market and the

Table 5.1 Effectiveness of the college mission

Characteristic	*Included?*
Specifies the nature of the enterprise	Yes, nos 1 and 4
Reflects the concern of members	No
Specifies the enterprise's markets	Partly, no. 8
Specifies beliefs and values prized by members	Partly, no. 10
Specifies technology in use	No
Specifies growth policy	Partly, nos 1 and 3
Flexible, but specific	Bland

basic beliefs and values under which it operates, and the generally bland nature of the statement. David's (1989) research into the characteristics of mission statements in successful companies suggests that such statements can take several forms, but the three key elements must be: a concern for customers, specification of the organization's products or services, and the need to clarify the enterprise's public image through the explication of its basic beliefs and values. When compared against these three key criteria, the mission of Westland Institute does not appear favourable. The lack of involvement of the institute's staff in developing the statement, and the lack of attention to the marketplace in the statement itself, suggest that the mission will have little impact upon the processes and ethos of the college.

Conclusion

In Chapter 3, the examination of the literature on mission in practice suggested that some aspects of the mission establishment process were more successful in promoting change than others. This finding had been foreshadowed to some extent by the deconstruction of the mission concept into a number of facets in Chapter 2. The survey of literature in Chapter 3 established that goal- or objective-setting alone was insufficient to promote organizational change. Nor was it sufficient to rely on the assumption that consensus regarding the mission would occur once it was established. The aspects of the process that were influential in promoting change were those of participation and market responsiveness.

As a result of the empirical work discussed in this chapter, it is clear that the existence of the statement alone has not yet had a significant impact upon the college. It also appears that there was no consensus regarding the mission of the institution, the mission process was not a participative one, nor was the mission developed with a clear eye on making the institute more responsive to the educational marketplace. Consequently, it is expected that the mission statement developed for the institute will not be a particularly influential one that will change practices within the college. The responses to the statement, illustrated in this and the previous chapter, support this supposition.

Two important issues emerge from this case study. One concerns the context into which the mission process is introduced and the effect of this context on the mission developed. With regard to Westland Institute, clearly the recent merger had confused the identity of the institution and made the process of mission establishment more difficult, albeit more necessary. In addition, national and local political contexts had certainly raised the issue of who sets the agenda for the process. Were the college directorate merely putting into operation a plan devised by the LEA in response to central government pressure? If so, what is the point, the staff may respond, of going through the process of mission establishment when the directorate is already clear what it has to do in order to please the LEA and its political masters?

The second issue concerns the degree to which the mission reflects the key concerns of the participants. The omission of any comments about the curriculum in the official version has already been mentioned. How can the mission be meaningful if it does not address that part of the work with which the main deliverers of the mission are most concerned? In the same way, bland statements may not be seen as placing sufficient emphasis on values or activities considered important by staff, and can lead to the statement having no role to play in promoting change because it is merely rhetoric with no grounding in real day-to-day practice. The close link between personal sense of mission and personal history suggests a strong commitment to a mission which grows out of one's own experience, and raises doubts about the possibility of a genuine consensus ever being reached. Not to acknowledge this aspect of an individual may have grave implications for his or her 'psychological' contract with the institution and, consequently, may considerably hinder organizational change.

The empirical work described in this chapter also suggests that because the teaching staff have a different concept of the mission of the college to that of management, and the opportunity to promote their own concept in the classroom, the mission delivered at the interface between teacher and consumer is highly likely to be different from that of the institutional mission. This may be a particular characteristic of educational organizations and one that needs to be addressed if institutional missions are to be instrumental in encouraging colleges to be more consumer-led.

6

Methods of Mission Establishment 2: Surveying Constituent Groups

This chapter begins with a description of the origins, development and administration of a survey of college constituent groups regarding mission. This is followed by an analysis of findings, including identification of underlying dimensions, and the differences in support for these dimensions among the key groups. Finally, the conclusions section discusses the methodology of the survey and the nature of the missions revealed by the technique. The survey was conducted in the same institute of art discussed in previous chapters, during the spring of 1990.

Origins and development

The idea for using a survey, such as the one discussed in this chapter, came from my experience of the mission establishment procedure in the USA. During this time, I became aware of the Community Colleges Activities Survey (CCAS) developed by Doucette *et al.* (1984). The survey was in use in an adapted form at the American college I was attending, as part of the college's mission establishment procedure. As discussed in Chapter 3, Doucette *et al.* had developed the CCAS as an improvement on the IGI, an instrument developed by the Education Testing Service at Princeton for the purpose of reviewing and revising the goals of educational institutions. Their dissatisfaction with the IGI, because of the difficulty in applying the results of the survey to practical management, led them to design a survey technique that employs the construct of activities, a construct which combines the intentions of goals with the measurability of objectives and thus is able to assist management in making practical use of CCAS results. Only the general format of the CCAS could inform the design of a similar survey for use in the UK. The statement of activities was highly specific to the American community college, as was the general language of the instrument.

The first task of survey development for the British context was the gathering of statements of activities perceived as relevant and potentially relevant to the Westland Institute. This task was achieved through interviews

with staff and management of the institute as reported in previous chapters. From the interviews, it was possible to develop a list of activities encompassing the personal sense of mission felt by each individual member of staff, and which together may be said to constitute the mission of the institute as a whole. This list was supplemented by consulting any relevant documentation produced by the college stating its aims, objectives, aspirations and desires. The language of the statements – the words used, the phrasing of statements – was directly informed by the language of the tape-recorded interviews in an attempt to ensure the statements reflected the milieu of the institute and thus were perceived as authentic to potential respondents. As a result of this exercise, a draft list of fifty activities was produced. These raw statements were modified into the first draft of the survey by ensuring that each statement was short, specific and only asked about one activity per statement. The survey was also subjected to external scrutiny. This involved checking out the draft survey with the principal of the institute. From this discussion, a number of amendments were made. These revisions raised the number of statements to seventy-one.

It was also decided to include a number of 'test' questions to check the consistency of responses and thus ensure a degree of internal reliability for the survey. These questions necessitated opposite responses to ones provided earlier in the instrument if the respondents were to demonstrate a consistency of response. Four test questions were included in the total number of questions.

Following the interviews and scrutiny of documents, it appeared that there were a number of underlying dimensions related to the mission of the institute. These dimensions revealed themselves as groups of statements which seemed to cluster together, because of their common concern with such areas as course provision, curriculum, liaison, etc. For example, the following statements constitute the extramural dimension:

- Offer recreational evening classes.
- Offer residential recreational summer schools.
- Offer recreational residential weekend courses throughout the year.
- Organize a general interest public lecture programme.
- Cooperate with tourist organizations to promote recreational activities.
- Ensure the Gallery has a central role within the institute.

The test question for this dimension is 'Concentrate resources on full-time award-bearing courses'. It would be inconsistent to agree with this statement as well as with the statements in the extramural cluster. The existence of dimensions was checked out in the full survey by using factor analysis.

The survey was piloted with a group of thirty BA (Hons) graphic design students. They were chosen on an opportunistic basis, in that they were working together and the survey could be explained to them as a group, completed immediately and results collected on the spot. The scrutiny of the pilot resulted in rewording eight of the statements to make them clearer.

Table 6.1 Responses of constituent groups to questionnaire

Group	*Number sent*	*Method*	*Returns*	
			n	%
Full-time staff	50	internal mail	27	54
Part-time staff	35	post	18	52
FT non-teaching staff	20	internal mail	10	50
Governors	17	post	10	55
Employers	28	post	12	43
LEA officers	11	post	6	54
Local community members	64	post	35	55
Students	93	personal	93	—[a]
Total	318		211	51.8

[a] Percentage not calculated as it would distort the true response.

Administration of the survey

The survey was administered to seven constituent groups within the institute, utilizing either internal mail systems, the normal postal system, or personal administration and collection. A total of 225 questionnaires were sent out.

Every single member of each constituent group was surveyed with the exception of employers, students and local community members. Only those employers with whom the institute had regular contact, mainly through the arrangement of student work experience, were surveyed. Also, only 12 per cent of students were surveyed in class. Similarly, 12 per cent of local community members whose names were on the institute's gallery mailing list, and thus likely to take some interest in the work of the institute, were surveyed.

A total of 118 questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 51.8 per cent across the constituent groups. When the 93 student surveys are included, this makes a total of 211 complete questionnaires. Table 6.1 summarizes the various constituent groups' responses.

There are a number of reasons that might account for the relatively low response rate. With regard to the staff, suspicion was an important factor. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the institute at the time of this research was undergoing a radical period of restructuring to deal with a £300,000 budget deficit, which was being phased in over four years. This meant cutbacks and redundancies, which were being discussed at the time the survey was being undertaken. Some staff feared for their positions and were wary of completing the questionnaire, which they perceived as possibly contributing to the restructuring of the college, despite the fact that it was explicitly stated that the survey had no 'official' purpose.

One reason for the low response rate of governors was the fact that the governing body had been newly reconstituted under the regulations of the Education Reform Act 1988. This meant that a considerable number of the governors had only recently been appointed. As a consequence, their familiarity with the institute was limited, and three of them returned their questionnaires stating that they did not feel sufficiently acquainted with the institute to complete them adequately. Local community members may similarly have been deterred. Eight respondents stated a limited knowledge of the workings of the institute as the reason for not completing their questionnaires.

It would appear that individual LEA officers were discouraged from responding, as a letter was received from a senior officer stating: 'for some of the questions it would be quite wrong for there to be any variation in response from Local Authority Officers, particularly if this was on record as a formal response from the Authority'. In the event, six out of eleven responses were received from individual officers.

Given the total response rate of 51.8 per cent, it is important to consider whether the responses received were representative of the constituent groups, or whether those who did not respond did not do so because they felt that they could not identify with the idea of mission implicit in the survey. The key issue here is one of systematic non-response: Did the 48.2 per cent of non-respondents have a uniform reason for not completing the survey? Did they, as a group, constitute a body of opinion more significant than that of any of the various groups comprising the 51.8 per cent who did respond? It would appear that this was not the case, given the various reasons noted above for non-response. These suggest that different factors affected each group, rather than one common factor, such as a complete lack of identification with the idea of mission implicit in the survey.

Identification of dimensions: All constituent groups

Frequency distribution tables produced for all variables over all constituent groups showed the activities noted in Table 6.2 as receiving strong support, either through an 'agree' or 'strongly agree' response. Those activities which received support from more than 70 per cent of all respondents are included in Table 6.2.

It is possible to cluster together various of these statements around common themes and compare these themes with the dimensions discussed earlier in this chapter. The average percentage figures noted in Table 6.3 are arrived at by adding together the percentage support for each individual statement, and then dividing by the number of statements in each cluster. The general compatibility between these groupings suggests that common threads link certain statements together and that dimensions underlying the specific activities do exist. Factor analysis was employed to confirm the existence of these dimensions.

Table 6.2 Support for activities

Activity		*% Support*
14	Recruit students on their merits	97.6
24	Provide a curriculum designed to maximize student's creative abilities	94.1
60	Actively promote the value of visual arts in the community	92.9
27	Provide an element in all courses to assist students to cope with self-employment, etc.	91.8
9	Co-operate to promote the value of the visual arts	90.6
23	Provide equal opportunities in staff recruitment	88.3
39	Provide equal opportunities for staff promotion	88.3
41	Offer BA (Hons) Graphic Design	88.0
3	Provide facilities for students with special needs	87.1
29	Do more with local schools	86.5
47	Offer a foundation course	85.3
5	Organize a visiting artist scheme	84.2
16	Provide opportunities for international exchanges	84.7
59	Provide opportunities for students to transfer between courses	84.7
32	Offer BA (Hons) Fine Art	82.4
38	Encourage pupils in local schools to apply	80.6
49	Provide a curriculum designed to emphasize the link between thinking and doing	83.6
1	Offer recreational evening classes	78.8
28	Seek sponsorship from local industry for extra resources	78.2
15	Provide a communication skills element in all courses	77.0
67	Ensure the gallery has a central role	77.6
17	Provide creative artefacts	77.0
35	Offer BTEC General Art and Design course	73.5
12	Offer residential recreational summer school	72.9
36	Provide an employment placing service	72.9
31	Organize a general interest public lecture programme	71.7
66	Provide opportunities for students of different levels to work together	71.7
51	Operate student housing	71.7
52	Offer an HND in Graphic Design course	70.0

Factor analysis suggested that ten factors could be extracted linking the variables in the survey:

- Equal opportunities
- Provision of qualifying courses
- Links with industry
- Overseas links
- Recreational provision
- Cooperation with other colleges
- Access
- Excellence

Table 6.3 Identification of dimensions

Theme	*Statements*	*Average %*	*Dimension*
Equal opportunities	Nos 14, 23 and 39	91.4	Access
Curricular aims	Nos 24 and 49	88.8	Nature of curriculum
Special needs	No. 3	87.1	Access
International exchanges	No. 16	84.7	Enrichment
Nature of curriculum	Nos 27 and 15	84.4	Nature of curriculum
Links with local schools	Nos 29 and 38	83.5	Liaison with others
Promote value of visual arts in community	Nos 60, 9, 17, 31, 67 and 5	82.3	Promotion of visual arts
Qualifying courses	Nos 41, 47, 32, 35 and 52	79.8	Qualifying courses
Flexibility for students	Nos 59 and 66	78.2	Access
Links with industry	Nos 28 and 36	75.5	Links with industry
Recreational classes	Nos 1 and 12	75.8	Recreational
Student housing	No. 51	71.1	Enrichment

- Flexibility for students
- Promotion of the visual arts

The clear correlation of these with the themes and dimensions noted earlier suggest that there are indeed a set of dimensions underlying the specific activities identified by individuals. These dimensions can be summarized as follows:

- Equal opportunities
- Broadening of access
- Enrichment (or excellence) of the curriculum
- Liaison with other educational institutions
- Promotion of the value of the visual arts
- Recreational provision
- Links with industry
- Provision of qualifying courses
- Flexibility for students

Newsom and Hayes (1990) are critical of American college and university mission statements for failing to inform the strategic planning process of their institutions because they are so vague and non-specific. They used Pearce and David's (1987) dimensions of mission (as discussed in Chapter 3) to analyse the American examples and found that few statements contained all the dimensions considered important. If the dimensions uncovered here are compared with those of Newsom and Hayes, then only two

are comparable – the definition of products or services (recreational provision, qualifying courses), and philosophy. In fact, most of the dimensions noted above could be considered to be of a philosophical nature (equal opportunities, access, enrichment, flexibility, etc.). Any statement developed on the basis of these dimensions may thus not be considered to be an effective statement in Pearce and David's terms, because of the failure to include such dimensions as customer specification, market location, self-definition and public image. However, the applicability of these dimensions to the British F/HE context is questionable, as these data suggest that different dimensions of mission may apply in this context, which are not shared with those identified in the American corporate sector.

Together with the strong suggestion that the dimensions noted above do exist, it is possible to generate a mission statement from the data that reflects the concerns of the various constituent groups. The statement can be generated by linking together the sets of activities grouped with the dimensions noted in Table 6.3. Such a statement would have ten items and read as follows:

1. Promote equal opportunities in staff and student recruitment and development.
2. Provide a curriculum that promotes excellence, by maximizing students' creative abilities, linking practical and theoretical knowledge, and providing opportunities for international exchanges.
3. Provide facilities for students with special needs.
4. Provide a broad-based curriculum, including life and communication skills elements.
5. Develop relationships with local schools to encourage student recruitment.
6. Promote the value of visual arts in the community, by cooperating with arts bodies, providing creative artefacts for public premises, providing general interest public lectures, organizing a visiting artist scheme, and ensuring that the gallery has a central role within the institute.
7. Offer qualifying courses in art and design.
8. Provide opportunities for student flexibility (e.g. through transfer between courses and students of different academic levels working together).
9. Offer recreational courses.
10. Develop closer links with industry via sponsorship and the provision of an employment placement service.

The mission conveyed in this statement is compared with the original mission developed at Westland Institute in the conclusions section at the end of this chapter.

One part of the questionnaire allowed respondents to record other activities which they felt the institute should be involved in. This was included in case any important element of the mission of the institute had been omitted from the survey. Thirty-four separate activities were noted in this section,

but only three were noted by more than one respondent, suggesting that, although individuals may have their own particular views, these views are not widely shared and no important element of the institution-wide mission had been omitted. Those activities that were mentioned by more than one respondent had already been included in the questionnaire, although with slightly different wording. These were: 'Keep the South Westland site', 'Forge stronger links with the community' and 'Provide more opportunities for inter-disciplinary work for students'. The first was mentioned by five respondents, the second by three and the third by seven.

With regard to areas of disagreement, these were not so strongly felt. Only ten activities were disagreed with by more than 20 per cent of the respondents and only one of these was disagreed with by more than 50 per cent of respondents. These activities are noted below:

Activity		*% Support*
10	Provide a curriculum excluding such elements as business and communication skills	57.7
71	Concentrate resources on internal affairs	37.6
43	Above all teach courses providing the best possible chance of employment	37.0
33	Give local business and community groups access to resources	35.9
20	Locate all full-time courses on the North Westland campus	28.8
50	Offer profit-making courses for industry	27.7
42	Make library services available to local community members	27.0
55	Offer institute courses in other locations	27.0
34	Provide a curriculum designed above all to develop students' vocational skills	22.4
57	Divide courses into self-contained modules	22.4

These contentious activities are similar to those one might expect, given that they suggest a narrow-based curriculum, provided in an inward-looking institution, which is willing to share its already scarce resources with a wider community.

Support and dissent: Highlighting the management/staff divide

Frequency distribution tables were generated for the various constituent groups so as to ascertain the different levels of support for dimensions between groups. Tables 6.4 and 6.5 summarize this support, utilizing the mission categories derived from the examination of key respondent groups, as described in the previous section.

Perusal of these tables shows that there appears to be considerable support for the first ten dimensions among all constituent groups of the

Table 6.4 Percentage support for dimensions among different groups within the institute

Dimension	*Constituent group*			
	Academic managers	*Full-time staff*	*Students*	*Governors*
1. Equal opportunities	100	100	87.6	100
2. Maximize creative opportunities	100	92.5	88.4	95.8
3. Special needs	100	85.2	83.8	100
4. International exchanges	100	85.9	90.1	87.5
5. Broad-based curriculum	100	83.3	77.8	93.7
6. Links with local schools	100	92.6	63.6	87.5
7. Promote visual arts	77.0[a]	85.1	78.7	97.5
8. Qualifying courses	96.6	89.6	79.0	87.5
9. Flexibility for students	91.7	74.4	81.8	87.5
10. Sponsorship for resources	83.3	77.7	85.1	87.5
11. Recreational classes	100	64.7	66.6	62.5
12. Employment placing service	33.3	44.4	91.4	87.5
13. Student housing	66.6	77.7	90.1	87.5

Note: These percentages were calculated by summing the percentage support for each individual activity in the category and then dividing by the number of activities in each category to find the average percentage support.

[a] In the case of the academic managers' response to mission no. 7, there was 100 per cent support for the two activities referring directly to the principle of promoting the visual arts, but when these two statements were combined with the other statements in the category referring to how this might be done, an overall figure of 77 per cent was obtained. All other percentages in this category for the various groups are calculated on the basis of averaging all statements in the category.

college. Some important areas of difference, however, do exist. One of these concerns the move into the provision of recreational-type courses. It is likely that management and policy makers see this as a way of making up some of the shortfall in funding received from the LEA and the PCFC. However, those who will have to deliver the recreational classes, the teaching staff, are markedly less keen on this type of provision. Some of the reluctance to embrace this work may be due to fears about dilution of the resources available to spread across course provision. Thirty-nine 'qualitative' responses were received on the 'open-ended' section of the questionnaire and seven of these mentioned the serious lack of resources. Typical of these is this comment from a part-time teacher: 'I feel that the courses presently run at the institute are under-resourced and understaffed, so that it seems a very bad idea to be thinking of adding courses'.

The establishment of an employment placing service and student housing facilities did not receive strong support from college managers, staff or the LEA. Clearly, such activities would require resourcing in what is already a constrained financial situation. However, students strongly support such

Table 6.5 Percentage support for dimensions among different groups outside the institute

	Constituent group			
Dimension[a]	*LEA*	*Employers*	*Community*	*All*
1	100	91.6	83.3	91.4
2	66.0[b]	88.9	80.8	87.3
3	100	91.6	80.8	87.1
4	83.4	91.7	76.9	84.7
5	100	87.5	78.8	84.4
6	100	87.5	86.5	83.5
7	75.0[b]	81.6	83.0	82.3
8	60.0	78.3	74.6	79.8
9	91.6	95.8	69.1	78.2
10	100	75.0	69.3	78.2
11	100	75.0	75.5	75.8
12	33.4	91.6	73.1	72.9
13	66.7	83.3	46.1	71.1

[a] The dimensions are the same as those shown in Table 6.4.
[b] For these percentages, a similar situation applies as to that of the academic managers in Table 6.4. The statements directly referring to the principle were agreed with 100 per cent, but when averaged out with other statements in the category the figure noted in the chart was achieved.

provision and it may be that in the battle to maintain and increase student recruitment, serious thought needs to be given to attracting students by providing them with facilities to be found in other establishments and which they clearly value. Improved student union facilities are considered important by the academic management, but their responses suggest that they have other facilities in mind to those mentioned above.

Provision of these student facilities is one of the few areas in which there is a lack of 'fit' between the students and the staff. Generally, there is a good congruency between the views of staff and students. The only other area where some degree of difference exists between these two groups, is over the links with local schools. Given that many of the students compete nationally for their places, especially on advanced courses, it might be expected that students would be suspicious of developing closer relationships with local schools with a view to increasing recruitment.

The broadening of access to courses is emphasized by the institute's management and LEA officers, but does not receive strong support from other groups. Again, a lack of enthusiasm on behalf of staff may handicap plans to improve access. One local community member attributes this lack of interest to the fact that: 'The college has an elitist and isolationist image which deters ordinary members of the community from using it'.

The governors and the LEA strongly support links with industry, either via sponsorship or via the provision of short course and consultancy services.

Again, such practices have financial benefits for the institution, which would help in its battle to create additional funds. The staff, however, are more circumspect about such relationships. Perhaps the traditional emphasis on providing an education as opposed to narrowly based vocational provision is at the root of this. Twelve comments were made about such links, of which the following from a full-time staff member is representative:

> The institute ought to pursue a policy which firmly establishes its position as an institute of higher education. It also ought to make plain its aim as one of providing a well-rounded education for its students rather than a narrow vocational/business outlook.

The main activities with which there was a significant level of disagreement between the various constituent groups are summarized in Tables 6.6 and 6.7. From these tables, it can be seen that there is quite clear opposition

Table 6.6 Areas of disagreement between groups within the institute

	Constituent groups (%)			
Area of disagreement	*Academic managers*	*Full-time staff*	*Students*	*Governors*
1. Provide a narrow curriculum	50.0	61.6	23.4	45.8
2. Looking inward	83.4	55.5	29.7	75.0
3. Share resources	0.0	29.6	53.1	12.5
4. Closer links with industry	16.7	29.6	33.3	25.0
5. Locating all courses in North Westland	0.0	7.4	37.0	37.5
6. Provide courses in other locations	33.4	55.5	24.7	12.5
7. Modularize	0.0	33.3	18.5	12.5
8. Give staff experience in schools	0.0	33.3	18.5	12.5

Table 6.7 Areas of disagreement between groups outside the institute

	Constituent groups (%)			
Area of disagreement[a]	*LEA*	*Employers*	*Community*	*All*
1	55.5	36.1	34.6	39.0
2	50.0	36.1	34.6	37.6
3	16.7	16.6	19.2	31.4
4	0.0	16.7	34.6	27.7
5	33.4	16.6	19.2	28.8
6	33.3	8.3	26.9	27.0
7	0.0	25.0	19.2	22.4
8	0.0	16.7	7.7	22.4

[a] The areas of disagreement are the same as those shown in Table 6.6.

to the notion of providing a narrow curriculum and to looking inward. Both these statements were 'test' statements and might be expected to produce adverse responses given the nature of the rest of the survey. Students, and to a lesser extent staff, are against the idea of sharing resources with a wider community, probably because of their perception that such resources are already scarce. The institute's managers are not against this, however, perhaps viewing it as a way to make money, but there is clearly potential for conflict of interest here.

As observed above, there is lack of consensus on closer links with industry. Students, governors and LEA officers are quite strongly against locating all courses in North Westland, although the governors are the only group to lend strong support to the retention of the South Westland site. Two additional areas of contention between the institute's staff and managers are those relating to modularization of the curriculum and the suggestion that institute staff should gain experience of teaching in schools.

The analysis of contentious areas shows that generally the students are less concerned about most of the statements than the staff with the exception of sharing resources, closer links with industry and the location of all courses in North Westland. The idea of sharing resources is opposed by more than half of the students and clearly shows their concern with the overall level of resources received by the institute. As about half of the students who completed the survey were based on the South Westland site, it is to be expected that they have doubts about relocating all courses to the North Westland site.

The analysis of levels of support for the mission suggests that there is a fair degree of consensus about the mission when it is expressed in terms of dimensions. When this consensus is examined more closely, however, it becomes apparent that several important differences exist between constituent groups regarding some of the dimensions and the more specific activities the institute must pursue for it to achieve its mission. There is no clear consensus over the provision of recreational-type courses, enhancing student facilities, broadening access to the institute's courses, modularization of the curriculum and the development of closer links with industry. This again raises the question of whether it is possible to subsume the 'missions' of individuals within a single institutional mission. Each of these activities can be seen as elements of a more consumer-led ethos, and it is interesting to note that staff concern about these may reflect their reluctance to embrace this ethos, which is perceived as imposed from outside the college and detrimental to the nature of art and design education.

On closer scrutiny: The consensus crumbles

As observed in the previous paragraph, overall there appears to be a fair degree of consensus. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes clear that this is not the case. An example is discussed in this section in which an area of apparent consensus is focused on in more detail to reveal far less

Table 6.8 Support for qualifying courses

	Constituent groups							
Course	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MA (FA)	83.4	81.4	61.7	75	33.4	16.7	73.1	62
MA (Des)	83.3	74.1	71.6	75	66.7	16.7	76.9	66
BTEC (Fash)	83.3	55.5	63	62.5	50	50	53.9	60.8
BA (FA)	100	100	85.2	75	66.6	66.7	76.9	81.9
BTEC (GAD)	83.4	75	75.3	87.5	58.4	50	73.1	73.1
BA (GD)	100	100	82.7	100	100	66.6	77	82.5
Foundation	100	92.6	85.2	100	83.3	66.7	84.7	84.8
HND (GD)	100	81.5	66.7	75	83.3	50	61.5	67.2
HND (DC)	100	51.8	61.8	75	75	50	61.5	67.2
BTEC (GD)	100	81.4	60.5	87.5	83.3	66.7	57.7	69.2
BTEC (SP)	100	77.7	55.6	50	75	33.4	23	55.5
MA (Pub)	50	48.1	37	62.5	33.4	0	19.2	35.1
BTEC (3-D)	66.7	62.9	53.1	50	41.6	16.7	61.6	59.6

Key: 1, Academic managers; 2, staff; 3, students; 4, governors; 5, employers; 6, LEA officers; 7, members of the local community; 8, all.
Fash, Fashion; FA, Fine Art; GAD, General Art and Design; GD, Graphic Design; DC, Design Crafts; SP, Surface Pattern; Pub, Publishing; 3-D, Three-Dimensional.

agreement than appears at first sight. This example refers to support for qualifying courses.

The data collected suggest that there is widespread support for providing qualifying courses. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the consensus does not extend to all the qualifying courses included in the survey. Some of the qualifying courses referred to are already well established, whereas others are only proposals. Scrutiny of the responses reveals that, generally, there is strong support for the existing course portfolio, especially the Foundation course and the two honours degree courses, but that support for the new proposals is not so widespread (see Table 6.8). Plans to develop taught MA courses in both fine art and design receive good levels of support from all groups except the LEA. This probably reflects the LEA's policy of retaining the existing balance of further and higher education provision established when the two colleges were merged. The provision of higher degrees by research also receives strong support from college managers, staff and governors.

The provision of a new HND Design Crafts course is quite well supported, except by the staff and the LEA, while proposals for an MA in publishing receive little support. A proposal for a BTEC Diploma in 3-D Design only receives half-hearted support. This may suggest that the policies and plans that inform such new developments have not been effectively communicated to all relevant constituent groups, or that members of these groups do not share the same sense of direction.

Conclusions

Conclusions are drawn with respect to three areas: those related to the methodology of mission establishment, those related to the variety of missions, and those related to a comparison with the managerial mission described in Chapter 5.

The value of a survey such as this is that it is possible to consult a wide range of individuals both inside and outside the organization. This is important in enabling all the institution's members to contribute to the mission development process. It is also very useful in that a survey allows members of constituent groups outside the college to be consulted. Such groups as potential employers and governors are considerably influential in determining the mission. Care in the development and administration of a survey such as this enables individual perceptions of mission to be 'tapped', and gives access to a range of individual views that might otherwise remain aloof from the mission development process.

Such surveys are not without their drawbacks. In attempting to reconcile the myriad of individual views, it is inevitable that some dilution occurs and that any mission developed may end up a weak compromise that does not satisfy anyone. Such statements are sometimes referred to as 'motherhood' statements, in that they are so all-encompassing, and so bland, that they have little practical use in influencing management or staff behaviour.

Surveys also result in the problem of non-response. The response rate of just over 50 per cent is reasonable when compared with other surveys. But what of the non-respondents? Don't they care, or does the idea of mission incorporated in the survey so alienate some respondents that they feel they cannot complete the questionnaire? The reasons cited earlier for non-response probably account for a considerable number of those who did not respond, and it is likely that sheer inertia accounts for a large percentage of the remainder. The questionnaire was also very long – seventy-one statements – and this may well have deterred some potential respondents. Postal surveys are less likely to result in a high response than those personally administered.

A problem with the survey technique in the context of mission establishment is the lack of opportunity for debate. Mission establishment by interest groups promotes debate both within, and sometimes between, interest groups. Surveys are generally completed alone and only stimulate occasional informal debate between those who complete them. Discussion presents an opportunity for the sharing of ideas, hearing different viewpoints, modifying ideas and perhaps developing some kind of consensus. Surveys do not promote this kind of interaction, and the consensus that comes out of them is to some extent mechanical and artificial.

The survey technique reveals tension over the mission of the institute. At first sight this is less apparent because there appears to be considerable support for the first ten dimensions among all constituent groups. When agreement with these dimensions is investigated further, however, it is clear

that while there may be agreement with the broad principle or dimension, there is considerable disagreement over exactly how this principle should be promoted. For example, the provision of qualifying courses is widely supported, as is the principle of access. On closer scrutiny, however, it is clear that this support does not extend to all qualifying courses, or to the idea of broadening access to the institute through the provision of recreational programmes of study. Analysis of the data reveals that agreement on, and thus implementation of, the mission is a more contentious issue than might be suggested by unilateral declarations of mission by management. Given the opportunity to consult over the mission, the respondents reveal that no clear consensus exists and that there may be areas of fundamental disagreement. This supports the findings of the interviews in Chapter 5, in which it was clear that a range of personal missions existed which were not acknowledged in the managerial mission developed for the institute.

If the sense of mission that is suggested by the survey is compared with the statement developed within the institute by the directorate, and described in Chapter 5, then it can be seen that this 'new' mission is more proactive, has more to say about the nature of the curriculum, and makes a commitment to extramural provision which does not appear in the original statement. It is also possible to be more specific, through the identification of the activities which suggest how the mission could be operationalized. There is some concordance with the original statement, suggesting that the directorate has to some extent set the agenda. Also, the agenda is indeed set in a wider context, in the sense that constituent groups outside the institute (e.g. employers and local community members) support similar activities, thus lending credibility to the concept of 'ideas in common currency'. That is, a set of ideas currently in wide circulation and generally accepted as significant for the time, probably promoted by the government of the day.

The method of mission establishment adopted by the institute and described in Chapter 5 was considered inadequate because there was no consultation with those who would have to deliver the mission through their work with students, or in their contacts with outside groups. There was no emphasis in the mission on the curriculum and the quality of student experience. There was also no attempt to operationalize the mission. The question then arises as to whether the use of the survey is preferable to this managerial procedure. It is argued that the survey method is preferable, because the opportunity for participation provides data which reveal potentially significant problems in securing consensus. The survey technique reveals that the mission is contentious and that it is more likely to produce a mission which reflects more accurately the concerns of teachers. This lack of consensus may suggest that the concept of mission is an illusory one, in that as soon as it is explored in more depth, it begins to evaporate. The complexity of an array of individual missions may make impossible, in any genuine sense, the notion of an institutional mission accepted in all its aspects by all institution members. While there are areas of common ground

between the two missions developed by the different methods, the survey has uncovered areas of disagreement and debate which the original procedure skates over.

The differences in support for various dimensions primarily concern differences between the academic staff, academic managers and policy makers. These are important differences and illustrate the difficulties involved in securing consensus. There appears to be a lack of agreement between the staff and management of the institute on a number of key areas – the expansion of teaching into extramural or recreational provision, broadening access to institute courses, developing closer links with industry, and modularizing courses – an issue which can be linked with both recreational provision and access. This may be suggestive of a growing gap between the developing 'consumer-led' philosophy of management and the vestigial 'producer-led' philosophy of the teachers.

The emphasis on access, modularization and continuing education of a largely recreational nature may be seen as an example of a consumer-led orientation, and suggests some suspicion about the change of emphasis on behalf of the staff: yet management appears to view this reorientation as essential to survival. This is consistent with the cynicism expressed by some of the respondents in the interviews discussed in earlier chapters, in which the true purpose of mission establishment was seen to be political and not educational. This cynicism appears to be rooted in a view that the mission process is a device for institutionalizing central government policy, rather than a genuine attempt to open up debate about the nature and purpose of the education conducted within the institute.

7

Methods of Mission Establishment 3: Workshops

The approach to mission establishment described in this chapter provides an opportunity to examine the role of debate by instigating a forum in which interaction, and thus resocialization, may occur. Fullan (1982) cites these as crucial elements in implementing change in education. The survey procedure discussed in Chapter 6 failed to provide this important aspect of interaction, because questionnaires are generally completed alone and only stimulate occasional informal debate between those who complete them. There is no scheduled opportunity for sharing of ideas, hearing different viewpoints, modifying ideas and perhaps developing some kind of consensus.

Earlier chapters also established that it was insufficient simply to generate a mission statement if it was expected that such a statement would have an impact on the 'culture' and processes of an institution. Examination of the literature in Chapter 3 in particular, suggested strongly that operationalization of the mission is critical to promoting organizational change. The workshop method discussed in this chapter suggests an approach to both facilitating debate and operationalizing mission.

Developing a participative approach

The workshop method described in this chapter was piloted in a large mixed-economy college of further and higher education, known for the purposes of this discussion as Eastlands College. The college has seven major schools, each of which has its own school board which acts as a forum for discussion of policy and decision making within the school. The school boards had been requested by the college principal, as a result of a decision by the college governors, to develop a mission statement for their schools which might form the basis of a college-wide mission. However, the school boards had been unsure of how to proceed, and some had refused to act until management had made more clear the future development and direction of the college.

I was asked what help might be given to progress the establishment of the mission. It was suggested and agreed that a series of workshops be run in

each of the schools and centres of the college during the summer and autumn of 1990, to enable participants to produce a draft mission statement which could then be discussed further within the individual groupings. I was therefore engaged as a consultant to facilitate the process of mission development. This provided an opportunity to test out an interactive approach to mission establishment. The participative method was suggested for a number of reasons: first, because the survey did not appear to be a useful tool for the generation of consensus; second, because it provided an opportunity for the involvement of staff at all levels within the schools; and third, because the workshops involved a mission development procedure that facilitated debate between staff, and between staff and management, which might conceivably assist in the development of a mission to which both staff and management could subscribe.

Support for debate and interaction as effective strategies for promoting consensus comes from the work of both Foucault and Fullan. The opportunity to participate in debate about the mission can be construed as the chance to participate in a discourse. Foucault (1974) uses the term 'discourse' in a particular sense to refer to what is both said and thought, by whom and in what circumstances. For Foucault, discourse involves both opinions and power relations and has a key role in the formulation of meaning and understanding. For example, in employing Foucault's concepts to analyse the 'new managerialism' in education, Ball (1990b) suggests that this managerialism brings with it the discourses and practices of industrial management. Ball presents such management as an example of Foucault's moral technology, a way of exercising control. Managerialism can be construed as a professional discourse which allows its exponents to lay claim to expertise which excludes others from policy and decision making. Ball also characterizes it as an imperialistic discourse in which order and rationality are set against chaos and irrationality, and thus it is a difficult discourse to challenge.

Management can suggest to teachers that unless a mission statement is developed, then the institution will drift, and unless there is agreement over purpose there will be uncertainty and chaos. A way to challenge a discourse is through discourse itself, for 'in so far as discourses are constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said, they stand in antagonistic relationships to other discourses, other possibilities of meaning, other claims, rights, and positions' (Ball 1990b).

If a less negative perspective is taken on the new managerialism, it may be possible to uncouple the concept of mission from the deprofessionalizing discourse of management and reconstruct it as a discourse of empowerment. That the concept of mission has become associated with the discourse of management is made clear in Chapter 2, and this view is reinforced by Earwaker's (1991) review of all the mission statements of the British polytechnics. In these he found that: 'Institutions of higher education shamelessly declare without qualification that they exist to serve the needs of the economy . . .

. . . institutions appear to be queueing up to proclaim that income generation and cost effectiveness are part of their *raison d'etre*'.

As part of a discourse of empowerment, a mission statement can come to represent those features to which members of the organization are entitled, such as the opportunity to influence the policies and strategies of the institution in which they work. Similarly, the mission can represent the student's entitlement to an appropriate curriculum of high quality. In this context, the mission can become a progressive rather than a controlling influence. Thus a discourse of empowerment can challenge one of management, where the two meet. Foucault characterizes a discourse as both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a point of resistance and a starting block for an opposing strategy.

If mission establishment is to become more than just a managerial exercise, then it would appear that teachers must have the opportunity to enter and influence the discourse. This opportunity is not provided by 'top-down' management pronouncements, nor, very effectively, by survey-type methods. The workshop strategy outlined here does, however, provide an opportunity for a more collegial form of policy making, and the forum for an exchange of views in which alliances can be formed and alternative perceptions of policy presented. This is important because debate and an exchange of ideas is a part of the resocialization process that Fullan (1982) claims is so important for change.

If the mission process is to result in new directions for a college, and is to influence such procedures as decision making and communication, then the process itself involves the resocialization of participants. This resocialization can occur through such processes as interaction, i.e. the opportunity to interact with management and colleagues to discuss the fundamental purposes of the college, its procedures and values. Fullan (1982) argues that: 'Research on implementation has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that these processes of interaction and staff development are crucial regardless of what the change is concerned with'. The notion of meaning is also critical in coming to terms with change, for as Fullan (1982) comments:

> New experiences are always reacted to in the context of some 'familiar, reliable construction of reality' in which people must be able to attach personal meaning to the experiences regardless of how meaningful they might be to others.

If the mission statement is meaningful to organization members, then it is more likely to become an important document within the institution. If not, it is in danger of remaining a paper exercise. Debate, and the inclusion of some of one's personal beliefs in the eventual mission, give it meaning which may result in its more widespread acceptance. The workshops devised to assist the mission process at Eastlands College provided an opportunity to test the impact of an interactive methodology upon the mission process.

The mission workshops

At the time of the workshops, the college had six major schools and four cross-college centres (e.g. Library, Student Services, etc.), and a central administrative function. Workshops were held in all schools, two of the centres (because both the Library and Computer Services had already developed mission statements), and central administration. Attendance at the workshops was voluntary and open to all staff, including technicians and secretarial staff.

The meetings were scheduled for when it was likely to be convenient for the various participants, e.g. lunchtimes or Wednesday afternoons, the time set aside for cross-school/centre meetings. The actual attendances were variable, with some groupings having an 80 per cent turnout, others having less than 25 per cent. Within the centres and the administrative grouping, attendance was uniformly high, in a number of cases involving nearly all the staff members. The attendance of academic staff at the school workshops was the least representative. This has obvious implications for the statements produced.

Despite the low level of attendance in some of the academic schools compared with the centres, this level of participation can be seen as something of an achievement in getting so many staff involved in such an important policy-making activity. The main reason for the differences in attendance between the schools and centres is probably because the centres have an administrative function which enables them to 'shut down' for a two-hour workshop. Teaching commitments in the schools, however, overlapped with when the workshops were scheduled, even though these were the times during which least teaching took place.

The workshops devised took the following form. The first twenty minutes or so served as an introduction, in which the reasons for engaging in a mission establishment procedure were explained. This was followed by a twenty-minute discussion period, in which there was an opportunity to air one's grievances relating to the overall policy and management of the establishment. Three main concerns surfaced during this part of the workshops:

1. The first related to the lack of guidance from management, accompanied by anger that staff were now being asked to help formulate the overall direction of the college.
2. The second concerned the importance, if any, that would be attached to ideas developed within the groups. Would management pay attention to those things thought to be important and would these concerns be watered down in the reconciliation process?
3. The third was a general cynicism about mission statements. Why do we need to do this? What's wrong with aims and objectives? This is just the latest government jargon.

These issues generated much debate in the sessions. The remainder (and majority) of the sessions were of a workshop type in which a variation of

Lundberg's (1984) 'zero-in' technique was used to generate a draft mission statement. It was felt that this method, with its technique of sharing individual perceptions within a group setting, encouraging discussion and allowing opportunities to modify perceptions through a discursive process, was particularly appropriate for a method of mission establishment designed to promote debate and interaction. Because this approach was taken, it was hoped that (1) a mission statement would be produced that reflected closely the concerns of the participants, (2) it would lead to a greater commitment to the mission, and (3) it would enhance the likelihood that the mission would direct institutional action. The success of the method in achieving these outcomes is evaluated later in this chapter.

Zero-in involved the following procedure. Individuals were first invited to encapsulate in a couple of sentences their personal sense of mission: Why am I here? What's important to me about the work that I do in this college? This was an attempt to put people in touch with their personal sense of mission and tacitly to acknowledge that the overall direction of an institution is decided by those who operate within it. These anonymous statements were then collected, shuffled and circulated among the participants until everybody had the chance to read all of them. They were then collected for later analysis.

The next stage was to ask individuals to attempt to encapsulate in a few sentences the mission of their section or department, having read the anonymous views of their colleagues. Something from the collection of individual statements is often likely to influence these latter statements of departmental purpose. These second statements were then circulated, and this time individuals were encouraged to underline, or in any other manner indicate, those sentences or parts of sentences, which they thought were particularly important.

The statements produced in these two 'rounds' varied in their level of abstraction and with the ethos of each school and centre. Some statements related to the general concerns of the institution as a whole. For example:

- To promote excellence in all activities.
- To be responsive to the present and future needs of the community.

Other statements related to specific activities concerning course or service provision. For example:

- To provide timely and accurate information for management.
- To offer specific courses in preparation for business careers.

The ethos of each school also appeared to influence the statements produced by the participants. For example, members of the School of Community Studies emphasized the need for a caring and supportive environment for learning; members of the Business School stressed close liaison with industry; and the Hotel School teachers emphasized income generation through industrial sponsorship and consultancy. When compared with the dimensions identified in Chapter 6, a striking similarity exists between the

dimensions and the statements produced during the workshops. This suggests again a set of ideas in common currency within the post-compulsory sector.

The circulations stage was followed by one whereby two volunteers were asked to draft a first statement that included all those elements indicated as important by the last round of circulations. There was usually a fair degree of overlap and it wasn't difficult to produce a manageable list of statements on a flip chart. This first draft then became the basis for discussion between group members. The aim was to end the session with a first draft that could be more widely discussed within the school at school boards, discussed with other constituent groups such as students and employers through the medium of consultative committees, and eventually submitted as the schools's statement to college management. The statements produced were to become subject to a reconciliation process in order to produce a version for the whole institution.

In comparison with the statement of mission produced at Westland Institute, the statements produced by the individual schools and centres at Eastlands College placed much more emphasis upon staff and student experience, and this characteristic carried through to the college's eventual statement of mission. Examples of items produced for some of the school statements are as follows:

- To provide a caring and supportive learning environment.
- To provide a rewarding and enjoyable service for students.
- To provide sufficient support for staff development to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities effectively.
- To provide a broad educational experience.

At the end of the session where the first draft was produced, a mission statement 'starter' issued by senior management, in a response to requests for more guidance 'from the top', was distributed and could form part of further deliberation on the draft. This 'starter' was not produced at the beginning in order to avoid circumscribing individuals' responses to the challenge of developing a mission for their own school.

At a later meeting at senior management level, these separate statements were reconciled into an overall college statement. The mission that was produced via this process was made up of eighteen elements and, it is argued, contained much that is meaningful to the staff of the college. Examples of some of the elements that refer to staff experience are as follows:

12. *Staff support*: To provide a caring and supportive working environment in which staff can develop and enhance their job satisfaction and personal effectiveness.
18. *Participation*: To encourage an ethos of openness and mutual support in which all those associated with the college are involved and committed to the college mission.

The following elements are examples which refer to student experience and thus reflect staff concerns in their work with students:

9. *Student experience*: To provide students with relevant, stimulating, enjoyable and innovative learning experiences.
10. *Personal development*: To encourage the intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and practical skills development of students to enable them to maximize their achievement in society.
11. *Student support*: To provide a caring and supportive learning environment that acknowledges the individuality of each student.

Of the nine ingredients of an effective mission statement referred to by David (1989), the college mission includes aspects of all nine, except that which refers to the technology in use by the organization. The particular strengths of the statement are in its references to the philosophy and self-concept of the college, concern for public image and concern for employees. Elements which might be more clearly expressed relate to a sharper definition of the college's customers, and the products and services it promotes. That these are not as explicit as they might be may reflect the traditional producer-led orientation of British F/HE.

If the eventual college mission statement produced by this process is compared with that of Westland Institute discussed in Chapter 5, then the following key differences can be noted. The process itself involved a wide range of college staff as opposed to the managerial mission produced at Westland Institute. The statement reflects the concerns of staff in their work with students with regard to the conditions under which this work is carried out, and the curriculum which is offered to students. The statement also reflects staff concerns about their own working conditions and their role in institutional decision making. Of course, all these features are meaningless if no action follows from the statement itself, but the attempts to operationalize the mission outlined below demonstrate some active institutional commitment to the broader process of mission development and implementation.

Following approval by the college committee structure and the governors, the next stage was to take the statement back down to the individual schools for them to develop specific objectives. This was an attempt to ensure the operationalization of the mission. One workshop was held in each school of the college in the spring of 1991, and again attendance was voluntary, resulting in similar levels of attendance to those of the original workshops. The purpose of these meetings was to develop specific objectives for each school deriving from the various elements of the college mission, and provide the schools with a specific agenda for turning the mission into practical action. These objectives were to include time-scales and names of those responsible for taking action. Examples of some of the objectives, developed in one of the schools, are shown in Table 7.1.

The development of such specific school objectives and strategies for their achievement linked to the overall mission of the college, represents a

Table 7.1 Examples of school objectives

Mission element	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*Who leads?*
1. Service to community	Conduct market research	Develop employer database	HOS, Reader
1.1 Improve research systems to identify community need		Increase research profile in specific areas	
1.2 Further development of summer, weekend and out-of-hours provision	Offer summer school	Open up facilities out of hours	AHOS, marketing group

Key: HOS, Head of School; AHOS, Assistant Head of School.

significant step forwards both in operationalizing the mission and in staff participation in formulating the policies of the college. In addition, it represents the basis of a strategic approach to management that may be crucial in adapting to the increasingly competitive environment.

How influential was the process in stimulating the development of the objectives and strategies mentioned above? Might they have evolved anyway, independent of the whole procedure? It is suggested that the process was instrumental. During the objectives workshops during the second 'phase', I witnessed discussions in which participants were 'freewheeling' in generating specific activities linked to the mission elements. For example, one group from the School of Community Studies generated four activities linked to mission element 1 (service to the community), two of which concerned offering summer schools and opening up college facilities out of hours. These ideas were jotted onto overhead projector transparencies and fed back to the whole group in plenary sessions. These ideas were subsequently incorporated into the school plan, extracts of which appear in Table 7.1, and the first pilot summer schools were actually offered in the college during the following summer. This example illustrates the transition from broad mission element to institutional action, occurring as a direct result of the development and operationalization procedure piloted at the college.

To assess thoroughly the value of the procedure in securing commitment and influencing action, a long-term follow-up study would be necessary, in which the effect of the procedure in determining decision making and resource allocation could be monitored. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions from the limited evidence that is available to date. The purpose of testing out this approach to mission establishment was to examine the impact of a more interactive process upon the mission produced, the commitment of participants to the mission and the effect of such an approach

upon consequent organizational action. The prime outcome of the interactive approach was the mission statement itself. This statement, as argued above, contained much that was meaningful for the teachers within the college. This statement can be contrasted with that produced at Westland Institute, which was not developed through an interactive process, and which appeared to have little meaning for the staff, nor fulfilled many of the characteristics of an effective statement. Clearly, different types of institutions will produce different types of statement, and therefore it is not possible to compare them on an equal basis. However, on the basis of the statements alone, the statement of mission produced at Eastlands College appears to reflect a wider range of influences than that of Westland Institute.

Another outcome of the interactive process was the follow-up workshops which involved participants in the generation of more specific objectives for their own operating units or schools. This represented a first important step towards ensuring that the mission statement actually has an impact upon the operation of the college. Following the workshops, individual schools did develop their own objectives, strategies and time-scales – further evidence of the operationalization of the mission. This suggests that this interactive approach did effectively link the mission to action. Within Westland Institute during the research period, the mission remained at the level of rhetoric and did not appear to be significant for management or curricula planning.

Finally, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that the mission at Eastlands College has meaning for the participants. Recent student enrolment figures have shown a big increase but additional funding has not followed, and there aren't the number of rooms available to accommodate them. This has led the unions to take the college management to task by referring to the mission statement and its mission to: 'Improve the quality of the working and learning environment, including health and safety aspects'.

Part 3

Towards a Strategic Perspective

8

Operationalizing Mission

An approach to operationalizing mission that has been in operation for a number of years is that employed by the technical and further education (TAFE) system in New South Wales in Australia. This approach is discussed in this chapter.

The context for mission establishment in Australia

As will be seen from this brief discussion of context, Australia and the UK share a similar context in terms of developments in the F/HE sector. All institutions in post-compulsory education in Australia are under considerable pressure to assist in economic restructuring: to play their part in the development of the 'clever country', and the reformulation of Australia from a country with a third-world economy and first-world lifestyle, to one in which the economy and the lifestyle are more in harmony.

Further and higher education is now more directly controlled by the Commonwealth (federal) government and it has become subject to a 'managerial' culture, which emphasizes entrepreneurialism (in the form of a broader funding base), responsiveness and an 'explicit emphasis on the efficient and effective use of resources' (Smith 1990).

In New South Wales, the TAFE system is being restructured directly as a result of the need to 'enhance the skills of the Australian workforce to promote the process of economic development' (TAFECOM 1990). The promotion of economic development is being achieved by:

> ... seeking more efficient management performance, greater public accountability, higher quality service to clients and involvement of stakeholders, and greater competitiveness with and between public and private education and training providers (TAFECOM 1990).

One practical consequence of this, as a deputy college principal put it, 'is that we are being greatly encouraged to go in for a lot of "fee for service" activities'.

Table 8.1 Hierarchy of objectives

Commission level	Prepare and implement a marketing and development plan so as to take up appropriate commercial opportunities available to TAFECOM
Network level	Establish marketing strategies in the college network to meet TAFECOM marketing targets of income generation and responsiveness to industry and community needs
College level	Market and promote the educational and related services provided by the college

Table 8.2 Example from a management plan

Objective	To market and promote the educational and related services of the college
Strategy	Establish a commercial centre to house and promote the college's income-generating activities
Outcome	Commercial centre established and partially operational by February 1992
Responsibility	Marketing coordinator and senior management
Resources	New initiative provided for in budget estimates

The language and sentiments employed in this discussion of the Australian TAFE sector will be very familiar to those involved in further and higher education in Britain.

Operationalizing mission in Australia

In New South Wales, the state commission specifies the role and mission of TAFE and has developed a set of corporate goals and activities derived from the mission. College networks (groups of colleges) produce a network management plan, which has a set of objectives derived from the commission's corporate goals. Individual colleges also produce a strategic plan which derives from that of the network. This hierarchy of objectives is illustrated in Table 8.1.

The plans which are produced include strategies for achieving the objectives and outcomes (including targets and time-frames), and they specify whose responsibility it is to achieve those outcomes. An example of a section of a college plan is shown in Table 8.2.

Initially, due to the reorganization of the state system, the mission, goals and objectives are set at the top and then filtered down, but the intention is that the objectives and outcomes of individual colleges should drive the process from the 'bottom up'. The TAFE system of management plans with objectives, outcomes and responsibilities, provides a vehicle to operationalize the mission, and an opportunity to measure progress towards its achievement.

As discussed in earlier chapters, it would appear that in reality mission statements remain broad and vague, unsupported by the development of clear objectives and performance indicators, and thus remain at the level of rhetoric. Newsom and Hayes (1991) comment in the American context:

> Not surprisingly, few colleges find much use for their mission statements. They are usually not guidelines for serious planning.
>
> Does this mean mission statements are a waste of time? In their present form, we would answer, yes. But we found a few documents that were quite courageously specific, and these seemed to point the way for planners.

From the following comment by a deputy principal, collected in a series of interviews in New South Wales during the Australian winter of 1991, it would appear that the management plans in use within TAFE colleges can affect organizational processes:

> A big drive, in the plan last year, was to look at the instructional design centre. It hasn't been very effective, especially outside the college, very few other colleges have tapped it. Lots of resources go into it. In the plan, part of the educational development objective was to review provision in the college, and the first area we looked at was the instructional design centre. So we carried out a review and we're in the process of implementing that review now.

Another college principal describes in the following extract how the management plan influences his behaviour:

> I don't sit with my management plan at the ready and every time there's a decision to be made, refer to it. But when I have to make decisions, I make decisions based on an organizational belief that that's where we should be going. What I do do also, is to use the plan in the allocation of resources.

These comments suggest that the plans developed to operationalize the mission in TAFE colleges in New South Wales have some impact upon managerial practice and decision making. In this sense, the practice of strategic planning does appear to help bridge the gap between rhetoric and action. The procedures described here are very similar to those employed at Eastlands College.

The type of planning discussed here is a form of corporate planning that is characteristic of strategic management. Strategic management was defined in Chapter 1 as separate from operational management and concerned with deciding on strategy, and planning how that strategy is to be put into effect (Johnson and Scholes 1989). The elements of strategic analysis, choice and implementation involved in the process are designed to assist an organization to adapt to its environment. In a little more detail, the process involves a number of stages, including: analysis of the internal and external organization environment, mission development, objective formulation,

choice of objectives, implementation and evaluation. The place of mission development in the process can vary – for example, Bowman (1990) suggests it should follow an analysis of the organization's environment – however, the establishment of mission is seen as a key component of strategic management.

Within the context of the strategic approach, planning can be either more or less formal. The corporate approach used in the TAFE system in New South Wales is akin to the systematic planning advocated by most writers on strategic management. Such an approach is much more likely to ensure that the mission is relevant to the organization's context and that the mission really does direct action within the institution. This is because (1) a management committed to the ethos of strategic planning is much more likely to take the mission seriously, and to wish to see it directing policy and decisions, (2) mechanisms exist to link the mission to action and (3) management control devices exist to reinforce achievement and monitor progress. This suggests that mission establishment should be a part of a strategic approach if it is to impact upon procedures and action. However, it is still likely that not all decisions will be made with reference to a strategic plan. Steiner and Miner (1982) recognize this when they comment:

> The planning system presented in this chapter is designed to inject more rationality into the decision making process. It must be recognised however, that many, and generally the most important, decisions made in the process cannot be settled on the basis of universal quantitative truths. The issues involve judgements, values, passions, and consequences that are very difficult to perceive. So irrationality cannot be avoided no matter how carefully a formal planning system is erected. Anyway, the rationality or irrationality of any decision is often determined by who is looking. Nevertheless, good formal planning does move a company toward rationality; that is why companies that have formal planning systems have generally been found to perform better.

Consequently, strategic plans cannot guarantee to 'deliver' the mission of an institution, but may act to ensure more conformity to the mission than would occur without the plan.

It was suggested earlier in this book that an effective mission process should engage all institution members in a wide-ranging debate about the nature and purpose of their organization. Where such a debate takes place, with regard to the mission and the plans developed to help implement it, it is expected that the plans will be more influential in determining organizational action. The role of TAFE college teachers in New South Wales in the development of objectives, management plans and ultimately the mission of the system, is not completely clear from discussions with college managements. Some principals claim the development of the plan to be a highly participative process, and indeed TAFECOM emphasizes the importance of this in its official literature. The participative mechanisms talked of by college managements appear to be fairly formal (committee style), and the degree

of staff participation in such forums is likely to vary. In the following quote, a college manager describes the process of plan construction in his own college:

> Ultimately its the whole college. Initially it was devised by a team of elected people, that was last year. This year we've looked at last year's plan and changed it slightly. We went about it by having a senior management group meet to discuss and revise the plan and then put it to senior staff within the schools after circulating it to the whole college. So the whole college has an input. Each section within the college was encouraged to have a meeting with their staff to discuss the plan . . .
>
> The plan isn't something which has been thrust upon people. Everyone has had the opportunity to develop it. Not everyone has a say in these meetings, but we do encourage all staff to attend their section meetings, and not just the teaching staff, the ancillary staff as well. Everyone should have the chance to participate.

Some college managers suggest that very few of their staff are really interested in participating in the process and that their real concern is only with their teaching. As one college network manager commented:

> I think out of a 1000 full-time teachers and 2000 part-time – of all those I could count on one hand how many would be interested [in participating in management planning] . . . We're going through a big restructuring at the moment, a changed culture, and most of the staff were recruited in the previous culture, and they haven't visited the future yet.

Despite the emphasis on management plans, some of those in the system are sceptical of the whole process of mission making and strategic planning, and the degree of participation involved. This is because such plans involve the danger of fragmentation and over-emphasis on the plan at the expense of initiative and creative thinking. The following illustration of this view is from a TAFE teacher educator:

> I've seen lots of schemes come from America offered as recipes and panaceas, and I don't think any of them have been as successful as promised, especially strategic planning, which hit the TAFE system four or five years ago. I get concerned when everything gets disaggregated into very small action plans for individuals. I get very concerned about losing coherence, losing direction, losing vision, losing creativity, stifling initiative. Locking people into set courses of action. I think that's what they do. I suppose I feel cynical also, about the extent of participation that's possible in a large institution like a TAFE college.

These caveats, concerning fragmentation and the effect on initiative, are important to note. To overcome such possible drawbacks, the strategic

approach needs to operate within the framework of more devolved responsibility. This is considered further in Chapter 9.

Conclusions

The system of strategic planning that exists in the New South Wales and a number of other Australian state TAFE systems suggests a way of operationalizing missions that makes it less likely that they remain rhetorical statements. In this system, a mission can be broken down into a set of objectives or activities for the composite elements of an organization. A set of outcomes, time-frames, responsibilities and performance indicators can be generated.

Clearly, the danger of such an approach is that the whole process can become so fragmented that overall coherence is lost and individuals are allowed to focus exclusively on their own small area of objective achievement. The importance of individual initiative is also crucial. Within policy guidelines, there should be scope for initiative and imagination to inform the direction and operation of the institution. There is, however, little reason to believe that in the UK further education sector to date, strategic management has developed very far. In higher education, its use has been advocated by the PCFC since 1989, although it is not clear how wholeheartedly the approach has been adopted in colleges. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) is similarly encouraging colleges of further education to adopt strategic planning methods.

Many within educational establishments will be uneasy with the managerialism implicit in the notion of strategic management – fearing the decline of collegial structures, human values and an attack on teacher professionalism. This is less likely be the case if the planning process is a highly participatory one, through which all teachers are given the opportunity to debate purpose, set meaningful objectives and develop performance indicators that do not relate solely to efficiency and quantitative measures.

9

Implications for Management

This book has been concerned with analysing the concept of mission and its application in further and higher education. Throughout this analysis, it has become clear that the concept is a difficult one, implying consensus and rational management based on an agreed institutional mission, in an organizational context where consensus and rationality of decision making is problematic. Yet, despite the problems inherent in the mission concept, it is still in the ascendant in terms of government policy and educational practice in F/HE in the 1990s. A good example of this ascendancy is the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. A major plank of the legislation relating to the further education sector is the release of colleges of further education and sixth-form colleges from the control of LEAs, permitting them to become corporate institutions in their own right. This follows on from the incorporation of the polytechnics as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988.

One of the major consequences of incorporation for the further education sector is the need for greater financial stringency. Colleges will have the 'freedom to go bust', as well as the opportunity to be rewarded for expansion. Becoming corporate involves colleges being responsible for an additional range of administrative functions, including payroll administration, invoicing and bad debt collection, and auditing. The increase in administrative costs will generally be financed from a reduction in teaching costs. Yet colleges are funded on the basis of student numbers, by a diminishing unit of resource. This is designed to encourage expansion through an increase in student numbers and to stimulate efficiency in college operations. The more gloomy prognostication is that more students are being crammed into worse classrooms and being taught for less time. For college managements, corporate management techniques appear to be essential. The days when individual departments quickly assembled their own development plans, which were then sent to senior management who stapled them all together and called the result an institutional development plan, have gone. College managements have to ask serious questions about costs, priorities and the fundamental purpose of the institution. There is much more talk about mission statements and strategic management and hence more concerted attempts to link decisions to the mission of the institution.

Given this background, what has been learnt from this work that might inform management in F/HE? What is clear about the concept of institutional mission is that it is a multi-faceted concept. It involves a mass of ideas, within which little is new. Underlying the concept are a number of assumptions which are problematic within the context of organizational behaviour. These are the assumptions of rationality and consensus. The assumption of rationality implies that once a mission is established, then it will be used as the basis for organizational decisions and actions, otherwise why bother to establish it? The assumption of consensus implies that once a mission is established, then organization members will subscribe to it and sublimate any personal mission to the institutional. This is not guaranteed, for reasons relating to the importance of personal mission and its close link to individual identity. The concept of institutional mission thus becomes somewhat illusory. The closer one moves towards it, the more blurred it becomes.

What may hold together the illusion of the institutional mission is the existence of dimensions which underlie it. These dimensions – such as the desire to provide equal opportunities, wider access, qualifying courses, etc. – appear to be ideas in common currency in both the institutions and in the wider society. They can provide the broad base which enables statements to be expressed in a manner which avoids offending the sensibilities of participants. In this way, they can act as the 'glue' which allows the diverse missions of individuals to be accommodated without major discomfort within an institution.

The notion of mission is highly likely to be contextual. What mission means, how it is established, how it is received, how it is used, how it is operationalized and how it is evaluated, is context-dependent. What works in one situation may have little chance of success in the next. The specific context within which Westland Institute was attempting to establish mission (e.g. the loss of 'topping up', the merger and the school's traditional image) is very likely to have affected the way in which the mission was established, the statement itself, and the way it was perceived by the various constituent groups.

With regard to the process of mission development, it has been suggested that it should be participative if the mission is to have meaning for organization members. In this context, participation means the opportunity to be involved in discussions about the development of the mission, in the drafting and agreeing of the statement, and in the techniques established to ensure the translation of the mission from rhetoric to organizational action. The meaning this may give the mission for those involved makes it more likely that the mission will inform practice. As observed earlier, mission establishment is often linked to a desire to promote change in organizations, but this does not occur through the development of a mission statement alone. The statement is only part of the process, a process which must involve the operationalization of the mission.

Regardless of how fragile the concept of mission is, and how effective or ineffective the process of mission establishment is, the nature of the mission

statement itself may also be a variable in the acceptance and credibility of the concept. Despite the work of David (1989) in identifying key components of a mission statement, perhaps the most important component for British F/HE staff is that the statement reflect their concerns, especially those about the curriculum.

Another point relates to the plurality of interests within colleges which makes the achievement of true consensus difficult. As Steiner and Miner (1982) comment: 'policy/strategy is subject to different interpretations by different people, each of whom has a power not controllable or easily controllable by someone else'. Such a plurality appears to be more typical of not-for-profit organizations. The idea of a multiplicity of missions coexisting within a single institution focuses attention on the applicability of the mission concept to the management of educational organizations. The plurality of missions has its roots in personal values. Because of the likely lack of engagement in the product or service at the values and beliefs level, as a general rule in commercial organizations, there is less likelihood of a schism between the values of the workforce and those of management. Education, on the other hand, is so closely associated with personal values and beliefs that clear potential for disagreement exists.

The policy imperatives that underlie the introduction of the concept of mission into the British F/HE scene are important to note. Three such imperatives may be discerned. The first is that a 'cultural' change in the nature of the sector is being promoted, involving a shift from a producer-led ethos to a consumer-led ethos, in which the market becomes far more influential in determining provision. The second is that this cultural change involves a 'managerial' orientation, which seeks to control both public sector expenditure and, some argue, the influence of the producers, who appear to be perceived as 'conspirators in the restraint of trade' (Harris 1989). In some respects, however, it is likely that a greater role for management in F/HE could help in adapting successfully to a rapidly changing environment. As Scott (1989) comments:

> Sadly, it may be true that in the past many schools and colleges were under-managed, or rather that their management structure and style had been designed for a different environment . . . Today's environment is more populist, less prosperous, more uncertain . . . large complex institutions with diverse roles must be more deliberately managed than small, simple ones with restricted roles. The managerial revolutions in schools, colleges and universities is perhaps a growing pain of a mature educational system.

The third imperative is that the notion of mission establishment is part of a policy that seeks to stimulate the growth of the private sector and encourage F/HE to become more akin to this sector in its responsiveness. Mission establishment is thus not primarily a method of promoting a fundamental debate about educational values.

There is now an opportunity to reflect on a number of general questions

about the nature of mission establishment. For example, why do missions exist? In theory, it is to delineate the basic reasons for the existence of an academic institution and to establish its essential character. In reality, they exist as part of a drive to change the ethos of further and higher education from being provider-centred to being consumer-led.

So does mission establishment succeed in 'living up' to this expectation? Such a change will be difficult to achieve, it is argued, without some fundamental change in teacher attitudes and roles. This in turn will need more than an attempt to establish mission if it is to take place.

More consumer influence implies a corresponding reduction in the influence of teachers over matters educational. This could result in teachers perceiving a diminished role for themselves, and a perceived lack of concern for educational values on behalf of those who advocate mission establishment. Because of this, and the ample opportunity for insider adaptation because of the way in which educational services are delivered, resistance to the concept from those inside the F/HE system will occur. Compounding this resistance is the belief that the concept is destructive to the values of education. This belief may be an extremely powerful source of resistance because of the commitment to such values that exists.

If the mission concept is not successful in terms of meeting the expectations claimed of it, what does it do? Attempts at developing mission appear to be successful in pointing to the complexity and variety of the 'missions' that exist within a single institution. The more the nature of mission is explored, the more it becomes apparent that an overall institutional mission is little more than a veneer. Mission establishment may thus be successful in pointing to the futility of the tight central control of an organization and therefore be helpful in creating a climate in which self-managing, responsive teams, operating within a broad institutional framework, may become the model of operations for the rapidly changing environment of the 1990s.

The mission concept is closely associated with market mechanisms. The consequences of an increasing use of market mechanisms in F/HE are various. Such mechanisms are likely to result in greater choice, through greater ease of access to college courses and an extended range of programmes of study on offer. This will probably lead to greater competition in the sector – among providers of higher education in the new unified system, between schools and colleges of further education, and between public and private providers. Competition often leads to a diversification of products on offer as colleges seek to capture new market segments. Funding sources will also diversify, as more full-cost courses appear and the notion of cash exchange is extended, perhaps through the widespread introduction of a training voucher scheme. These changes are likely to result in organizational changes. Already colleges are rapidly establishing their own companies and looking for ways to become more flexible to cope with developments such as those noted above.

Attempts to operationalize missions are likely to result in a more obvious

display of the management role and a greater acceptance that certain tasks can be located within the management domain. This may mean a clearer role for management in educational institutions, where the functions of planning, setting objectives, achieving targets and performance measurement become more common and therefore more widely accepted. A further consequence of this is that educational institutions may become more rational in their operations. As Steiner and Miner (1982) observe, the greater the attempt to introduce rationality, the more likely it is that such rationality will develop. The more that management planning type systems come into use and are influential in determining people's jobs and careers, the more the rationality inherent in them is likely to become a feature of institutional processes. The implications for management in the F/HE sector can be expressed by listing the main findings summarized earlier in this chapter, and noting their associated implications (see Table 9.1).

To respond to the challenges inherent in the findings in Table 9.1, it is suggested that managers in the sector will need to employ two key strategies for managing F/HE institutions in the 1990s. The first is what may be referred to as post-modern management, an approach concerned with linking central and local concerns; the second is the adoption of strategic management techniques.

Post-modern management

The administration and structure of most F/HE organizations has tended to operate on a hierarchical and bureaucratic model, which commentators like Westwood argue are based on Fordist beliefs. Such a set of beliefs, 'in both the popular and academic literature speaks for a whole era of manufacturing based on mass markets for standardised products produced from assembly lines in large units with large workforces' (Westwood 1991).

Colleges of further and higher education have traditionally been hierarchical institutions producing standardized courses in large establishments. However, new models of production based on reorganized capitalism, and the decline of the 'grand narratives', with overarching explanatory theories such as Marxism, are leading to the development of post-modern production methods and policies linked to local rather than central narratives. Because centrally devised policies are invariably linked to imposition, and often necessitate adaptation for local needs, they are likely to meet resistance and modification. Local initiatives, while tied to central concerns, can generate greater commitment and are more suited to local conditions.

Much has been written about the new forms of organization relevant to the conditions of operation that educational institutions have found themselves in in the 1980s and 1990s. Beare *et al.* (1989) trace the development of such new forms, drawing on notions such as loosely coupled systems, loose–tight structures (identified as a common characteristic of Peters and Waterman's, 1986, excellent companies), federal organizations and adaptive

Table 9.1 Findings and implications

Findings	*Implications*
Personal mission and personal identity are linked	The values and beliefs of individuals need to be represented in the mission
Certain broad dimensions in common currency appear to inform missions. This 'broad brush' can allow the accommodation of more specific individual/group views	Missions might best be expressed in broad dimensions
The unique context of each organization influences the mission and its development	Take account of contextual factors in the development process
Missions are more likely to have meaning for participants and impact upon institutions if participants are involved in their development	Provide opportunities for participation in mission development (Workshop method)
Impact involves operationalization	Institute systematic planning to facilitate mission achievement
The mission statement should reflect participant concerns, especially about the curriculum	Participation, and emphasis on the curriculum in the mission
The mission statement should include certain features if it is to be effective	Ensure these features are included in any statement developed
F/HE organizations represent a plurality of interests	Seek to accommodate this plurality within the overall mission
Concept is part of an attempt to shift the ethos of F/HE to being more consumer-led	To manage the implications of the increasing use of market mechanisms

corporations. All these concepts appear to point to some central control over such matters as the nature of the enterprise, areas of operation and main developmental thrusts; but a great amount of freedom should be vested in semi-autonomous units where speed, initiative, local entrepreneurship and creativity are necessary. In such circumstances, control can be exercised through a strong culture which binds the separate units, and clear articulation of institutional values. In addition, control can be exercised through a system of resource management, whereby resources can be utilized against a planned audit of activities and outcomes.

This post-bureaucratic form of organization is particularly attractive in education where teachers 'make many of the decisions relating to the real function of the school and they do so without reference to anyone else, including their own colleagues or the Principal' (Beare *et al* 1989). What is described here is very similar to the idea of 'post-Fordism':

> . . . where the move is away from concentrated, large scale production with a large workforce on site. Instead production of commodities is generated through a network of small firms that supply a part in the operation overall and that are co-ordinated through the use of computer technologies and decentralised management. (Westwood 1991)

The consequences of post-Fordism, or post-modern methods of operation, for F/HE could be: greater decentralization, whereby senior management does not exercise close executive control; greater opportunities for professional autonomy, in that staff would have freedom of action in developing and implementing decisions; and the incentive to provide more diversified 'products'. Some functions take place at an institutional level and are exercised by senior management. Examples of such functions might be: setting the broad character of the college (visionary leadership); the formulation of rules and policies and the enforcement of collective agreements about these; quality assurance; and setting up and operating management systems and processes. Academic staff would then be free to manage their own work, decide on the principles of resource allocation and be accountable to their own operational unit. They are in effect members of self-directed teams.

Orsburn *et al.* (1990) describe some of the classic features of self directed teams:

> Although work team members demonstrate classic teamwork, they're much more than simply good team players. For one thing, they have more resources at their command than traditional teams do: a wider range of cross functional skills within the team itself, much greater decision making authority and better access to the information they need for making sound decisions. Work teams plan, set priorities, organise, co-ordinate with others, measure and take corrective action – all once considered the exclusive province of supervisors and managers. They solve problems, schedule and assign work, and in many cases handle personnel issues like absenteeism or even team member selection and evaluation.

Although the idea of these teams is not new – their origins being in the work of the Tavistock Institute in the 1950s – their more recent popularity is due to their match to prevailing environmental and organizational conditions. According to writers such as Orsburn *et al.*, self-directed teams bring benefits in terms of increased organizational flexibility, quality improvement, employee commitment and customer satisfaction.

In summary, managers in F/HE are invited to consider abandoning bureaucratic, hierarchical notions of management, which involve every member of the organization subscribing to set ways of working and joint goals. Such methods require a great emphasis on control, which in itself is counter-productive in achieving the aims of the system. The new paradigm could be one in which self-managed teams with a high degree of autonomy operate within an agreed value framework that permits greater flexibility of method, greater variety of provision, and necessitates no loss of energy to the organization through 'political' battles, in which individual missions are pitted against institutional ones. This approach would effectively address the concerns raised earlier in this chapter relating to the need for individuals to feel that their values and beliefs are represented in the activities of the organization, and is consistent with the notion of a broad-based central mission, with scope for specific tasks and strategies to be decided at a more local level. In addition, this approach is certainly participatory and allows the accommodation of the plurality of views that do exist. Finally, it encourages the expression of educational values which inform the mission and provide a framework for local interpretation, consistent with such values.

Strategic management

Linked to the success of the self-directed team concept is the notion of financial and outcome control coordinated from the centre, which is characteristic of a strategic approach to management. The systematic planning also often associated with such an approach is important in ensuring the impact of the mission on organizational action. Thompson's (1990) definition of strategic management as 'the process by which an organisation establishes its objectives, formulates actions designed to achieve these objectives in the desired timescale, implements the actions and assesses progress and results', emphasizes the strategists' concern with implementation and impact. Consequently, it is recommended that managers in F/HE adopt a strategic approach. The strategic decision-making style considered appropriate to the sector is a variant between rigid corporate planning and 'ad hocery'. This variant is one in which central management sets broad guidelines and budget centres have a high degree of discretion in decision making. Although there is no single approach to strategic management and it is a complex area that cannot be addressed in depth here, broadly a strategic approach means analysing the internal and external environment of the college, especially with regard to its competitive position in the market; generating strategies for action in adapting to the environment and evaluating and choosing between these strategies; managing the implementation of chosen strategies through budgetary control and performance expectations; and evaluating their success.

Adopting such an approach involves developing a strategic awareness which suggests that managers in the sector should address themselves to

such fundamental questions as: Where are we going? How are we doing? Where and why are we doing well/badly? Where are our opportunities and threats? And where is our competitive advantage?

Strategic management was developed for application in the commercial environment. Is there any reason why it should not be applicable to F/HE? Further and higher education is a service, as opposed to a manufactured product, and a public sector organization, as opposed to a commercial one whose main purpose is to make profits. Most writers, however, see few reasons why managerial techniques generally applicable to commercial practice cannot be applied to public sector organizations. Such organizations are also involved with suppliers and users (or customers), and are also looking to generate surpluses in order to carry out their work. Clearly there are a number of factors, as discussed earlier in this book, which make F/HE organizations distinctive, and which may result in difficulty in applying managerial techniques. Many of these factors are, however, being addressed by the cultural change being promoted in the sector, which emphasizes the increasing use of market mechanisms and control over public expenditure. It is likely that these factors will become more successful in assisting the reorientation of F/HE from a producer-led to a consumer-led operation. As this occurs and change takes place, such as an increase in those users who are also funders, and rewards for organization members become more closely related to performance, techniques such as mission establishment and strategic management will be more easily applied.

The strategic planning model advocated initially by the PCFC and also proposed by the FEFC is likely to be a powerful factor in promoting change, linking the need for a strategic approach with the provision of funds. However, there are still those who may be unmoved by exhortations of the value of strategic management because of their concern with educational values. Due to the close association of education with personal values, individuals may find it particularly difficult to associate themselves with institutional missions and strategies which do not reflect their personal educational values. In such instances, strategic managers will need to:

> . . . combine acute political and interpersonal skills (to manage the various interest groups), with a clear set of values, or a vision. Armed with this clarity of purpose, they are then able to set direction and make judgements between conflicting requirements (Bowman 1990).

A key role, then, for the strategic manager in F/HE is to have a clear vision for the college, to agree broad missions and values consistent with this vision, which can then allow considerable operational autonomy for individuals and groups. As well as allowing for greater autonomy and involvement, this approach would effectively address the concerns discussed earlier in this chapter relating to the need to operationalize the mission. More specifically, a strategic management framework is suggested which contains the following elements:

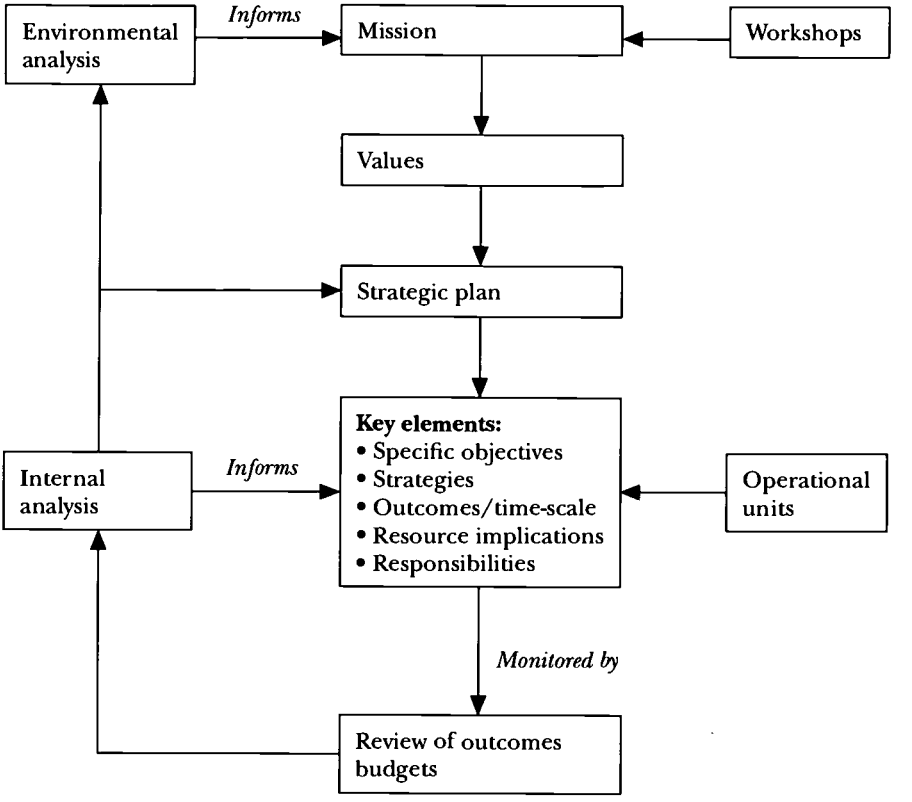
1. The *mission,* informed by an environmental analysis and developed via participative workshops. The mission is better expressed in broad dimensions and needs to reflect the concerns of participants, by including statements about the nature of the curriculum and the experience offered to students.
2. A set of *institutional values* specifying a shared and clear idea of the values which must inform institutional policy and action.
3. The *strategic plan,* containing the following elements: specific objectives relating to the mission elements; strategies for the achievement of objectives; specification of outcomes and associated time-scales; a link to resource requirements and responsibility for achieving outcomes. The institutional plan is based on the individual plans of operating units who have the flexibility to adapt their specific plans on matters of detail, as long as actions are consistent with the key agreed values of the institution. Resourcing levels are negotiated with senior management. The detail of the strategic plans is informed by an internal analysis of the institution conducted by the various operational units.
4. *Review and evaluation processes* involve a joint review of outcomes and budget. Such reviews inform the subsequent development of strategic plans and the mission.

This framework is summarized in Fig. 9.1 and can be compared with that developed originally by the PCFC and also adopted by the FEFC, as shown in Fig. 9.2.

Until the end of the 1980s, it would not have been possible to talk about a strategic approach to the management of further and higher education. More recently, it has become apparent that such an approach is desirable in enabling institutions to adapt to their changing environment, to operationalize their development plans, and to assist in promoting the cultural change necessary to reorientate colleges towards a more consumer-led stance. The need for more effective management of complex and diverse institutions also points to the development of more comprehensive management strategies. The same conclusions have been reached by the funding bodies, and the strategic planning framework promoted by both the old PCFC and the FEFC is evidence of this. Some of the key differences between the two frameworks developed are examined in the following paragraphs.

The first main difference is that the funding councils' framework is a strategic planning framework, rather than a strategic management one. Consequently, it has little to say about the internal college processes necessary to produce the plan. Analysis of the external environment, and internal assessment of the institution's strengths and weaknesses, are not mentioned. Participative processes are not considered. While one of the intentions of the strategic planning framework is to assist colleges in changing their cultures and working practices to respond to independence, the

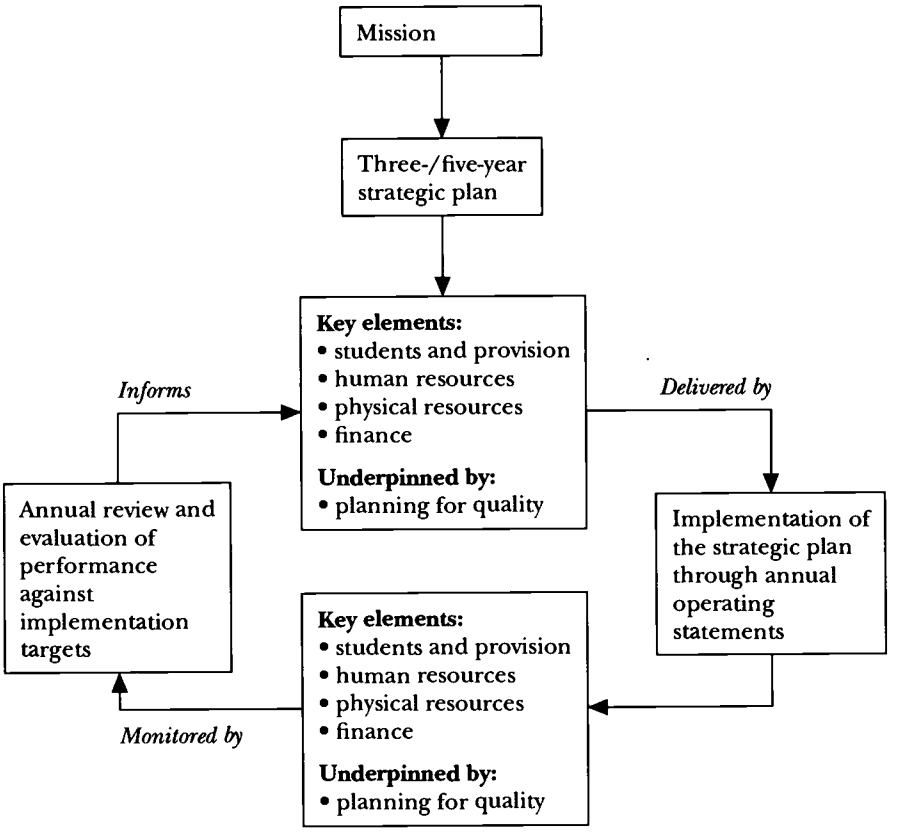
Figure 9.1 A strategic management framework



councils have backed away from issuing direct guidance on promoting cultural change. This is probably a good tactic, as it protects the councils from criticism that they are exerting too much central control, and leaves institutions some flexibility to respond to the framework.

This emphasizes another important difference between the two frameworks which makes direct comparison difficult. The councils' framework is a national one, proposed by a central body; that proposed in this book is an institutional one. An important theme in the latter framework is subsidiarity, and it is appropriate that such a theme is incorporated in the national framework. There is already some danger that the national framework could be considered too prescriptive. By specifying the key elements of the strategic plan as relating to academic developments, and human, physical and financial resources, there is a danger that this might be seen as detailing the action required to implement strategies, and that this is best left to the operational units themselves, in this case the colleges. However, the need of the councils to discharge their statutory function of allocating

Figure 9.2 Funding councils' strategic planning framework



public funds efficiently and effectively, and accounting for their use, puts considerable pressure on the councils to collect detailed data on institutional proposals and plans.

The councils' framework is vague on mission, stating only that the mission is about 'specifying a shared and clear idea of the purposes of the institution, [and] what is distinctive and important about it' (PCFC 1991).

The framework proposed here makes recommendations about the form and to some extent the content of the mission, as well as some proposals about how it might be developed. The Touche Ross (1992) report, *Getting Your College Ready*, produced for the FEFC, goes beyond the PCFC's vague statement to stress the operational value of the mission as part of the strategic framework: 'It is vital that this statement should not be merely a vague statement of worthy aims, but that it should be capable of being translated into measurable targets in subsequent documents'.

The framework proposed in this book includes the specification of institutional values. This is included because of the role such values can play in

linking central and devolved decision making. This is part of the broader strategic management approach suggested here, which includes a consideration of the implementation of plans, rather than the primarily planning concerns of the funding councils. The desire to link the strategic approach with notions of post-modern methods leads to a concern with methods and implementation that is absent from the planning framework of the funding councils. In the councils' framework, implementation is only considered in terms of annual operating statements, whereby 'the activities contained in the strategy which the institution intends to deliver in each year' (PCFC 1991) of a five-year plan are specified.

Implications for research

The material discussed throughout this book suggests a number of areas where more detailed research would be valuable. These are as follows:

1. The link between personal mission and personal identity. How central are personal beliefs and values relating to professional life to individual self-concept? In what circumstances are such beliefs and values formed? In what circumstances might they be subject to change? How far are we able to compromise such beliefs?
2. How generic are the dimensions of mission across the whole of the F/HE sector? Are all or most of the dimensions present in the mission statements of all colleges? Do all colleges of art and design have missions informed by similar dimensions? How aware are organization members of these dimensions? How do such dimensions become common currency?
3. Further investigations into attempts to operationalize missions in Britain. How widespread is the use of strategic planning in the F/HE sector? How could strategic planning processes be encouraged? How much involvement can staff expect in such a process where it exists? How effective is it in linking the mission to change in the organization?
4. Research into the operation and the 'success' of self-managing teams in the F/HE sector would be very valuable. What functions might such teams have? What degree of autonomy would they enjoy? How might such successful teams be created? How would such teams link to the central functions of the organization? Would they improve the quality and variety of the service offered?

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LEADING ACADEMICS

Robin Middlehurst

At a time of major change in higher education, the quality of university leadership is an issue of key importance. Whether heading a research team, planning curriculum innovations, managing a department or running an institution, effective leadership is required. Yet how well is the idea of leadership understood? How is leadership practised in the academic world? What special characteristics are needed to lead autonomous professionals?

This book, based on research in universities, is the first comprehensive examination of leadership in British higher education. Robin Middlehurst critiques contemporary ideas of leadership and examines their relevance to academe. She explores the relationship between models of leadership and practice at different levels of the institution. She argues for a better balance between leadership and management in universities in order to increase the responsiveness and creativity of higher education.

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Part 1: Thinking about leadership – What is leadership? – The new leadership – Organizational images – Leadership and academe: traditions and change – Part 2: Practising leadership – Institutional leaders – Collective leadership – Leading departments – Individuals and leadership – Part 3: Developing leadership – Leadership learning – Endings and beginnings – Bibliography – Index.

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WHAT IS QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Diana Green (ed.)

In the UK, the absence of any agreed definition of quality is problematic in the wake of the changes set in train by the 1988 Education Reform Act. Pressure for greater accountability in the use of public funds and changes to the structure and funding of higher education (designed to increase competition for students and resources) provided the initial rationale for giving quality a higher profile than in the past. The Government's commitment to a higher participation rate, together with the decision to overtly tie quality assessment to funding decisions, sharpened the concern. However, a fundamental dilemma remains: if there is no consensus about what quality is in higher education, how can it be assessed?

This book was stimulated by, and reflects some of the debate following the publication of the 1991 Further and Higher Education Bill and its subsequent enactment. It also draws on the preliminary findings of a major national research project funded by a partnership of government, business and higher education, designed to develop and test methods for systematically assessing quality.

The focus here is on the quality of teaching and learning. The book illustrates the extent to which quality has overtaken efficiency as the key challenge facing higher education in the 1990s. It underlines the growing awareness that institutions are accountable not only to the government which funds them but also, in an increasingly competitive higher education market, to the customers – the students. The book therefore signals the early stages of what threatens to be cultural revolution as profound as that which has transformed the behaviour of organizations in the manufacturing and commercial sectors.

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Contributors

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Mission and Change
Institutional Mission and its Application to the Management of Further and Higher Education

Graham Peeke reviews critically the concept of institutional mission in higher and further education, and evaluates the claims made for its use. Through case studies he analyses different methods of establishing objectives, provides guidance on how to operationalize missions so that they are more than just rhetoric, and links institutional change with the development of a strategic perspective in education management. He argues that it is essential to adopt participative methods in mission development, that procedures for operationalization are crucial, and that broad dimensions of mission need to be agreed with the core of the organization. However, given the plurality of educational organizations, he also argues that autonomy is necessary for significant groupings throughout the institutions. This is essential reading for all policy-makers and managers in higher and further education, and for researchers into the management of higher education.

Graham Peeke is Head of the Centre for Education, Development and Training at City College, Norwich. He has worked in further and higher education in the UK, the USA and Australia for twenty years as a teacher, researcher and consultant. He has a PhD from Cranfield School of Management.

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