

Changing Roles for Academic Leaders: A Comparative Study between Sweden and South Africa

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Abstract : Academic leadership has traditionally been associated with collegiality, consensus and a limitation in time. These factors alone have resulted in a complex and fuzzy leadership culture in academia, combined with a strong sense of autonomy among researchers and teachers. A more competitive educational market have resulted in increased audit as well as recent autonomy reforms with higher demands on effectiveness, cost awareness and accountability in higher education. In recent years, with the introduction of new public management, academic leadership has been in a state of transition moving from collegiality towards managerialism. University reforms and changes, which have gradually taken place in most western countries in the past decade, including Sweden and South-Africa, have contributed to the notion that collegial academic leadership is questioned. Academic leadership is traditionally associated with vice-chancellors, deans and heads of departments. This paper will focus on "outer circle" of academic leaders, consisting of, for example, program directors, directors of disciplines, course coordinators and research leaders. We investigate the meaning of collegiality for these groups of academic leaders in Sweden and South-Africa. The paper rests on a comparative study made on universities both in Sweden and in South-Africa. The aim of the comparison is to achieve a wider scope and to investigate perspectives from both inside and outside of Bologna.

Keywords : academic leadership, new public management, collegiality, consensus

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