

Presentation at the First Roundtable under the EU-Asia Higher Education Platform of the European Union, Hanoi 25-26 November 2008

Entrepreneurship and public access to new knowledge – innovative models to ease the tension

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Overview of the presentation

- **The entrepreneurial university**
 - The broad and the narrow perspectives
 - The optimistic and pessimistic perspectives
 - The internal and external perspectives
- **Other tensions in the entrepreneurial university model**
 - Public access versus knowledge capitalisation
 - Scientific excellence versus community service
 - Commercialisation of research versus traditional teaching and research
- **Models to ease the tension**
 - Internally driven organisational innovations
 - Linking research, teaching and entrepreneurship
 - Incentives for entrepreneurship and the golden goose problem



The narrow and broad perspectives

- **The narrow perspective**

- Entrepreneurship defined as linkages to industry and knowledge/technology transfer
- Important mechanisms are technology transfer units, intellectual property guidelines and a wider support structure
- Mechanisms often copied from successful U.S. universities like MIT and Stanford

- **The broad perspective**

- Entrepreneurship also in education, fundamental research and organisation and management issues
- Many different mechanisms are possible
- Entrepreneurship is old and seen all over the world




The optimistic and pessimistic perspectives

- **The optimistic perspective**

- Every university can become entrepreneurial
- Every university is relevant to economic and social development in their region

- **The pessimistic perspective**

- Only the universities with scientific excellence on a global scale can become entrepreneurial
- Other universities should generally not invest much in TTOs, science parks and the like
- Only the hard sciences are relevant to entrepreneurship



The external and internal perspectives

- **The external perspective**

- Entrepreneurial universities are a response to demands from policymakers for "usefulness" in a broad sense
- Emphasis is often placed on mechanisms that make the university *appear* more entrepreneurial

- **The internal perspective**

- Entrepreneurship is something the university itself is strongly committed to at all levels
- Mechanisms are tailored to the institution's own strategy defining weaknesses, strengths and characteristics of its environment



Public access versus knowledge capitalisation

- How far should the university go in claiming ownership to its outputs?
- How far should the university go in charging market prices for tailored educational courses?
- Should the university grant exclusive licenses to its patents and technology?
- Should the university only try to be useful for clients who can pay for its services?
- Is international collaboration an opportunity for entrepreneurship, or is it threatened by it?



Scientific excellence versus community service

- Some types of entrepreneurship are related to scientific excellence, but not all
- What if local industry lacks the sophistication, money or absorptive capacity to collaborate with universities? Implications of the financial crisis?
- Four different industry roles for universities locally:
 - Create new firms and industries
 - Attract firms and industries from other locations
 - Help local advanced firms to grow
 - Transform traditional industries
- Difficult for one university to fill all these roles, and they vary in their reliance on scientific excellence



Commercialisation versus traditional teaching and research

- Building a commercialisation support structure costs a lot of time and money, and TTOs etc. generally do not create a lot of revenues
- Emphasis on commercialisation tends to imply a focus mainly on applied research activities
- It is possible to think entrepreneurship in basic research without threatening autonomy, but this may depend upon the local research culture
- There may be an underdeveloped potential for entrepreneurship in teaching/education at many universities



Internally driven organisational innovations

- New intermediary organisations, programmes and transfer mechanisms
 - Based on a thorough analysis of internal capabilities, strengths and weaknesses
 - Not based on “desired results”, the wishes of policymakers or external “success cases”
- Many universities are more free to do organisational experiments than they think
 - Often in partnership with other organisations
 - But sometimes national/regional authorities impose restraints



Linking research, teaching and entrepreneurship

- How can you develop local expertise in entrepreneurship?
 - Going beyond a “school of entrepreneurship”
 - Students are often motivated by entrepreneurial opportunities, but may lack the necessary experience
 - A team approach may be necessary
- Formalising linkages to the needs of local firms
 - Student project work and assignments
 - Contract work integrated in teaching and research activities
 - Web portals and liaison offices



Incentives for entrepreneurship and the golden goose problem

- Does it pay off to be an entrepreneurial staff member at the university?
 - Criteria for promotion and reward mechanisms
 - Entrepreneurial professors are often seen as “disloyal”
- Too much emphasis on results (the golden eggs) than the processes behind it (the goose)?
 - Motivated and skilled academics and good students are a university’s most important resource
 - Creating a good professional climate in well-organised disciplinary and cross-disciplinary units may be the university’s best investment



Thank you for listening

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