



# Universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Strategic Management in  
Uncertain Times

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## What is uncertain about the times?

- **The marketised environment**
- **Continuing financial stringency**
- **Competition**
- **The paradox of increased state steering imposed on increasingly market orientated and autonomous universities**



# Developing the principles of strategy in a university context

- The road map or the swamp?
- Evolutionary or the big bang ?
- Bottom up or top down?
- Environmental fit
- Building on staff capabilities
- Coherence
- Financial management – the resource base




When you are lost on a highway a road map is very useful; but when you are lost in a swamp where topography is constantly changing a road map is of little help. A simple compass – indicates the general direction to be taken and allows you to use your own ingenuity in overcoming various difficulties – is much more valuable.

Hayes R H (1985) Strategic planning – forward or reverse? Are corporate planners going about things the wrong way round?” *Harvard Business Review* 63 (6)



# Strategy and Implementation

- The central steering core
- Centre/Academic departments – the small turning circle
- Academic resource allocation
- The academic data base
- Finance led strategic planning
- Managing the day to day –coherence , opportunism and communication
- Momentum
- Reputation



“Every time an institution hires or dismisses a faculty member, starts a new programme or curtails an old one, decides to recruit students or staff in one way or another, it is creating a strategic plan through its actions. The greatest influences managers have over institutions is through the daily choices in what **(Baldrige and Okimi 1982)** once called ‘Jugular vein decisions’, which build their institutions’ internal strength and condition and enable them to respond favourably to opportunities or threats. Cumulative, everyday decisions can have a lot more impact on an institution’s destiny than any master plan. These decisions ....create ‘emergent strategies’ **(Mintzberg 1994)** that ‘Converge in time in some sort of consistency or pattern’ **(Hardy, Langley, Mintzberg and Rose 1983)**”

Birnbaum R (2000) *Management Fads In Higher Education* Jossey Bass