UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Education

**An Inquiry into the Suitability of Organisational Change Theory to Embed
Optimum Change Process and Acceptance at a UK University**

by

Elsbeth Caswell

Volume Two
Academic Transcripts

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education

March 2007

LIST OF CONTENTS

ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPTS

GUIDANCE NOTES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GUIDANCE NOTES

Please note that the reporting format used for the transcripts uses italics for the interviewer's questions and regular type for the respondents' answers.

Each respondent is identified by a numerical code with the letter A for academic and the letters SM for senior management.

Also, to further ensure anonymity, certain identifying words or phrases have been removed and replaced by either the letter X or an explanatory phrase in brackets.

A line of dots signifies either that the respondent paused and lost their train of thought or speech has been removed that was not part of the interview, such as a phone conversation or an aside to another colleague.

Academic Interview Number One

First of all I just want to talk about the Higher Education as a whole, alright. Some people consider it to be the market of education or whatever terminology you want to use. From your perspective, sitting here in your office, do you find that universities in the UK are changing or static? What's your feeling about what's happening?

Universities in the United Kingdom are going through phenomenal periods of change which probably started, from my perspective, in the middle of the 1980s and are going to continue. When the former polytechnics were granted university status, that was a very poignant period of change, but I think more poignant periods are going to appear in the future if we're going to move to a position where 50% of the population goes through university.

So you perceive they are changing. In what way do you perceive Higher Education as a whole is changing?

I think you've got to go back and look historically at the ... at change, because when I went to university in the early '80s, it was still not more than 5% of the population that went to a university and did a degree. It was probably even less, 3% maybe. And at that time you saw some of the former polytechnics developing degree programmes. Since then you've had a situation where, not only have former polytechnics gained university status, developed a whole raft of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, you've got a situation where the numbers of students going through Higher Education has increased. And also Higher Education work has cascaded down into former Further Education colleges a well and there is a whole change in emphasis and, I believe, potentially also a problem ... not a problem but a situation with regard to academic standards and slippage with regard to qualifications throughout the whole of the educational system.

OK. So you perceive this change. We've discussed how you see the change. What do you think is causing these changes? What's the driver coming from? Do you think globalisation's involved in this in any way?

I think the primary driver for change is governments ... the idea that government has, that we will be a better equipped country to compete within a global economic system if we have more people trained to a graduate level. But one of the problems they have is that training to a graduate level implies that people have to actually be graduates; whereas there are a whole range of other qualification systems which could put graduateness or involve graduateness in the qualifications that they produce. And then, what you end up with is that a situation which was previously degrees of an academic standing only, now has tension between vocational and academic demands which causes some elements of conflict. But in a way there always has been that element of conflict. When I did a degree in X in the early '80s many people considered that it wasn't a proper degree, even though people had been doing degrees in X at (name of university) which used to be Oxford's (name of discipline) college since the '40s. So there is a pressure, supposedly, to get better trained individuals and end up tagging them with this degree tag. But in order to fulfill the sort of academic demands of the degree, in some way, some of the vocational elements are quashed and maybe you get sort of qualification slippage. I haven't answered to that very well but that's the ...

So do you think the pressure for change then is within the UK or global?

I think there's a global pressure for change. There is an enormous globalisation and pressures for change and the need for people to be adaptive and all this ... sort of the ... we had modernism, then we moved into post-modernism and nobody's got a job for life and all the traditional structures disintegrating and all that. So there is a pressure to produce people who are reflective individuals capable of coping with change and all that sort of stuff. And the UK government has picked up on that in a specific way, which is

then passed on to Higher Education. And then, there is the pressure for change. But the problem is that, in order to do this effectively, you have to fund organisations well. And so the funding, I don't think, has necessarily followed the sort of urge to make half the population into graduates and that has caused, in itself, pressure and attention.

Overall then, do you think this change process in Higher Education is overall good, overall bad, bit of both?

I think it's a bit of both and I think that what the government has intended ... I don't know, what policy seems to have tended to do is to ... it's almost snobbery in that people and government seems to think that we need to tag people with this degree qualification. Otherwise they haven't got professional worth almost, and that you can do that by forcing ever increasing numbers of people into a system which previously said that only 3% of the population would maybe get a degree and now it's after 50%. And there are all sorts of issues of access to that. Why people didn't, previously didn't go to university of whatever, that it's ...

So there's two sides to this argument isn't there?

There are two sides and it's laudable but maybe it isn't the best way of approaching the real problem which is developing highly skilled people in the workplace who are capable of adapting to change.

OK. Well if we leave Higher Education as a whole and come down here to SU, do you think your working environment at SU is changing in the X years you've been here?

Well for me personally it's changed enormously and it's set to change enormously.

Can you tell me about these changes that you've perceived to yourself?

Well I'm in a very specific situation because I came here in 19XX to teach on a new programme within the (name of School) as it was then which looked at rural diversification and I was brought in as a Senior Lecturer in X. And we, initially, had very good recruitment. Subsequently recruitment declined. We developed a new programme to follow on and this programme was cut short after one year, about six months from validation. The Study Centre which I teach at, was initially on a twenty year lease and the university has decided to move, withdraw from that. So as opposed to working in (previous job location) I will move to ... I haven't been told whether I will have a job or not, but I'll either be made redundant or I'll move into the university to teach very different but related subjects to the ones I came here to teach. So personally I have to adapt with regard to where I am working, what I am teaching and also I am working in different ways compared to the ways that I worked when I first came here. And part of that is as a result of the onset of information technology and developments related to that and changing demands that have been made upon us in terms of the contact time that we spend with students and efficiency of delivery. All of which I understand but do not necessarily support some of them.

So these changes within your working environment, are they coming from within you or outside of you? Who's directing these changes?

I think that what I experience is my response to the pressures from the outside. I have very ... although as an academic I have a certain element of academic freedom, the ability to control the factors that are key to my working life, I consider are largely beyond my control. Therefore I develop coping strategies to work within the confines that are set around me and survive in that sort of way. It's very difficult to shape your own destiny. At least I find it very difficult to shape my own destiny within the structure of the organisation.

So overall do you find the changes happening to you in your working role here overall positive, negative, or a bit of both?

Overall I find them quite negative. And I can see the reason for change but I think that this process is very badly managed and the context could be so ... done so much better. And the attitude towards human resources and given resource management is a very laissez faire attitude and things tend to just happen rather than being managed and it contrasts badly, I think, with the best of human resource management in the private sector of which I have some experience but may well be par for the course in an academic institution where individuals are not promoted necessarily on their ability to be good administrators.

Do you perceive these changes (A1) as happening just to you or they happening to your colleagues as well?

They're happening across the board. I mean some specific things with regard to the Study Centre I work at and other things like that are very much specific to me. But with regard to the university population as a whole then change is being ... is taking place across the board and some colleagues are better at adapting to it than others.

So if you perceive a certain pressure in change, does this pressure change affect your relationships with colleagues in any way?

Oh it can do, yes.

In what way?

There are certain ... I believe in supporting my colleagues and at the same time, in terms of self preservation, it's often better to surround yourself with positive people who are

also able to deliver in terms of the work that they're doing. And so it can be quite difficult. Because I wish to support colleagues, some of the colleagues who aren't able to face up to the change, and the change that's going on, become very negative. So it becomes very personally costly to support individuals like that. And, some of the groups which are perceived to be going on and delivering, I think, I have difficulty with relating to some of those because they're delivering in a way that I think is fairly shallow and it means that you're having to balance very carefully work and work quite hard to gain access sometimes to groups which are doing genuinely positive work and containing groups of positive individuals. Now whether that working hard is a product of some lack of ability on my part in which the individuals don't necessarily associate me with what they want to do, I'm not sure; or whether it's a defensive thing on behalf of individuals in terms of the groups that they manage or what. But it can be a very ... academics can be very bitchy individuals without, you know, they can ... they're bizarre ... I've heard it's easier trying to manage academics is like trying to herd cats.

Fair enough. Some people say there's a burden of change. Do you think change can be a burden?

Yes. Because change ... those who ... leaders who are good leaders are able to manage change and they initiate change for a purpose. Weaker leaders initiate change for change's sake because they think they have to be seen to be continually doing something to justify their position and they often initiate change more often than some of their better counterparts and are less able to manage that change. And this gives rise to tremendous pressure for individuals, some of whom cope with it well, some of whom cope with it less well.

So here within this School then if there's a burden to change, who picks up the pieces do you perceive?

I think a lot of the pieces are picked up by the individuals actually at the work face. I think that the reality is that if you have good and strong leadership then you often need people to pick up and run with the bits and pieces that cascade from that leadership. If you have weak leadership you have to pick up the pieces and try and make something of them, rather than being able to move on something which is inherently strong and vibrant. And I think a lot of that ... because the interface, the delivery interfaces between, primarily in this university, lecturers and students, it is those people who are actually teaching who have to pick up the fall out of whatever with regards to their teaching and also at the same time cope with the conflicting pressures of trying to teach and do research and do consultancy.

OK. Do you think you have a relationship with Senior Management here at SU?

It depends on your definition of Senior Management. I have a nodding relationship with the Office of the Vice Chancellor in that a couple of them would recognise me and know my name. I'm not sure whether that's good or bad. Within the School I have a relationship with our Senior Management Team in that I know them all and I have had the opportunity to go for promotion within the School which would have brought me into the Senior Management Team. I have not taken up that for two reasons. The first reason is that I would like specialise more in research work than in administration. And the second reason is that I believe if you take promotion and access to something like the Senior Management Team you have to develop corporate responsibility for decisions and I have a great deal of difficulty in going along with some of the decisions that are made, the way in which they are made and the ability of some of my colleagues in the Senior Management Team in terms of their ability to make positive and coherent decisions. So I feel ... I don't feel comfortable with that and I don't believe that the most able people within the School are necessarily in the Senior Management Team.

OK. If you look at your life as a sort of whole, how do you tend to feel about changing your life? Does change sort of excite you or worry you? What's your usual reaction?

I'm risk averse as an individual and my wife is more risk prone in that she is more inclined to take risks and I am more risk averse although that is primarily based, I think, on a fear of failure. So I've done lots of innovative and new things and am prepared to do that. I'm prepared to take risks in terms of my presentation style whether it's to the students in terms of facilitating their learning, whether it's stuff I do on radio or television or in public life.

So you say that you're a little risk adverse so how do you tend to cope with change when it comes?

If change is managed well it's something I can embrace. If we have a plan and this is how we're going to go forward and we've developed an exit strategy then that, that's fine. If we end up in a sort of laissez faire undirected movement in a not generally defined direction, and this is defined as change, I have difficult with that because I'm primarily, I suppose, a fighter and I like to fight things that I can see and I like to have direction and about focus. And that is one of the problems that I have with the change process within organisations such as the University which are basically amateur organisations in many ways. Our leaders are promoted from, often from within, a system and communications often very poor and it sometimes like trying to battle in fog. So it develops a considerable amount of anxiety which I have to manage.

OK. Thinking of sort of strategic change at the university, tell me about any recent strategic changes and policy or process you've experienced in your employment with the university. What have you noticed in terms of strategic changes to policy or process? For example some people are commenting on the WP strategy.

WP?

Widening participation. As something they've noticed and had some experience.

Well there's ... I think there are political agendas which are very nice to do and a lot of the strategies are related to political agendas in that the university has to be seen to be involved with regional Higher Education strategies or developing the number of people coming into Higher Education or whatever. But the ... there are issues with regard to the ability of staff to do that if they don't have the resources to do it. And it's all very well a directive coming from above with regard to things like the Regional Higher Education Strategy and the Involvement of Further Education which is where I came from, in Higher Education. But at the end of the day institutions have to be able to deliver. They have to have the resources to deliver and the ability and, you know, you can't magic rabbits out of hats.

How about any change to the emphasis on quality assessment and your experiencse there?

Well there is ... I came from Further Education and, in terms of quality and the ability of us to demonstrate that we were doing quality education, the Higher Education is, as far as I'm concerned, ten years behind where I was in Further Education. When I first came to the university and we were going to have an inspection I helped put together the dreaded 'Box' scheme. We were one of the first subject areas to be assessed in terms of teaching quality and the box files for each unit containing all this sort of stuff, I helped developed that, and I can remember back ten years ago senior academics having one sheet of paper in their box. And now I find that this has now become the accepted sort of strategy and there are lots of people telling me how worthy and good it is and I'm just looking back think 'Well, you know, you are teaching people to suck eggs sometimes'. I have no difficulty in having to demonstrate my teaching ability. What I do have a difficulty with

sometimes is the development of systems, often paper based systems, that seem to be there to justify the paper and the ticks in the boxes rather than actually celebrating the real richness and quality of delivery. It's like my annual appraisal where I've just had to read five different documents and complete two forms. And you sort of sit there and think 'Well I wonder what actual affect that will have with regard to my personal situation during the next twelve months and probably not a lot.'

Do you see these strategic changes as window dressing or profound change?

It's a profound change to go to 50% of the population going through universities. Some of the stuff is window dressing. I find the ... a specific example ... I find the university's approach to the environment and there have been some environmental initiatives recently, primarily geared up to saving money on our electricity bill. I find some of these initiatives total greenwash. The strategy initiative in regard to staff parking is almost laughably naive in terms of the ability which we are supposed to teach in terms of strategic thought and analysis and synthesis to our students just isn't represented in the developing environmental policies in regard to transport.

So when these strategic changes come through, what's your thinking or action process? How do you react to them?

It depends on the nature of the specific change that's coming through and if I ... if it has a direct impact on me given the position I'm in I will address what I have to do, if it doesn't I largely ignore it. I just have too much stuff to try and process without reading yet another quite badly written policy document on some aspect of something.

Do you think accepting change is part of your job (A1) as an academic?

I think part of my job as an academic is to question everything and to adapt to change I think is part of my professional role. However, there are some changes which I think you need to fight because of injustice and because they are not right. And it might be because they are fundamentally unjust or it might be because they are just being badly implemented, in which case fight is a bad word. It is more work with people to try and see a better way of doing things. But there is a danger that academics become complacent and there's also a danger that senior colleagues consider that questioning of whatever policy or strategy policy or its implementation is in some way a form of dissent, when we are told, as academics, that we should question and we are trained to question, we train our students to question. But when we in fact question it's considered negative or subversive in some way.

If you look at change at the university sort of as a long process, are we at the beginning of the change, the middle of the change, the end of the change?

No, it will go on for ever.

It will go on for ever.

Yeah.

Do you have any expectations of what the next strategic change will be? Do you think academics think ahead in that way or just react to the change as it happens?

I think they become very reactive because we are in a process where we are actually not encouraged to think. Academics within a university like SU are actually encouraged not to think. We're encouraged to do stuff. If you go … its like if I'm sat in here reading people think I'm not working. If I'm sat in here with my feet on the table with my eyes closed they think I'm asleep rather than thinking. And my time must be filled with doing

stuff that has an immediately appreciable output, you know; the fact that contemplation and reflection are extremely important then that, seems to be discounted here. And so we are not encouraged actually to think in the long term because that is the job of people who do produce strategy and policies and what purpose would it have anyhow. So, in terms of looking at what the next changes might be, I can think what good changes there might be, the things that we could do to implement better systems. All sorts of things like that. But I find it's sometimes, sometimes it is stuff that I think won't directly influence me because I'm not in a position where it might. I have an interest, a professional interest, in what might happen but on the whole it's sort of fighting battles that might never exist or going down lanes to very fruitful areas that you might never be allowed to go down. So there's a limit I think.

OK. Is there any third party influence in your reaction to these changes, your wife, your friends, your colleagues, the Union?

My wife is very important in terms of the changes. The union, I am not an active member of the union and I think that my particular union NATFHE at a national level is a vaguely bizarre organisation. I've always been a union member. I believe passionately that you should be a union member because that ... they negotiate on your behalf and they provide a legal representation and things like that. So I do believe in being a member of the union. I despair though at the nature of the union sometimes and some of the ideas I think are just so impractical in the current world and that the fact that we'll never go on strike again. I can't see that, I can't see that happening, and so you have to learn to move on. But some things you have to fight for and it's trying to work out what you will fight for given the vindictive nature of some of the responses you get when you do put your head above the parapet.

So you're giving me the impression that you can find strategic change within the university, to a certain degree, difficult.

Yeah.

How about your colleagues?

Some of them find it impossible.

Yeah.

Totally impossible, it breaks them. You know, it has significant effects on their mental health and on their physical health and on their socialising, on them as a whole. And in some I have no doubt it will hasten their death. It has an enormous impact on some of my colleagues and it has, you know, enormous impact, a significant impact on myself because I care about my job and my professional status and it, you know, it has impacts in terms of stress and you have to learn to manage the stress. It's very interesting within the university because I've existed in a number of different environments including environments where physical violence and things like that are prevalent such as when I was a cadet in the Army and things like that. And it's very interesting. In the university, if you hit somebody that would be automatically considered a form of abuse and assault and you would be ... face disciplinary action. You can though face, as I think many colleagues do, terribly violent psychological assault on a regular daily basis with regards to the way in which some colleagues are managed and they perceive the nature of things and there is no recourse whatsoever. And that's sort of, in some ways, to some colleagues, in some situations, is almost abuse I find amazing. Yet if you were to ever to become physically robust it's considered a sort of ... it's almost like the Victorians not talking about sex, you know, it's just something that isn't contemplated.

So this is how you've sort of perceived the reaction of people around you. How do you think the university wants us to react to change?

I think the university wants us to be compliant and to do what we're told.

Any particular reason you feel that way (A1)?

Well I'll just qualify that slightly. They want us to be on the whole compliant to do what we're told. But also they want individuals to take advantage of opportunities when they arise. I don't doubt that whatsoever. The reason why I think that the university wants individuals to be compliant is because of the reactions that I've experienced from Senior Management within the School or the University when anybody doesn't try to be compliant. And when that happens the reaction is very firm and often in terms of the psychological aspect, very violent, in terms of suppressing that sort of thing. You will either move along, you know, there is no room for questioning, this is what will happen. By the same token there are considerable opportunities and it depends whether you can work out a way of working within what happens rather than working against it because small trees learn to bend in the wind. And that's quite an important thing. And you also need to work out what your priorities in life actually are and that this is experience over eleven years at the university which has seen substantial changes in individuals and styles, but still a lasting impression.

OK. So where do you think the push comes from for strategic change at SU? Is it coming down from the top? Is it coming up from academics? Is it coming from somewhere else?

It's top-down. It's top-down and ultimately it is government top-down. So many ...

So the government pushes the Uni which then pushes down?

Yeah. And in many ways, criticism of Senior Management, in terms of what they do, is sometimes unfair because they're in a situation where they have to do stuff. Although I think at times they could do things better.

Is there any change that you see that's coming bottom-up?

I think that there's a lot of innovation bottom-up in terms of ways of coping with change. If you look at some of the innovation relating to using IT to support teaching and innovative ways of helping people learn, helping people manage situations, supporting people with disability, those sorts of things. A lot of innovation though which could have direct benefit in terms of broader issues of management and forming policy is suppressed because I think that some of our leaders aren't comfortable enough with their own ability and consider it a threat which strong leaders don't. They use and they channel, whereas poor leaders often suppress.

OK. So if you see sort of big strategic change coming top-down and some academic contribution, more in the sort of innovative area going up, what do you like or dislike about this process of implementing a change?

I think that the university misses out on an enormous amount of very able contribution from people at lower levels of the management hierarchy. In an almost an arrogance that first of all these people should be kept where they are and secondly that senior people actually know best.

So why do you think changes in university work this way?

Because it's based on a power structure and it's based on one that is born out of certain competitive element of people which, who may well be academically gifted but in terms

of managing other people and recognising those sorts of things, tend to be quite important and end up almost by default in the positions that they are.

Do you feel part then of any change process here, or is change something you feel just happens to you?

I feel change happens to me in some respects. In other respects, such as information and things relating to IT for example, I'm involved in bits and pieces there. So I feel involved in that sort of creative, innovative to a certain extent. I worked quite hard to be, to have my skills used higher up in the sort of management spine but it's difficult unless you actually decide to go there and to camp there.

So do you feel you've been part of the planning process for change?

No.

No you don't.

No.

Do you think academics should be more involved in designing and implementing change?

I think so. You take things forward by involving people but supplying frameworks and direction and that is one of the skills of managing change and once you make decisions you have to implement things quickly. I think sometimes you can be too ... it can become a sort of ... if you involve ... there are different ways of involving people and it becomes a very indulgent thing sometimes which, if you dissect and go over again and again stuff, and that is not constructive. Sometimes you have to move. Once you make

decisions, move and implement and it's a balance in terms of involving people without becoming sort of quasi sado-masochistic about it all.

If you were to get involved in the sort of strategic planning process, do you think enough about the big picture or the issues involved to contribute?

I think that I have a perspective. I consider myself able to develop perspectives very quickly if I haven't because I'm a holistic systems thinker and I think that often I have a far better and broader perspective than many of the people that are actually in senior positions.

Do you think right now that anyone is speaking for you on these issues? Do you have a voice?

Probably not! Because you get where you are within this particular organisation by conforming and it's a classic industry problem for British industry as well in that if you take an organisation like Marks & Spencers, traditionally they have promoted people who have conformed right down to the underpants. And then when they get to upper management they find that they haven't got free thinking individuals and they have to import them from other industries because they've bludgeoned their staff into conformity and it's a way of controlling people.

As an academic do you feel that you've ever led change or acted as a change agent?

Yeah.

In what way have you been a change agent?

I've developed, at the previous college I was at; I developed Higher Education programmes in X business management and led a whole series of developments there. Which was quite, it was when I was in my late twenties and early thirties, late twenties. So that was quite, that was quite tough because I was the youngest academic in the college and pushing stuff forward. And coming to a larger set up such as the university I find it's like wading through treacle and also there's a lot of stuff relating to faces that fit rather than necessarily ability or conforming to specific agendas rather than being prepared to be innovative in new agendas.

So you are comfortable with the concept of change agency working within the university?

Yeah.

So just a few closing questions then. The change process then for big strategic changes to policy and procedure, in your view could it be improved?

Yes.

And if so, how?

It can be improved by developing a whole new perspective which relates primarily to communication so that you help people understand the pressures that are there and the need for the university to respond. You take up concerns and you deal with them and use that as a force for going forward; which is something I don't think this university does.

So what sort of process do you think for implementing change then, to make change less painful?

Communication is a very key factor and making information freely available; openness and honesty and being able to stand by decisions and clearly explain why they've been made. I don't necessarily … if I have a leader and they decide to make a decision, then I don't … then that's fine, they have decided to make that decision. I might think they're wrong but they've decided to do it so that's the way that we will go or you get out of the organisation. What I don't like is people dressing things up, washing them in different colours or even lying about what they've done in order to make decisions. It just shows weak leadership.

In your opinion, do academics need anything to help them embed change? Is there anything that we could do with?

Yes to get out a bit more and eat a bit more fruit and vegetables. I think we can become terribly anally retentive, naval gazers who are inwardly looking. I spend a lot of time working with industry and industries and a lot of trouble such as the X industry and, you know, we can't afford to be insular. At the same time we need to develop trust and we need to celebrate excellence and celebrate contribution and develop a positive aura to it. Sometimes we do get wrapped up very much, I think, in what we're doing.

Do you think the reward process at SU has any impact on the success or failure of change implementation? When I say reward I mean promotion or money, carrots.

Yeah I think that it's … I think that the way in which people are promoted gives rise to a set of individuals who I personally don't think are the best people to take forward and facilitate change. Because you don't take on board free thinking individuals, this current structure tends to take on board people who have conformed and do what they're told.

So does the reward system right now reward people that change? Is that what you perceive? Or doesn't it reward people that change?

I think it rewards a lot of people who talk a lot about change. I don't think it necessarily rewards people who are successful in change implementation and people who are marginally successful. It rewards them because of other agendas and they are successful to whatever extent by default rather than design.

So you do think the carrots go with the people that implement the change right now?

I think yeah or talk about implementing the change. Maybe they never actually do it. A lot of people get rewards for talking about what they're going to do rather than what they actually do. And you have to promote people with regard to potential. And it's just that some of the people who are more honest about what they expect to achieve would not put themselves forward for a promotion or whatever simply because they are more realistic. And some of the people that get promoted are the ones that talk the talk but can't walk the walk.

Any further comments or thoughts in this area?

Change is one of the most difficult things for any individual to go through. There are a whole series of life changes and organisations need to manage this and develop support systems. But primarily they need to value the individuals that work for them rather than treating them like fodder and to get the best out of them. Then they will start doing that if they respect them as individuals and I believe that within the university there's a lot of lack of respect for people as individuals which is a real shame because there are some very beautiful, hardworking, capable people who are frustrated by the whole process.

Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Two

(A2), these are just sort of chat areas. OK? So just develop them as you feel developing, if you feel you've got a comment on it. OK? Overall, if we're looking at the, what I would call the market, the industry, the business of Higher Education, do you think personally that you find yourself in a changing situation or a static situation?

A changing situation.

Yeah? In what way is it changing? Do you feel, if you look at the industry as a whole?

I don't really like you using the term industry for Higher Education. I'm not happy with that.

OK. What term would you like me to use?

Education. Higher Education has changed because of this very reason. It is becoming a market. It is feeding the world of work and this is a vocational university. It's very much driven now, instead of being driven by academic issues, it is being driven by government changes and, of course, by changes in the work place.

Do you feel that this change then is positive, negative, bit of both? How do you feel about the changes happening to Higher Education as a whole?

Positive and negative are too black and white. I think a lot of it is too fast. There's never any time for consolidation. We move from one fad to the next fad. Obviously change is important and change is good. Things shouldn't be static. But sometimes we move on too quickly.

Do you feel that this is really within the UK or is there any sort of globalisation issues here to change in Higher Education?

Probably within the UK but maybe there are issues in other countries as well.

How long have you been at SU?

I came here as a mature student and did my degree, graduating in (date). So I was here for four years before that as a student and (X) worked here so I was familiar with the place for many years through it's growth from the (X) Institute, through (X) Polytechnic from (date) onwards.

So how long have you been an academic?

I've been teaching here since 19XX. So that's X years.

X years! So if you think of those X years and think of your working environment within the university now exclusively, do you find there's any change in any way?

Yes. Numbers have increased. We're much more accountable to the students now. They seem to be punters rather than students. The role of the academic is changing very much.

Do you think these changes are coming from within you or from outside of you? Are you making these changes?

Obviously all academics make changes within their discipline but many changes are being imposed on us from outside.

So who do you feel is, within SU, who is directing these changes? Where are these changes coming from?

Some of the changes come from a new section called ADQ, which has arisen because of the expansion of polytechnics into universities, which is probably fair enough because Higher Education has received a lot of bad press. We've heard about Mickey Mouse degrees, especially in Media. We know of many polytechnics that got their status and perhaps deliver degrees that are not top quality. I don't believe this is the case at SU and many of the requirements imposed upon us by ADQ are actually in line with poor paperwork, poor standards at other universities. I believe that our standards here are high and our paperwork is, mostly, beyond reproach. It does, however, allow for a lot of bureaucracy. We keep having to rewrite documents with new terminology all the time which I feel is an awful waste of an academic's time.

Other than paperwork, any other changes you've noticed to your own working life or your role?

Yes of course. There are government changes, Widening Participation, the imperative to take on overseas and international students because they bring in the money. Also the requirements of academics not just to research and teach but to raise money so links with industry, enterprise activities.

So how do you feel about the change that's impacting on you?

Resentful a lot of the time because I don't always think it's for the best. And I think the university doesn't always know which direction it's going in. It doesn't know whether it wants to be an establishment noted for its teaching quality, whether it wants to be involved in research, or whether it wants to be a money maker and a feeder into industry.

OK. So you feel that the Higher Education is changing. That you feel your own role here at the university is changing. Is it just you changing or are colleagues work roles and work environment changing as well? Is this change all around you?

I think the change is all around. Colleagues are required to change. Some of the older ones are finding this quite difficult.

So does this pressure for change impact on your relationships with colleagues in any way?

Yes, because as Course Leader I'm often in the middle. I have to pass down what comes to me from higher up, if you want to put it that way, to colleagues who may be resentful. Some have seen it all before because they've been in education a long time and they've seen many changes. They see it as a step backwards; they know they've been down that path before. We also have part time staff who really take no interest in that side of things. They often see themselves as guest lecturers coming to deliver something and struggle with the demands to keep changing what it is they're delivering.

A lot of people say it is a burden, change, there's a burden of change. Do you see it as a burden?

Sometimes, yes. Change is always threatening. And when change is being imposed on you and you haven't had a say in what changes that you want and what changes might be good. Sometimes changes are made by people who perhaps don't understand the nature of teaching, by bureaucrats, by politicians. Not people that have actually worked with students.

So who's picking up the pieces then?

Good question. I don't know, Course Leaders probably.

Do you feel you've got a relationship with the Senior Management here at SU?

It's increasing as I get further into the role of Course Leader. But not as much as perhaps would be good.

So you would say that you, if someone asked you if you knew Senior Management, do you feel that you know them.

Well there are a lot of them, far too many. I know the immediate ones that matter to me but I don't necessarily know higher up the line, the higher echelons, and I think some of those admin people are quite distant.

How do you generally feel about change in your life outside of university?

Well I've had a lot of change imposed on me, again, which is stressful. What are you asking me?

Well do you find that ... are you the sort of person that finds change exciting or is there a worry to change? How comfortable are you usually with change, outside of your working environment?

Well as I said, it depends how it arrives, whether it's something that's sought or something that's imposed on you.

So how do you tend to cope with change in life?

I probably find it difficult. Perhaps when I was younger I coped better. But at the moment ... again, I think it's the pace of change that's the problem. We all have so much change, so fast. I feel as if consolidation is needed.

Right, let's go back again to SU. If I asked you tell me about any recent strategic changes to policy or process you've experienced, would anything come straight away to mind?

Policy or process? Well I think the biggest change has been the course review, which I've just been through, which has meant the rewriting of the degree which really I didn't think needed a great deal of change. But we had to show that we were looking at it, that we were updating it because of demands in the market place. We had to make it more marketable. And a lot of the terminology changed which I think was, well, maybe in some ways a good thing but very time consuming.

Any other sort of strategic changes happening into the university right now?

Probably but ... yes, I'm sorry, I could have done with some preparation for this.

No, I don't want preparation; I just want you to ...

Yes, because I have a copy of the University Strategic Plan and in looking at that I noticed issues like flexible learning becoming ever more important. Now this is in response to students needing to spend more time working. I'm very concerned that flexible learning needs a great deal of care and understanding by staff that have to deliver it. It doesn't just mean sticking teaching materials on websites and internets. It's a whole new approach. I think that there are many students who don't want to attend to classes because they have financial pressures, they have jobs. They want to be given material they can learn up, regurgitate and pass exams. This is not education and it's not good

teaching. You asked about changes before and we've seen a change in the students we're getting, they have less cultural literacy. I'm concerned that the standards of A levels are going down. So the student body that we are taking on is, to a large extent, far less literate than in earlier years as A levels are easier. The material we are giving them is harder in comparison. They don't want to come here and think for themselves. They want to come here and be given material in a nice easy life style and this issue of flexible learning, I think, needs a great deal of careful approach to make sure that it is good education and not just handing out materials those students can easily assimilate and regurgitate

OK. So if we stay on that flexible learning, as a strategic change. Do you think that's, from the university perspective, is this window dressing or is this profound change?

I'm sure they would like to call it profound change but I do wonder if some of its window dressing.

Any particular reason why you think that way?

I think all universities have to be in line with whatever everyone else is doing because they're all fighting for a diminishing number of students.

So when these changes come at you, here within this role, exactly what is your thinking or action processes in terms of dealing with the change?

The initial response is usually to groan because it's all extra work load and we're not given extra time very often for this sort of professional development.

So is this going back to this resentment issue that you talked about before?

Yes. I think that most lecturers have an engagement with their subject, they're interested in their subject, they want to update and are constantly being asked to ... I think they're constantly being taken away from that to get involved with other areas, other issues.

Would you say that accepting change in the work environment is part of your job as an academic?

Yes.

It is. You think that flexibility is built in this particular job?

Yes, because if you don't change you stagnate and you die. Yes, change is necessary. But the pace of change has to be manageable.

If we look then at the change in the university on a sort of continuum, where do you think we are now? Are we at the end of a process, at the beginning, working our way through it?

I'm sure we're working our way through it. I don't think we're ever going to know the end because the continuum is going to keep on and on moving. The goal posts are always changing. So I don't know where we are. You can only look back on hindsight can't you?

Do you have any expectations of sort of a strategic change to policy or process that will happen next?

No.

You're just going to take it as it comes?

Yes.

You don't sort of try to proof?

There isn't time for that.

No OK.

My commitment is to my students. I'm not interested in taking a wider role in the management of the university, the running of it, or anything else. I like ... I've come up through teaching, I like my students, I like the pastoral side, I like to care for them.

Does any third party influence your reaction to change? Like your family?

Through the university?

Yeah, your colleagues, the union.

No, family are more or less grown up, so and I'm on my own so that doesn't matter. But colleagues, yes. The union I haven't had a great deal to do with again.

So you feel that colleagues interact in terms of this change process, can you expand on that? How do your colleagues react to change?

I didn't say they are. I think part timers are largely not aware of it. So again that creates extra work making sure they are informed and up to date. Colleagues change, new colleagues are much more flexible, old colleagues obviously are much more set in their ways. And we have a whole range from new young colleagues up to, you know, retirement age colleagues. So it depends who they are.

So that's how you feel they're reacting. How do you think the university wants them to react?

Well the university obviously wants them to fit in and not be difficult. Not oppose change. Toe the line.

Why would you think that (A2)?

Well obviously it makes life easier for them doesn't it? But academics, by tradition, are a stroppy bunch. They're critical. They like to question. They don't want to accept what's imposed on them.

Where do you think this push for strategic change at SU is coming from? Do you feel it's coming down from management? Do you think it's coming up from academics, or perhaps from somewhere else?

Probably down from management but I don't know.

You don't know. You don't have a clear view of where you feel the driver is coming from? From your perspective how does change happen here? If there's going to be a change in your working role, how does it happen?

Usually emails, those come through just telling us.

So you sort of interpret it as the change happens and ...

You're expected to fit in, yes.

You fall in line. Do you feel the academics at SU contribute to any changes in policy or process?

I'm sure some do. I mean we have the opportunity to. There are positions on committees and so on. Some people are more inclined to be involved at that sort of level, others are not.

Any reason why you don't then?

I think because of, as I said, personal reasons, taking on a course leadership and the following year having to deal with a course review. It's made me have a very narrow focus. And as a comparatively new academic anyway, people have been here since ... for most of their working lives. I think they move on into taking a wider role. So that might come in the next ten years, I don't know.

So overall you think the change comes down from management. Once that change decision has been made, who implements it?

Well the Schools initially I suppose. So Heads of Schools, Deputy Heads of Schools. It filters down, I think it filters down.

Do you like or dislike that process for change, have any comments about it?

I think it's OK where people take the time and trouble to explain issues. That doesn't always happen though.

So why do you think that change happens at SU this way? Why is it a top-down, people down process?

I think it's the way the university is organised.

When this change is happening, do you feel you're participating in any way or do you feel it's being done to you?

I usually feel it's being to me.

Can you expand on that? Or do you have any ... I don't want to put words in your mouth.

Well I think it fits with what I've already been saying. I feel that my interest is the students and teaching them and I do feel that teaching is very often under-valued at SU. They want high profile. They want ... they don't necessarily think about the issues that happen with students in the process of education. So it's very much about money. But I could be wrong. Perhaps I shouldn't be saying these things. I'm being honest so I hope that you're careful with this confidential material.

No, it is totally confidential, so don't worry about that. So if you see it as a sort of top-down trickle process, do you think academics should be more involved in designing and implementing change process? Or is it really a Senior Management function?

I suppose you could take a look at the history of universities, the way they've changed, the expansions, the expansions in the sixties, the expansions now. The fact that we have managers at all and that academics aren't just autonomous. But maybe that's a good thing. Perhaps that worked when we just had the few red brick universities. But it's not feasible nowadays.

And you think that that course is applicable to SU?

Yes probably.

If you wanted to ... you said that you don't really get involved in change process because of time restrictions and having a more narrow focus right now ...

Well I don't think I'm a very proactive person, I'm a reactive person. So it's personality as well.

If you did want to get involved in the change process, do you think that you know enough about the issues involved? Or do you know enough about the big picture to contribute if you wanted to?

No I don't. I'd have to make sure I'd researched it and found out what was happening.

So as far as change process is concerned, who do you feel is speaking for you?

Yes, I don't know.

Do you feel you have a voice?

There's a voice ... there are certain key individuals who I think keep a note on the process very closely. They're representatives on committees. So I probably do have a voice, yes.

OK. And you're satisfied with that voice?

Possibly. Without checking out that, you know, following up what people are doing all the time. I trust the individual yes.

Have you, as an academic, ever led change or acted as a change agent?

Only through the course review.

Anything on the larger picture?

No.

Do you think that using a change agent is a suitable strategy for a university? Where you get academics on side and then let them spread the news so to speak.

What do you mean by change agent?

A change agent would be that if management decided we're going to start teaching in the evenings, people have to accept this. They get a few academics on side and then ask them to sort of spread the word.

That sounds horribly manipulative and in by the back door. I don't think that's good.

So you don't really see the use of academics sort of spreading the news, implementing change or would it just depend on the type of change?

It depends who you mean by academics.

Us!

But individual lecturers rather than ...

Yes.

No it should be done through Heads of Academic Group.

OK.

And it should be done formally and consent should be a change, because those are changes to people's working conditions and contracts. So it should be done properly, not by a, you know, sneaking through the back door, filtering down process.

Right, if you were God. OK? How would you change or improve the change process at SU, or are you happy as things work now? This is in terms of implementing change.

I don't think you can answer a question like that. You have to be interested in the big picture, the whole university. You have to want to do those sorts of things. You have to have that sort of inspiration for running a place and I'm not.

OK. Do you think you're short anything or need anything in terms of adapting to changes at work. Is there anything that anybody could be doing for you?

Time.

Time.

Time, yes. There's never time to take on board all these things and talk through the implications.

In your opinion, do you think there are any communication or staff development issues here?

It tends to be on email, on P Drives, it's up to you to follow it up for yourself. So I suppose I don't know how you could make it any different. It's there if you want it, I think.

OK. Do you think the reward process that we have at SU right now has any impact on the success of change implementation?

What is the reward process? Are we talking ... do we know ... are we in agreement there? What do you understand by it?

Does money or time remission follow change implementation? Do people get anything extra for implementing change?

No I don't think they do and I don't think it is good enough. I think there are far too many inconsistencies. I think the way honorariums are paid to Course Leaders is very dubious because that's performance related but the criteria have not been made transparent. I think that the idea of remission for different activities is, again, inconsistent. Some people seem to be more favoured than others. So remission for MA courses is ... seems to be the same as the remission for undergraduate courses despite differences in intakes. I've lost my thread. What were we talking about, other rewards?

We were talking about whether the reward system rewards change?

And I think in rewards in terms of salary and status, again, are very, very dubious because I see it when I see lists of resources, people that come in from industry are obviously given favourable treatment over academics which seems most bizarre for an academic institution. So I'm not happy with that. I see people with PhDs being paid less than people with industrial experience, which is again why I come back to the idea that maybe teaching is not valued. Raising money is valued.

Would raising money then be a change, so they are rewarding change?

It would depend on what people were taken on for and why they were brought in and what their role is. But sometimes looking at the new appraisal structure we always seem to be in the same area. We're expected to do some sort of enterprise activity which I'm not sure that that's always, you know right.

Are you being rewarded for the enterprise?

I expect people who do it, who are engaged in it, will be rewarded, yes.

Will you be rewarded?

I haven't decided what I'm going to do yet. So ... and I don't particularly want to do it anyway. Because I think it's just extra work.

So, any final comments (A2)?

You're worrying me. I don't know what you're going to do with this material and what's going to come out of it.

Everyone gets to see their transcript and if you simply want to put it in the bin at that point that's totally up to you.

I also feel that if I'd known what you were going to ask me I might have cleared my mind and thought about some of these issues more. So you've had very much off the top of my head answers.

And that's exactly what I wanted.

They're very personal. I don't think they're representative of other people. As I say I think I'm a reactive person, not a pro-active person.

[End of Interview]

<u>Academic Interview Number Three</u>

I don't know if you're comfortable calling it an industry of Higher Education, the business of Higher Education this first set of questions are sort of macro based. Do you think that universities in the UK are changing or not changing in your opinion?

Well, obviously the new universities you are seeing are becoming more research focused.

Any other changes you've noticed?

I may not be the best sort of candidate for you to interview on this basis. I don't personally have an interest in the political situation, the government white paper or anything like that so in terms of the macro changes – I don't tend to follow them that closely. My interest is more on the consultancy side of things than it is on the educational side of things.

Do you have any opinions as to why things are changing?

I think it's more to do with the fact that universities have to become self-funded, there isn't the funds in terms of supporting the structure within the university, the employees and the research that needs to be undertaken etc, so the universities are just seeking more external funds to be able to achieve things they need to achieve.

Would you see this as a UK drive or global?

To be honest I have no idea, clearly it is happening in the UK, as far as other countries, I really don't know. The only thing that strikes me is just, and this may be hearsay, you go to the States they seem much more cash rich as universities, and seem to have more funding. Being a lecturer in a different university, in the States for instance, seems to be a highly respected profession where you can command quite

high wages and it's also very qualified so you'd have to be qualified to PhD level for instance.

So, you do suspect it's changing – it's not really a front priority for you?

No – definitely not because I don't personally get involved in the research side of things.

Do you think these changes overall are good, bad – do you feel comfortable with them?

Yes definitely good, I feel comfortable; I think that it is right that universities need to act more like businesses and need to become commercially focused which seems to make sense.

Leaving the macro and coming down more micro to your position at SU – you've been here quite a while now X years. Do you find that the working environment here is changing – over the X years you've been here?

Yes, it most definitely has.

In what way, what changes have you noticed?

There are lots of changes. Beginning at micro level, at a course level everything has become much more professionally structured. You've got better working documents for students, more organised feedback in terms of specific feedback mechanisms for students. Probably a change in culture as well with the students coming in generally at undergraduate level with a really positive view of the media school and it's reputation and I think that's changed over the last X years. The first cohort for instance in advertising were probably less respectful as a whole of the lecturers and I think that changes the balance of power – that has definitely changed.

In terms of the way you do things and the structure, the bigger aims of the school if you like, I think we have become more commercially aware and focused and that's taken a long time. I think it started personally for me the launch of (X) which was obviously the (X) School and that was about 4/5 years ago. Before then we used to do ad hoc pieces of consultancy or market research or really what we could get involved with. There was no planning involved, and it wasn't a structured process, whereas now there seems to be more in the way of mechanisms put in place to be able to better do that kind of work. Obviously there is a much bigger focus on research than when I started I was the one and only researcher and there was certainly no research structure.

You feel there are changes in the university that you are aware of. Where's the pressure for this change coming from? Is it coming from within yourself or is this change happening to you?

No, it's happening to me

What is the impact of this change on your working life, on your role?

I will give you an example. Recently I had my appraisal and having also been involved a bit in the enterprise for the university it has become apparent that enterprise will become a formal part of virtually everybody's role within the media school, I can't comment for the university, and that won't be necessarily ad hoc consultancy work, that will be a formal part of your working role and it will be timetabled as such and I think that's very different to how it used to be. You used to have a teaching remit only. So that will certainly affect the staff at a personal level.

How do you feel about this change?

It probably has less direct effect on me because I'm a point X post so I think I can choose to some extent to do some consultancy work and it will be paid for independently. If I had just time tabled hours against certain projects I would be less

happy about it because if I wanted to go out and do consultancy work then I would do it at a full commercial rate not the time allowance worked out by the university at whatever it is today, which to be honest doesn't compare with industry standards, so for me personally if I wanted to earn proper commercial rates I would go out and do it. I wouldn't want to be time tabled into the university to do it.

So it sounds a bit impractical?

It's not that, but I'm sure there are some people who will buy up their time to do it and will be happy to do so. All I can say is that I would make like/like comparison of where I would look to earning money outside the university at the remainder point X of my time, and earn much better rates during that period of time than I could within the university. So if I wanted to do that full time, I would just go into a consultancy role and not be involved in teaching at the university.

We have discussed changes are impacting on you, do you have any perspectives on how changes are impacting on colleagues?

It's hard to gauge. I think a lot of colleagues have become more pro-active when it comes to research and been quite happy to do so and are active in gaining funding and doing so by buying out hours. They want to buy out a certain number of teaching hours in order to be actively involved in a project. I think there's sometimes a bit of tension in terms of can they successfully buy themselves out of hours and can those resources be used to their benefit because someone else may not be able to come and take their position and take over the teaching roles they have left.

Some of the other academics have commented there's a burden to change and that it changes their relationships with colleagues. Do you feel that the pressure of change changes your relationships with colleagues?

It's quite interesting, as I don't think it changes my relationship with my colleagues as I think everybody makes individual choices and it's completely down to you. I think

the burden of change affects me in a slightly different way in that when you are working in the university you do not get virtually any positive feedback or reinforcement. I don't think that's a case of not doing your job, I just don't think the process is in place and the structures in place to allow for that. We have lots of feedback from the students but not a lot of feedback from staff in terms of whether they are happy etc.

I think the burden of change is put on you but you're not remunerated accordingly just means that actually I'm going to work the system and if I'm going to introduce new things I'll make sure I get the best possible deal back. I think I've become slightly ruthless in that way, whereas before you would perhaps had more goodwill towards the system, the way things work.

You see a sort of erosion of goodwill?

Yes, definitely.

Do you feel you have a relationship with the Senior Managers at the university – you've been here quite a while?

I think my real experience working with Senior Management within the university is that much of the time they are "fire-fighting" so if there's an issue and if you create enough of a fuss then you find that that may be actioned and something may be done about it.

Over the X years you've been here, would you say that you know the Senior Management?

Yes I know them and can predict how someone will respond to an issue or how they'll deal with you. My point is that whilst I have a relationship with them I don't think it's always a good quality relationship. The way they handle issues isn't always well thought through, it's 'well, we've got an up and coming issue let's tackle it now

whilst it's a major problem' and they don't always foresee the issue so it's 'we'll step in at the last minute and see what we can do about it.'

Everyone has a different tolerance level to change in their own personal life so if you think outside of the university, how would you describe your own tolerance level?

I think I've got a good tolerance level to change.

Does change excite you?

Yes, moving house, going to different places, meeting lots of different people, from that point of view I actually thrive on change, I like things to be different and exciting and that kind of thing. Change doesn't worry me, particularly when you can see the good in the change.

Again – outside of the university, how do you tend to cope with change, how do you like to handle change?

I like it, I think it's exciting.

Do you like to plan in advance, or just let it happen to you?

Yes sometimes I plan in advance like I'm planning in advance for the next move that I'll probably do in 6 to 9 months time and sometimes it's a bit more opportunistic it kind of depends on what's up.

You don't mind if you're not in control of the change?

No.

Going back to your personal experience at the university, talking about strategic change and changes in policy or procedures – can you tell me about any recent changes you have experienced, anything in particular that has impacted on you?

I can't think of anything immediately off hand.

What about being Course Leader?

I was thinking that, but that's not a policy change as such. That's more of a change of ......

Was that your idea, or just your turn at bat?

In fairness I had always said I would like to be Course Leader and I would like to be Course Leader on an MA programme preferably, so that was great and definitely I wanted to do that. The disappointing thing is that you get asked to be Course Leader but there is no compensation. There was an honorary at the end of the process but it gave me no basis for negotiation on anything, not even my own office which I found quite disappointing.

If you can keep those thoughts, we are coming back to it. Do you think that accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

Yes. I think you have to. Any job, whether you like it or not you have to accept some degree of change and you would want to as well, I think.

Talking about the big strategic changes that are happening now at the university, some of the academics say these are profound, deeply embedded now, others are saying it's just window dressing and people pay lip service to, what do you think?

I think it's becoming more deeply embedded actually. Given that I've been here a long time, I can see when it was paid lip service to and people were talking about for

instance more research degrees registration etc etc, and they weren't very organised to do it and it was very ad hoc, and I think it's started to become more formalised within the X School.

When these big changes happen, do you have any sort of action or thinking process you go through to embed it yourself or do you just accept it?

For me, for some of these big changes I have been on the peripheral, it hasn't affected me directly as I finished my research degree before any of these major changes came about. I took the decision that I didn't want to carry on with the doctorate and I'd rather be more commercially focused. So from that side of things, to be honest, I felt it hasn't directly impacted on me. The only indirect consequence is of course and it's always really nice is that you think it will raise the profile of the X School so in terms of where I work – great, big kudos for me, because I belong to a School that's going to get lots of awards, declarations, whatever it is, doing good research.

So if you are looking at change we want to continue, are we still going on this journey?

Yes I think so, definitely.

We are still mid-point?

Continuing to go forward, I wouldn't say we are beyond mid-point, whether we are even mid-point would be debatable.

What sort of expectation of change do you have coming up next?

It's interesting because I really, really agree with the wider policy in terms of what the university and the X School is doing. I think we've got the focus right. I think the problem they are struggling with is how do we manage it day to day, week to week and how do we put in place the right processes to let it happen and it's just in terms of

things like finding the right people to teach, to take over teaching hours, making it a positive experience for staff as opposed to you will be doing this and this will be allocated time on your timetable and to put in place the right appraisal mechanisms as well so people actually say – yes, I'm awarded for this in some way. A good example of that is if you take the enterprise within the X School. The guy that heads this up does not get remunerated on a profit basis and you would expect that in order to motivate him in order to run this enterprise scheme effectively, with an expected turn-over of half a million, you would start to get profit share, some sort of commission.

Is there any third party that influences your reaction to changes? Such as the union, do you know what their position is?

No. I'm not a member of the union; I don't get actively involved with the union.

Colleagues, do you ever chat these things through with colleagues?

Not that much. Not to the degree that a lot of colleagues do. I take the view that I'm at my job, I know which job I'm doing day to day. I'm happy to perform it, daily, weekly, monthly to the best of my ability and so I get good results and to me that's where my remit ends.

The feeling I'm getting is that you see change happening but you feel quite fortunate that you don't see it directly impacting on you?

No.

Is that how you think the university would want you to react? It's not really your remit?

I think the university probably accepts there are all sorts of people in different positions and so not everybody is going to react the same to change in the first instance. There are going to be some people closer to that change than others. Had I

been close to the change ie I was actively researching for instance because this is obviously a key issue in the university at the moment, then I would happily be involved in that change, it's not because I have any negative perceptions of it, I just don't see that it directly affects me.

If we are talking about strategic changes and policy and processes at SU, where's the change pressure coming from? Who's making these decisions?

I would imagine it's coming from different parts, partly government led, partly the senate at the university, which obviously filters down to head of school.

So you see it as a cascade coming down from government?

Yes, I think it's probably a cascade coming down. I think from the School's point of view they want to generate x amount of revenue because there's a kind of competitiveness in being the best so I'm sure it's also welcome to some extent by the School

Do you see any sort of change pressure coming up from the academics?

I would say that a lot of the academics have been really pro-active in terms of seeking research grants and funding and that's a change that's really pretty big since I started. When I first started no one would go out and actively seek a grant and now people are looking in the right places and being directed towards it.

What you are saying is that the decision is made on the top, this is what we're going to do now, and they've got the bottom to go along with it?

I think so, although some people wouldn't say the bottom, I think they can see direct benefits to themselves. For instance, a lot of staff would like to operate more like an old university and would like to teach fewer hours and would like to publish more

work, so if they can see a way to do that then I think they will openly accept and embrace that.

So – if the benefits are made clear, people will be more accepting?

Absolutely, yes, people aren't stupid, people will understand the benefits, it doesn't have to come from management, they just have to see it working and see from other institutions and they can see how much that would benefit them.

Why do you think that most of the change impetus comes down on us, as a sort of top-down structure? Other universities function other ways.

Hearsay – things you hear in corridors, things you hear when you are having an informal chat with people, having their appraisals saying Oh God I have to do this or told I've got to publish or told I've got to do researching, and sometimes there's obviously unhappiness about that so they clearly haven't generated that idea themselves but told they've got to do this and been told they've got to participate.

So, if things are coming down then, there are some negatives to it, are there any positives about decisions coming from the top and cascading down?

You would expect the positive would be that top management could give the whole process some direction and focus and bring everything together. It's like having an enterprise unit and steering all the groups' activities together, whether it is teaching, company schemes to commercial research or video production to government grants etc, so that you have somebody to direct and manage the process; somebody who could sort of take all the bits and create some positive publicity or communications surrounding it.

So, do you think we have strengths in making change or implementing change, or both, or neither? Do you want to make any negative or positive comments?

I don't think it's that clear cut actually. I think we've got an idea of where we want to be, but quite how focused it is I'm not sure. I think there's a relatively good idea of where we want to be. In terms of implementing it, part of the problem comes back to the idea that Senior Management tend to "fire-fight" so they tend to resolve issues as and when they arise and sometimes these issues are inevitable so in terms of staff loading, teaching, finding temporary cover for things that should have been pre-planned, so sometimes you think do they implement quite as well as they could do. Having said that, that is why I said it is a slightly more complex issue, I think in terms of some of the implementation, particularly by staff, is good, people are pro-active, I think they find light, research funding, even with the enterprise they understand how they can compete a bit better.

Do you see yourself as part of this change process, or is this just something that gets down to you?

For me, and this is purely because I'm not directly affected or involved in the change, I think I'm on the side.

You feel like a spectator?

Yes.

You have never been part of the actual planning of change?

No

Do you think academics should be more involved in designing and implementing the change process, or is this really a job for management?

I think it's a job for management. I think academics can feed into the process by sharing their experiences and they might have some good ideas as to how to direct it for instance, if they take some research funding they would probably have some good

ideas into the process. In terms of where the focus is and coming up with say a 2-year plan, or a 5-year plan I think that's the role of Senior Management.

If academics did want to be involved do you think they know enough about the issues of the big picture?

It's reasonably democratic here. I think if they were to be involved they would probably make sure they did know enough, to be honest.

When change process is going on, who do you feel is speaking for you, do you feel you have a voice in it?

I think the voice round here could come from absolutely anybody, colleagues for instance.

Would you speak for yourself for instance? Do you feel you don't have a voice in this – it's just something that happens?

Yes I would certainly speak about it if I thought it was going to have implications for me, and if I wanted to manage these implications in some way. As for colleagues, I'm sure they would speak out. I don't think there's one particular voice but I think there are a number of people who would speak out against any change if they thought were a big issue.

As an academic have you ever led change or been active in a change agency position?

Probably the most influential has been within a very small niche, which has been within (X). When we had the commercial business part of the X School, and (X) market research, video production and TV production, computer animation etc then we were involved in developing a very small business for the university, so obviously

we were partly involved in leading or making some changes ourselves; other than that, probably not.

Do you think change agency is suitable to work within a university to evoke change? Where you've got an academic leading the implementation of change? Does that work?

An academic as opposed to a Senior Manager?

Yes

Yes, it depends on what sort of change you are talking about. If you were talking about some minor changes like for instance, use of interactivity within teaching, use of the internet within teaching, or something like that, I think that could happen quite obviously within an academic role because they're close to the job and they can obviously implement those kind of changes and probably keen to do so. Bigger changes, long-term changes I think are less likely to be instigated by the academics, or in my mind should be more likely to be instigated by management.

Do you think the change process could be improved at SU or are you happy with the status quo the way change happens?

I don't think we very successfully manage things at the time, no.

Any changes that you would suggest?

One of the biggest things is that you have to get support from people within the university. One of the biggest things I've noticed by doing some research myself is sometimes it's incredibly difficult to change the culture within the working environment. You simply have to accept that you are going to have to do it very gradually and the way you can sometimes overcome this is to create different sub-groups or different organisations, bring in new people, bring in new experience, bring

in new skills whatever it may be ie the centre of excellence for say for arguments sake. So it depends on the scale of change, but increasingly I think it will happen, as with our new professor here, is you can't necessarily all adapt to the change in-house. You have to bring in new skills, like a new professor, new researchers to work with him, whatever it might be, to be able to implement that change successfully.

Do academics, in terms of yourself and your colleagues, need anything to help them adapt to change? Is there anything they're missing anything that would make it easier for them?

I think with change you need to re-address the whole way that people appraise, the way they're remunerated, the way their time is structured, their role in the university and that needs to be addressed. Because what you can't do, and what seems to happen now, which I think is really poor, is that you go into an appraisal, for instance, and you will be told you will be adding another objective to your appraisal to include enterprise and to include research. Now actually what they should set down is re-address the way that appraisal takes place, what performance measurement is measured against you, as you're not measured against teaching now, you might be measured against research or you might be measured against enterprise, whatever else it might be. I think that ultimately if we are going to be bringing in much more funding the remuneration structure should also change because at the moment the problem is if you keep a low profile and you are not particularly good at your job, then nobody will ask you to do anything so you would be less involved in the change. If you are really good and very cool and involved typically in lots of projects then you are more likely to be asked, and you work many more hours and you would be paid no more. There is certainly an argument that says we should re-address and think about the way we measure performance.

You keep coming back to this. This is one of my questions, does the reward process we have here in SU help implement change or doesl it discourage change?

It totally discourages change. You can for instance when students give you feedback there is no reason why instead of you just setting objectives each year so what more can I contribute towards the university, your assessor at your appraisal can say I will mark you against 10 different points for your performance. I'm going to mark you in the quality of your teaching; I'm going to mark you on whatever it may be. At a personal level maybe it means you can have some intermediate appraisals with people and therefore I'm going to pay you accordingly. I need to think about this creatively – I think there are better ways.

Sort of awarding the carrots?

Yes of the people who perform well versus the people who don't perform so well, as fundamentally you are talking about changing the way you do business, as the university is a business, therefore you should look at the numbers of quantitative measures and qualitative measures and how you would reward people.

Some of the academics say it all comes down to communication issues. Do you have any comments on that in terms of implementing change?

Obviously it's down to communication but it's down to fairness more than anything. People don't mind change and they will grow with that change if they believe that it will benefit them and as a relationship it's reciprocal. That's a problem perhaps about communication because at the moment it's not reciprocal. It's a one-way relationship.

Other academics I have spoken to have said there are staff development issues, people don't have the tools they need to adapt to the change.

Funding for conferences, that sort of stuff, certainly that's the case you always have to fight for resources. You know you won't be offered the resource to do a job you actually have to say in order for me to do a good job I need x, y and z and you know that at some point you will reach a compromise because they won't actually give you the full set of tools you need to do that job.

Those are the end of my formal questions, do you have any final comments on the way they implement change at SU that you don't think we've covered so far?

I can't think of anything at the moment.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Four

Can you say your name into the tape please?

It's (A4).

Thank you (A4). I'm doing my Doctorate in Education on the Drivers for Change in Higher Education and how these drivers are impacting on the academic work experience here at SU. The first thing I would like to ask you is to look at Higher Education as a whole, alright. From your own perspective, do you think that Higher Education is changing, static? How would you describe the changing, in what way?

From my perspective?

Yes.

I find the process or the processes, all the procedures are getting much more complex and I think we're losing sight of primary role which is actually educating people and I have found the admin work has ... the workload, has really increased this last ... I would say these last, I don't know, three or four years.

Again looking at Higher Education as a whole, what's causing these changes? Is it within the UK? Is it global? What's the push?

I can't really say much about other countries because I have lost touch with (European country) for example. Certainly in the UK I suppose it's the governmental policy which has changed a lot and obviously Widening Participation, more students through the system, which has an impact. Now we have mass education whereas before it was limited to an elite and it was much more manageable.

Overall then, do you see this change process as mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

I think it's different. I wouldn't say it's good or bad, it's different, but we are at the receiving end, at the end you've got all that.

OK. If we leave the macro scale and come down to the micro, to you, sitting in this office here at SU. How is your working environment changing?

Well it's very difficult to pinpoint because I am developing as well. So, of course, I started as a Lecturer. Even before that I was on a Demonstrator post and my post has evolved and with it the responsibilities. So now I find I have to cope with a lot more but that's because my job has evolved within the organisation.

So would you say that these changes are coming from within or outside of you?

Well outside because my role is changing as well, so I can only comment on my present position which is a sort of Course Leader and I've done that for the last three or four years. Before that I didn't have as many responsibilities.

OK. So if we look at your position as a Course Leader then and the change you feel is happening around you, are these changes coming from you, are you making these changes or are these changes coming from outside of you?

Well it's coming ... I think it's coming from my response to the changes outside. For example, now we've got to look after the students a lot more and pastoral care for example. We've got to chase them up for example much more because they are our customers. We have got to look after them, otherwise we'll lose them, and I know, in the past, I wouldn't chase up students. Now I say 'Well, if I don't do that, they'll fail, we'll

lose them and it's bad for the university;' so it's self imposed but it's because of the ... of the circumstances.

OK. Any other changes you can think of as your role of Programme Leader?

Again, you've got to watch your back all the time. You've got to cover your back. You've got to ... I mean you have an interview with a student, student comes with a serious problem, you've got to record them all the time, because a student will say 'I didn't get the support. You didn't say this. You didn't say that.' So we find ourselves in a ... it's not pleasant at all knowing that 'oh I've got to record our conservation because a student might get back to us with criticisms' and I find ... I don't want to work like that. I want to work, you know, with trust.

That's an interesting point (A4). Do you find you have to cover your back from anyone else or just students?

Well, students yes, and colleagues as well. An again it is the atmosphere that has changed. It's the obligation which I find ...

So it's a bit of a blame culture then?

Yeah.

So overall do you find these changes positive, negative, bit of both?

Well for this aspect, negative.

Any positive changes that are happening to you?

Positive change, well again, because the job has developed and I have developed I find I have my little corner where I am in charge and I like that. I've always enjoyed teaching and, within limits, I can still do what I like with my students provided I prepare them well for the exams, because again, that has changed, the exams. Any sort of assessment has got to be extremely predictable for the students. So I find this a panic which I don't like. And for (my subject) it doesn't work. So, again, that is a negative change.

So far we've discussed the changes that you've noted for yourself. How about your colleagues? Do you notice changes happening to them?

It's the same. It's the same every way?

And are these changes affecting in any way your relationships with your colleagues?

Yeah I don't ... we don't ... in the past, the summer was fairly quiet and we used to meet and chat, it was much more relaxed. Now, some of my colleagues work all summer with their foreign students. That means they are very pressed, very rushed and we don't talk. And that, again, is a negative change.

Any other changes to your relationships with other people?

Again it's a blame culture. When something goes wrong we say 'Ah, who is at fault?' and it's never anybody and I think it's everybody. But we try to pass on the blame. And things go wrong. I've noticed, especially this year, a lot of things, little slips, you know, but things go wrong. It's so complex and there is an overlap of responsibilities or 'It's not my responsibility, it's yours. You are in charge.' And it's very messy.

OK. A lot of people say, use the term called the burden of change. Do you think there's a burden to change?

Well, it depends on what sort of change. I always find change is never ... it never simplifies things. A change equals more complexity. I couldn't ... well I could give you one example when we changed and it was simpler, we just cut down on our assessment because we just couldn't cope with their marking. So we cut down on their assessments. That was probably ... but mostly change means more work for everybody.

So who then suffers from change? Or who's impacted by change? Who picks up the pieces of change?

Everybody along the line; I mean you know people in Quality Assurance I suppose their job has increased in complexity as well.

How would you describe your relationship with the Senior Management here?

With my direct line manager it's fine. She knows about our systems. After that ...

You don't know them at all?

Not really. And they don't know what we're doing. So they ... yes, the great divide I think.

If we go outside of the university into your home life and your personal life, how do you normally cope with change? Do you find change exciting or worrying?

I do actually like change. Being a woman I think I do. Well, when ... I don't change on impulse. It is always thought out for a long time. Why? I love change provided it's going to improve my life and I welcome change.

In your outside life when you have unexpected change, how do you usually react or cope with it?

Well it depends if it's good news or bad news. I mean if it's positive change, yeah, fine. It can be very stressful if it is negative. Obviously, you know, moving house, I always find that extremely stressful but otherwise, fine.

OK. Again back to the university and your particular work, role here. What recent strategic changes to policy or process have you noticed or had experience with? These are big sort of macro changes at the university. What have you particularly noticed is happening?

In the structure of the courses or ... ?

Yes anything to do with the policies or procedures, the big stuff.

The big stuff! Hmm.

Like for myself as a Programme Leader I find Widening Participation is a really major change, it's impacted on me.

Because you're in charge?

Yes. I'm a Programme Leader.

For myself, personally, no, not really, I haven't been impacted by that, by any change really. But it's just my own case.

Yes. OK. And the changes that are happening, do you think they're just window dressing or do you think they're profound change? Is it deep change?

I think it's again it's a change because we are very keen on quality. We are keen on league tables and we've got to rise to that.

And is that a deep change do you think? Do you know what I mean by window dressing?

Yes, oh well I think it is a bit of window dressing, yeah. We've got to appear to be ... I mean in any audit.

Do you think it's more to appear than to be?

Certainly for the media we've got to appear. It is a form of window dressing. On the other hand I think there are people who genuinely want to improve the service. I don't know.

Do you think that accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

Yes.

To being open minded and flexible is part of what ...

Well it's not only academic is in the workplace, the modern workplace you've got to change. You just cannot stay put. But again it's got to be well thought out change and not a knee jerk reaction.

If we look at change at the university and we sort of look at is as a line. Do you know where we are in the change process; are we at the beginning, are we in the middle, are we at the end of it?

It's ongoing.

It's ongoing.

It's ongoing and it will never end. You've got to be very reactive now. Any company and now universities are companies, any company's has got to be very, very reactive and very quickly.

Do you think academics within SU are reactive to change?

No. Academics are not ... they hate change I think. You know I am in charge of the self managed learning. So I've got to develop 18 booklets and the minute you suggest change you straight away it is no. It's just like a taste, it's no. They don't even ask why. It's no.

Why do you think they react that way?

It's natural. I think it's a natural reaction.

Natural for humans or natural for academics?

Humans!

Humans?

It's fear. Fear of change. What's going to happen to me? Will I have to adapt? Will I have to change? It's fear.

How do you think the university wants us to react to change?

They want us to be extremely flexible. But again, it's not just SU, it's not the academic world, it's the modern world and we've got to be very flexible.

When you think of your own reaction to change is there any third party that influences you (A4) like your husband or your peers or the union? As far as the change in university and reaction to it, do you know what union positions are or do they influence you at all?

Well, let's say, I'm a bit of a loner and I joined a union. I don't particularly agree with all they say or do. I try to be informed before if I have any position. It's very difficult sometimes. I find information doesn't separate very well or if it does we are so overloaded with information that we are not as well informed as we should be.

Right now when there's a strategic change at SU, do you sense that it's coming down from above or from the middle or from the bottom, from the academics? Where's the push coming for change?

Usually it's top-down.

Top-down?

We are asked our opinion, yeah definitely. We have surveys and things but what happens to a survey. And again, you know, we don't have the overview and I mean how can we decide if we don't have all the evidence? It's like the juror, you know, you have a defense and the juror. The man in the street what does he have? Does he or she have an

idea of what, why. We're just not competent. So we just hope that the people at the top are competent which is not necessarily true but we just hope.

OK. So you feel it comes down. Do you think academics contribute to this process? Or should they contribute to this process? Or should they just leave it to management?

They should. In an ideal ... no, in an ideal world, management should listen. But yeah, they might listen but they do what they like. Again, they might have reasons for that. I don't know.

OK. So right now you don't sense that academics contribute, but you think maybe there could be a place for academics to contribute?

Yeah, certainly senior academics, yeah.

When change comes from the top-down, what would say are the positive or negative features of that?

Well again when it's top-down the person in charge has the overview which we don't necessarily have. If everybody did what we want, everybody else wanted, well it would be chaos really. So we need somebody accountable hopefully who takes the overall decisions. But that said it should be, in an ideal world, it should be a consensus.

So if academics were contributing more and more sort of change pressure was moving up what are the positive and negative points of that?

Well positive, hopefully, there would be consensus which is always good. Negative, everybody has different opinions and at the end of the day, yes, who is right? Who is wrong? So we need somebody. Now that might be a cultural thing in me because I'm

(European country) background and hierarchy is very important and our position is 'The boss takes the final decision'. That might be culturally oppressed.

OK. Why do you think then at SU that it's mostly a top-down decision? Because this is how you perceive the system to be. But why do you think the system is like this?

I think it's, I don't know, tradition. I'm not sure it's down to individuals. It's always been like that. I arrived here and it was a different Vice Chancellor. Well you know it was the same situation. So is it typical to Higher Education I don't know.

Do you feel that you're part of a change process or do you feel that change just gets done to you?

In my own sphere of influence I am in charge. Otherwise it is imposed.

So within your own course, you're pro-active?

Well not even own course because you are limited. You have to treat each other very well basically. I have very limited scope for change, very limited.

But if you look at the macro environment at SU you feel basically change is done to you?

Yes.

Have you ever been part of the planning process for change outside of your degree, sort of larger than your degree?

No, not really.

Any particular reason why you don't feel you've been part of the planning process?

Because, for degrees, it is the Course Leader that is in charge and, for example, to expand languages we suggest that for example a degree could have a language. But it's just suggestions. We are not in charge.

OK. Picking up the point you said before (A4), do you think one of the problems is that we don't, as academics, we don't know enough about the issues involved or the big picture?

I think we are ... I mean if you keep informed, if you read the [inaudible]

Do you think there is access there to the big picture?

There is to a certain degree but that's national.

How about the big picture in SU?

In SU it's, you know, in any organisation it's a rumour shop and you get gossips, yes, things on the grapevine. You get bombarded by emails but that's what they want us to know.

Who speaks for you? Do you have a voice when it comes to change process?

Do you mean from the department or the university?

Who speaks for (A4)?

Herself and her Line Manager sometimes. She defends our interests.

So you feel through the Line Manager you have a voice to the Vice Chancellor's office?

No.

No.

No. Only small beer.

Do you feel you've got a voice on ... small ... but you don't have a voice when it comes to larger issues? OK. As an academic have you ever been a change agent? Have you ever actively led change?

Yes. We introduced a self managed learning scheme and I was in charge. So I had an insight into managing and managing people.

So you're comfortable with the idea of using change agency to get an academic to trigger change? You feel it can work in Higher Education?

Quite well..

Looking at the macro, the large change decisions that are made here, do you think the process could be improved any and are you happy with the way it goes [inaudible]?

Again, you know, its information and listening to people. It's the attitude. It's an attitude plus communication.

Communication issues?

Communication but again there's got to be a political will. It's again, is it window dressing? Do we send emails, you know 'We want your views' just because we have got to go through the process or is it genuine.

Do you think academics have political will to get involved?

Do they have political . . . ?

Political will to get involved in change or are they just too busy just looking after their own responsibilities? Is there an interest there from academics to get more involved?

I think if they knew it would lead somewhere perhaps they would get involved. It's a chicken and egg thing. If you know that what you say will come to nothing then next time you don't bother.

Do academics, in your opinion, need anything to help them adapt better to change? Because you were commenting on the fact that change does impact your colleagues and your relationship with your colleagues. Is there anything that management could be doing to make it easier?

Perhaps recognition of what we have to cope with, a pat on the back sometimes.

Well that leads us quite nicely into this next topic. Do you think the reward process at SU has any impact on the success of change implementation?

No.

Can you expand on that? I mean do you get any reward for changing?

No. No well, it is part of the job isn't it? So when things have got to change you do the work.

Could the reward system be adapted in any way to encourage academics to accept change?

I don't think so.

It's just part of their job.

It's part of the job.

Do you have any final words of wisdom on this topic (A4)?

Well I shall repeat what I have said. You know, change is, in a modern world, well in any world, I mean in the past, why are we here now, it's because things have changed, things move on and you've got adapt. When it comes to 'No I won't change' it's time you retired really.

OK. Anything else?

No that's it.

Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Five

My EdD is on change in Higher Education and particularly change in SU and how academics are reacting to it. How change is implemented and maybe ways that change could be implemented. So this is a very selfish EdD as it's very much from our perspective, we don't include anyone else.

If we look at the market as a whole, if I can call Higher Education that, an industry, do you think that Higher Education in the UK is changing right now or static, what's your take on it?

I think it's changing, evolving particularly regarding the kind of people we're recruiting into our programmes, the widening participation and so on, so I think we're changing to address greater needs, also in line with the Disability Legislation Act and so on which is coming in December

Any other way the business is changing?

Flexible hours for part-time study, distance learning, those kinds of things.

Some IT triggers coming into this?

Do you mean some more information?

The cause of these changes are the fact that technology is increasing or do you see any global triggers as to why Higher Education is changing?

Not really, not particularly.

You can see it in a UK perspective?

Yes.

In your opinion do you see these changes in a positive light, a negative light, a bit of both?

Positive, well making them the best out of quite a rum deal from the students' perspective, sort of B's and so on so trying to make Higher Education as accessible as possible more than in the current climate.

If we leave this sort of industry and go into our own little microenvironment here at SU, do you think the working environment here is changing?

Yes, I perceive changes all the time particularly in macro in the X School, but yes we're struggling to kind of find our position I guess in terms of whether we're research orientated or practice based orientated or teaching in the light of the white papers.

Any other changes that you're sensitive to right now?

There are moves to draw the (X) School together into one location to expand the campus in terms of facilities, new buildings.

Who do you think is directing this change within the university? Is it internal to you or is this change being done to you?

It's being done to me.

You don't feel that you're self- directing it at all?

No, going along with the flow I suppose

Have you found then that these changes are impacting on your own working life, on your own role?

Yes they are.

How?

Developing new courses, for example, I've just written a new Masters course which had to have a part-time route so I was told to design something which had a part-time route to it so in that respect I'm reacting to it, and it's affecting me in my work in those kind of ways. But in a positive way I'm not against that at all.

So the changes that are happening to you in your microenvironment in this little office here, you've got a positive perspective to them?

Yes

Any negative perspectives or neutral perspectives?

Extremely large amounts of paperwork to do and it means I think that these changes and the workload at SU ends up affecting some people and not other people in a very extreme ways, so some people have a lot of work to do and others no work to do really, particularly over assignments so that's why I'm here all the time, most people aren't.

That's very clever because the next question was the changes that you see impacting on your life are they impacting on colleagues' lives? Who's got the burden of the change, from your own perspective?

The ones who do are the ones who can. The ones who have the capacity to change with the changes, adapt to the changes, take on the burden of responsibility and the workload, and the ones who don't seem merely to exist alongside in an increasingly wider gap on the workload and responsibility.

So you perceive certain unevenness there?

Yes, definitely

So is this then impacting on your relationship with colleagues?

Not directly, but yes in my mind it does, yes.

Do you perceive that you have a relationship with the Senior Management?

Yes

Tell me about the relationship

I feel like I'm doing OK in my career, my contract was finishing in December and now it has been renewed as a permanent contract so I 'm taking more courses, more responsibilities, and through the group work assessment project I've been doing for (X) that's exposed me to the higher ranks of the university I suppose, and I am now on the University X Committee.

So you feel you know them?

Yes I have quite a regular dialogue with (X) for example because he runs the management committee for the project we do. So I'm quite exposed to these people which helps me partly I guess understand the changes which are happening and also to kind of to go along with those changes.

Thinking of yourself personally outside of the university, how do you feel about change in your life in general, do you feel you have a high tolerance of change?

Yes, I quite enjoy change, as I get bored.

Does it excite you?

Yes it does because I get bored if things stay the same too long, so I'm inflicting on my family moving house again next year. We've been in our current house for two years and I want to move to (X) to be nearer my work so that's another big change next year.

I know you've had a lot of changes between the house and family and getting married and everything, how do you cope with change, do you have any coping mechanisms outside of the university, personal to yourself?

I just have a plan so it's not like change which suddenly one day I find myself, Oh God this is completely different it's all like going according to a plan. But I am very structurally organised and I like to know what I'm doing.

You like to be in control of change – you like to see it coming?

Yes, absolutely.

And have a plan to deal with it?

Yes

Tell me about some recent changes you've experienced in your employment with the university? What's changing for you now?

The biggest change I would think is being involved in the validation of the new Masters course that I will be the Programme Leader of one of the routes through it with X, so just going through writing the documentation and getting that validated and help planning the route and so on and starting up in October, that's my biggest change.

How do you feel about that?

Nervous, again it's a new challenge, actually I do like challenges but typically I like them after I've done them if you know what I mean, I guess it's probably the same with most people, so I'm looking forward to it because I take pride in the fact that I'm doing that and people think that I can do that and so on. But it does put a lot of pressure on me.

How about more strategic changes, university wide changes, are they impacting on you?

I find it a little bit nebulous. It's hard to understand, it's not like there's a newsletter which comes round every month or 10 years what these changes are so they tend to be more gradual those kind of things so it's harder to assess how they are affecting me at the moment but I don't particularly have a problem with the way the university's heading although there's a much greater emphasis on staff doing either research or enterprise activity but as I'm currently doing a lot of research with group work anyway, I don't find myself having a problem with that, like some other members of staff.

So do you think accepting change is part of the job of an academic?

I think it should be, yes, but I think it's part of the job of the younger versions of an academic rather than, in my experience really people, some academics have been around in one institution for quite a long time they don't tend to like change and want to do the same thing every year, I can't see how that can lead to good teaching.

So, the strategic changes that are happening at the university, do you see them as window dressing, or deeply profound?

Interesting question, kind of between the two which is a bit of a wimpy thing to say I suppose. I am only really thinking about according to the White Paper, I suppose deciding what kind of institution we are. I don't know where they are with that, all I know is how it impacts on me which is we need to be involved in enterprise or

research so I think it's important and it will probably quite dramatically change the university and how we perform over the next few years.

So you see it at sort of intermediate level?

Yes.

Why do you think that? Or why do you think they're doing it that way?

Doing what that way?

Not deeply embedding change but not lip service either – sort of cruising.

I think they're just trying to work out, just trying to find their way at the moment which is the interesting part of change. It's not a done deal, and it is not obvious, it's more in the process of being thought about really at the moment.

If you look at a strategic change like WP for instance any sort of thinking or action process you have for dealing with this change? Do you just accept it?

I try to actively get involved in it. Over the last couple of months I was involved with running some (specific degree) days with some kids from schools that wouldn't normally go to universities, to put them through the experience. So I took that on board as an addition just an additional kind of thing in my timetable, just because it seemed a bit interesting and a bit of a challenge and I guess a bit different. So I feel quite comfortable with that because I've been involved in it myself I suppose.

What future expectations of strategic change are you expecting? What do you think is coming down the pipeline?

I think some staff may become term-time only and I'm not sure it's the right answer you're looking for but it will go down to the practice theory divide and what the staff

are involved with if they're involved with either research or enterprise or if we just become a teaching institution.

So you see it more as a change in the character, the mission of the university?

Yes.

And that would impact on the staff?

Yes it would as some staff would become more superfluous than they currently are to the point where they wouldn't be here any more.

If you have these thoughts in the middle of the night what are you planning on your reaction, the way you'll deal with it?

I don't have a problem with it because as I said I'm developing more research proposals to continue work after the (X) has finished, so surprisingly I find myself more a research orientated person than a practice orientated person, which I never thought I would say. I come from practice industry so I don't have a problem with that at all I find that another interesting part of the job.

Any third party influences your reaction to change? Or is it just within you?

Change in the university?

Change in the working environment? Do you pay any attention to the union position?

Not particularly.

Colleagues' opinions?

Yes but then I make my own mind up in the end. But yes colleagues to quite a large extent. Line Manager I suppose because I see how he responds to the changes and so on and how it affects us. I guess also partly my wife, my outlook on marriage is that's part of it anyway, I can't just divorce the two so she's involved in what I'm doing at work as I have to come home and be happy or sad every day!

You seem to feel that there's change happening around you, you can roll with the punches, you are pretty flexible?

Yes as I do that in my home life.

How about colleagues?

How I perceive them?

Yes, how do you perceive their reactions to change?

Mixed, there are a couple of colleagues who can do what I'm doing really and there's quite a few who have a harder time grappling with those changes. I guess because they've been used to different systems for longer period of time, but because I've only ever really known, every year I've been here . . . I've always been in a different office every year I've moved around a fair bit as well, I've always had different years, different jobs, certainly hugely different responsibilities so it's just how I perceive Higher Education to be. I don't know any other way of working which may be different that's what keeps it interesting. If it was the same thing day in and day out it would just drive you stupid.

When these changes and processes and policy come down, you say you react this way, colleagues react their way, how do you think the university wants you to react?

Their way! But I feel that I'm part of that process because I'm involved in the (X) Committee so I get to have my say at those levels where those policies are sometimes

formed, not all the time. A lot of the time they come down obviously from above and yes I do feel part of that process.

We have a pressure for change in our microenvironment, within SU where's that pressure coming from?

All sorts of different ... ... well really the very top level, whatever that really is, the Governors, the Vice Chancellor I don't really know.

Do you think strategic change comes from them?

I think they kick it along and it's interpreted and realised by, at the School level, kind of co-ordinated by learning and teaching and so on.

Does change ever come from anywhere else? We've discussed the government as a trigger. Do academics ever get involved in creating change?

Yes, but I wouldn't say ... only to a small extent, to a small level, like at course level, and unit level which is important that's the only way it al happens but that's the kind of level I think those people ...

Do you think strategic change is coming down rather than going up?

Yes

Any other third parties do you think are driving change in the university?

To some extent students drive change. Change in expectations, being more accountable, giving them a bigger role in their learning those kinds of things.

You said that you don't think academics make change, should they?

In terms of strategic change, I'm not sure that they're in the right position to see about the big picture basically, so I think they can make change in their own groups, but nothing which is going to span across the university as a whole, but maybe that's just because I'm looking at the basic simplistic kind of hierarchical tree structure model, how can they affect those people over there.

Do you think we're in a tree structure now?

Yes I think we are definitely and I think that all the pay scales affect that you know we've definitely got twigs and branches.

If we basically have change coming from the top, do you particularly like this process, dislike it, neutral?

Neutral I would say, mainly because as I said before, I sit on some committees where I see these changes being discussed so I kind of feel part of that; but neutral because I don't mind those changes. So far they haven't affected me in a negative way.

Do you understand why change happens like this at SU? Why do you perceive it as mostly top-down, or why does it work this way?

Because they represent the university I guess across other universities and how the government sees them and they also can oversee everyone working in SU and the different Schools and how they should inter-relate to each other and so on.

So back to the big picture?

Yes

So you do feel part of the change process in some regards?

Yes

And you have been part of the planning process for change?

Yes in a small way though …

Planning process or implementation process?

More implementation I would say.

And that was through one of the committees?

Yes, through committees and through my position in the (X) School, developing new programmes for example that kind of thing.

Do you think the academics should be more involved in designing and implementing change? Or would it just not work?

I think it just comes down to some academics are good at designing, implementing and so on and some aren't, so it's difficult to say that all … as a statement that academics should be able to manage and govern and instigate change, but I think there are certain academics who can do that, can see the bigger picture from their position and set things in motion, but I'm just aware that some people round here just so can't do that, so I wouldn't say all academics can do that, but some can.

Some of the academics have said that its because they don't have the big picture, they don't know enough about the issues, so they feel they can't contribute, is this a fair comment?

I think yes it could be depending on the extent to which they make sure they themselves are involved in what goes on at the university, yes, it can seem a very one-way process.

Who do you think speaks for you on these issues? Do you have a voice?

I think I have a voice partially yes in those committees. My Line Manager also kind of speaks for me as an academic in his group

The use of the term Line Manager is interesting; it's a business term and not an academic term. Is that how you perceive their job?

Maybe yes. It's a word that's been bandied around here a lot recently so I just picked up on it. I know my Line Manager, (X), quite well as I used to lodge with him before I started working here. We have a good relationship and yes he is my Line Manager in terms of appraisals which I am doing today, that's maybe why I'm thinking about these things.

As an academic, have you ever led change, or acted as a change agent?

Through the research projects on group work and assessment yes I am instigating change to improve group work in assessments in course teams, but it is difficult to invent changes like that with academics simply because everyone has their own take on learning and teaching and the outcomes and so on so yes in that regard, yes I have instigated change. Also I have been involved in altering the delivery of programmes, just finished changing the first year to reflect or just to make it a better programme basically.

Do you think change agency is suitable for university or does it just generate mistrust with the other academics?

I think it's seen in a positive light by most people. By those who can deal with that change. It can come down to silly things like just combining two units to cut down on needless assessment for example but that requires someone to rework their lecture programme to take account of more weeks or less weeks or something, they wouldn't like to do that because they've always delivered their ten lectures in ten weeks blah blah blah!

If we think about strategic change, overall change, do you think the change process could be improved in SU?

I guess there could be not particularly more consultation but maybe there could be more communication about the current state of changes and how they will be affecting us and what we can do to help.

Some of the academics have suggested the problem is in the actual implementation, do you think enough time and effort is put into thinking through the implementation?

I guess often not. Again it depends what the changes are but sometimes things can be rushed through and then we have to deal with it. There's not always a lot of time, mainly because a lot of changes that I'm actually involved with happen over the summer period where a lot of people just kind of disappear, so it's difficult to actually pull these things together.

You have said that you felt some academics have difficulty dealing with change, how could the university help them adapt? Is there anything the university could be doing?

I don't really know what the university could do to enable them to deal with change except – it's a bit silly to say a workshop governing or managing change or being involved in change, really just involving them early on, communicating so they have more lead in time to make changes and explain the reasons how and why it could be more beneficial to them perhaps.

Some of the academics have said that it's a communication issue; some of them have said it's a staff development issue.

I don't really know what that actually boils down to. Staff development usually means go to a conference or do a workshop in time keeping or something. If a member of staff is not interested in changing what they do, I don't see how going to a

workshop which is about making changes is going to – they are still going to drag their heels which is why I think they do quite well really as much as they like.

Is the answer in an award system? Does the award system right now help or hinder implementing changes?

Outline what you mean by the award system.

There's very few carrots in Higher Education

Yes there are, there's a lot of carrots but they are whipped away in the last second.

If you say that the carrots could be money or could be time remission are the carrots right now placed in such a way that they encourage change?

For example the staff here have said they don't want to, there's this line coming down you need to be involved in the theory or research or enterprise but people are saying they don't have time in remission unless there's actual money coming in to pay for research or something, there's no remission granted. To be honest I think that's the right way to do it. I think the university won't be able to, just can't afford to give remission to people without real good reason, without money being there to pay, to cover the teaching that's what it boils down to. Some academics wouldn't either see that or they would just choose to think that's just not part of their job.

Some academics are saying to me it's not fair. I change, he doesn't, and we get the same carrots. Is there an argument here?

Yes, or he gets more carrots because he's been here longer

Yes

Yes, I agree with that, that isn't fair. This award system awards people for the time they've been here as opposed to what they do here and that's why these two are very uneven, the distribution of responsibility and rewards.

Do you have any final comments on this?

Maybe there could be more kinds of reward for work undertaken which helps to develop or push forward or make changes for the better, providing it's measurable, and there should be ways of ensuring that Senior Academics, Senior Lecturers have the right amount of responsibility for that position and not just be paid £35,000 a year because they've been here for 20 years and they're not actually doing very much work and I'm doing more and I'm on a lot less than that. That's what I'd say, it sounds like getting into a rant! Stop quick!

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Six

Looking at what I'd call the market, Higher Education, sort of macro environment. From your perception do you see Higher Education in the UK changing right now or static? How would you describe the situation?

Well there are two levels. There appears to be a tremendous amount of activity or change although there always has been. Whether there's a real change is a moot point. There are students still coming in, still studying and going out, courses are still structured in much the same way as they were 30 years ago and assessment is much the same as it was 30 years ago. There's been a minimum impact of things like distance learning and [inaudible] learning models or two years ago. Fundamentally we're still talking about three terms, we're talking about three years taught and that structure has remained much the same. So at that level there's been minimal change.

So where do you perceive the changes to be (A6)?

Well, as I say, there's a lot of activity suggesting large images of changes. But when you actually look at it year on year in terms of the number of changes then it comes down to the funding model sizes really. So the emphasis moves ... you move things from one area to another to try and encourage students or universities to support some areas more than others and this constant review and review and review. If you look at it trickling down to the result it's really the funding model changes.

Where do you think the drivers are coming from? Within the UK or are they global in any way?

Oh I think globally there's a mass of ... the UK has a massive problem within the global market. More and more developed countries are investing and have been investing

heavily in the last 20 years in Higher Education. The percentage of graduates in countries like India and so on is rising sharply and it's very difficult for the UK to compete on straight cost terms. So, I guess, the government says things like 'Well in order to have a high rate of economy you have to have a highly skilled workforce' and that means primarily grief plus other things and looking to increase the rate of education proportion of the total. So an expanding house means it's kind of necessary to fund some sort of big structure like this.

OK so if you look at these changes in Higher Education as a whole, do you feel mostly positive about them, negative, bit of both?

It just presents a different set of challenges. I don't feel particularly that they're good or bad but it's necessary to increase the skill of the workforce and therefore widening participation serves to make an acceptable necessity in dealing with it. It's something that we have to do.

OK. Looking at your work environment at SU, from your own perspective, is your working environment changing?

Well obviously the biggest change over the last 20 years has been a huge change in our student ratio. The teaching numbers are more or less the same but the number of students we are servicing is now probably three times for last year than 20 years ago. And our workload in terms of operating materials in particular and mostly marking is substantially higher than it used to be. There's much less time for personal development.

Any other changes that you have noted ... to yourself?

Sorry?

Changes to yourself.

To myself, well not really. I mean I think it's really down to the fact that the consequences of the student numbers means we have to manage that and you have to change your approach and you have to become much more distant with the students because with the larger numbers it changes the whole way that you interact with students.

So the push for these changes are they coming from within you or from outside of you?

I think they're coming as a result of the way in which society's developing in terms of the percentage of people getting degrees. We're also getting a higher proportion of people with less motivation and negative motivation in other words they're doing degrees because they feel it's necessary to get a job of decent standard and 20 years ago those people will have seen opportunities without having a degree. And so therefore we're getting a proportion of people who really are not in sympathy with Higher Education. They're not stupid, they're just not in sympathy with what we're trying to achieve.

So within SU then, who's directing these changes then, again outside of you or within you? Are you pro-actively making these changes ... are they?

Well I'm certainly not actively asking for more students to teach. So I have to deal with the consequences of those sorts of things. I'm certainly pro-active in terms of trying to look at ways in which I can be making more effective use of my time, yeah.

How about your role? Has your role changed (A6) over the last few years?

Not a great deal I think. I'm still largely delivering courses, working in industry. That's what I've been engaged in for the last 20 years or so.

And overall then, these changes at SU that you've perceived, would you say overall positive, negative, bit of both?

I think that they've had ... the actual teaching related aspects, but the things that have the biggest negative effect is the utilization of resources and the way that's operated and that's ... it means that timetables become very fragmented. Students have found the experience around here much more difficult and staff has as well and I have. So as a result one has a much more destructive working week, much more difficult to deal with, much more fragmented, an hour here, an hour there, much more spread out and much more difficult to organise work and the job is two or three times as hard as it used to be.

So is it fair to say that you perceive some negative elements to it.

Oh yeah, I think that's the biggest negative and if you go for the high utilization of resources then you end up with somebody having to pay and that's the students' experience and staff experience and that's what's happened.

Any positive elements to change at SU?

Positive, difficult to identify too much in the way of positive change. Yeah.

OK. Fine. So you perceive some changes then in your own work. How about your colleagues work overall? Are they in the same position as you do you think?

I think the work experience is pretty much the same.

Does the pressure of change impact in any way on your relationships with your colleagues?

No, I don't think it's ... well, not really. The problem comes down to the difficulty we have in organising the timetable. I mean when you actually realise that a huge amount of time is spent doing that. So there is an impact on staff obviously.

In what way does it impact?

Well it's the same thing, that staff has to spend a lot of time in uncertainty. We have a number of outstanding issues as a result of the timetable outstanding now and only three weeks to go when all the fun starts and in general it's a much more last minutes 'Well should I really commit myself' kind of attitude because there may be last minute changes. And having to fight a long time to get the right room! There's all sorts of things come from that and that deflects people and what I've noticed is there is far less interaction of staff. There's not enough time to meet and chat, the number of people as well. So that's a kind of ... [inaudible] incredibly negative result. But the changes have put a lot of pressure on to maximise resources, minimise the classroom and that's having an effect in the way in which I have to deal with it.

Some people describe it as a burden of change. Do you think change has a burden?

Well all change will of necessity cause difficulties. Where the change will be continually increasing productivity roles, then that's going to have an increase in burden on the staff and you can extrapolate and this is where the people ... pressure often comes from the extrapolation to say 'Well this is where the staff/student ratio is now, this is where it was ten years ago.' If you extrapolate that to ten years from now then you're talking about averaging 35-40 plus, then marking ... but you know if people can see the gradual increase in everything and therefore in ten years from now will be, what is a very difficult job will be something that many people will not want to deal with. That's where the pressure comes from.

How would you describe your relationship with the Senior Management here? You've been here a long time.

Yeah I think that it's difficult to ... the difficulty is see exactly what it is we're really trying to achieve and it may be just the resourcing implications but in terms of getting a vision of where, what we want to be, that's where ... it is a problem.

Do you feel you know the Senior Management?

I don't have very many dealings with them, no. I was in a more senior position up until about eight or nine years ago and I did know them then but in the last seven or eight year I haven't, no.

If we come out of university and to you personally (A6) in your own life, how do you usually feel about change in your life in general?

Generally speaking I suppose I'm ... I'm not somebody who ... I mean my life changes a lot anyway. I mean I even know ... there's a lot of change in who I teach and students always change every year. So there's a lot of change in that. So I quite like, I deal with that on a regular basis. I don't expect things to be the same.

Are you the sort of person then that considers change to be more of an excitement than a threat?

It depends what the change is I guess. But, yeah, I'm always optimistic that things will move forward. Obviously I see some threats and that's not just work related. But not of the change of itself, I'm quite happy to see that going forward.

And when you have change in your own life is there any sort of coping mechanisms you use so you feel more comfortable with the change.

Yeah, I've had a load of changes in the last few years. I don't really know what you mean by coping mechanisms. I don't ...

Do you tend to chat with family, friends, do you try to minimise the risks?

Yeah obviously.

Do you try to avoid the change?

Not avoid the change. I mean I look at the situation. I must admit I'm fatalistic. So if, for example, I see the need for the change is imperative then I do feel there's not a lot of point messing about. If there's less money then you have to check, so there's no point in throwing the toys out of the pram, you might as well get on with it.

Tell me about any recent strategic changes to policy or process that you've noticed here at the university.

The way in which courses are well development process ...

Some people have commented on the WP initiatives.

The White Papers?

Widening Participation.

Oh right. That hasn't had a huge impact in where we are at the moment. We've dipped our toes into it, so we haven't actually seen that. I mean obviously there's a seeming increase in the additional learning needs and that's beginning to impact. But we haven't had any real experience of those things and certainly it is a concern of a large number of people, though we haven't actually experienced it. We've got I think one or two people who are involved in that at the moment. So it's not a lot of change.

Other academics have commented on the increased emphasis on quality.

Well there's an increasing emphasis on quality procedures. I don't think there's any increase in quality or even any intent on increasing quality. But there have been a lot more quality procedures put in place, to regulate a lot more of what we do. However that's still … the problem we have is that … we're currently in a hybrid system where we apparently have the procedures, but we still have a huge number of people who use individual judgement which supersedes the procedures. So we have a situation where the Head of ADQ for example who decides when the rules apply and when not and therefore one's left in a situation, I mean I'm currently affected by that directly, where apparently, you know, we might have a directory but any development team, any panel can make comment about the content of units that are already in the directory. The whole point of the directory is that when they're in the directory they can't … only the assembly of them can be criticised, not the content. And so we have a dichotomy that we apparently have directories but in practice we don't. And that's only down to the Head of ADQ allowing people freedom instead of sort of saying 'Do your job, it's in the directory and that's it.' So we're halfway to a quality procedure. I think we've still got a number of people in post who have been used to the old system which had a lot more individual freedom and still want to exercise that freedom. So we're halfway down the quality message in my view.

So if we think of some of these strategic changes to policy and procedures, such as WP, such as quality, do you think these are profound changes or just window dressing.

I think they'll have a progressive effect which will be quite significant and therefore ... but they will be down to the individuals within that who will make the effect. I mean Widening Participation ... I haven't seen any noticeable effect so I can't comment on that and if one tends to look at the actual change on the ground which is what I tend to rather than the White Papers or other suggested changes to degrees and all this sort of stuff. Until that actually happens I must admit I'm not looking for a [inaudible] which I've suggested before so I am waiting to see until it actually happens before I make a judgement.

OK. So would you say that that is really your sort of thinking and action process? You're waiting until things start to affect you?

Not necessarily, no. But I've been around the block a few times and the number of actual changes and procedures and changes in direction are a minute fraction of the number of suggested changes. So these tend to get filtered out and silly ideas tend to not get passed. Oh yeah I still think about them but I don't spend a lot of time concerned about them.

Do you think that accepting change is part of your job of an academic?

Oh I would hope that anybody in the world of academia would be horrified by the thought of no change. Hopefully academic knowledge and understanding moves on and therefore we would want to move with it.

If we look at what's happening now at SU as a sort of a line of change do you see it at the beginning, at the middle, at the end?

I think change is a continual process and therefore I don't see a beginning, middle or an end. I think that you've just got to be continually looking towards how we are going to adapt and adopt changes.

Do you have any expectations for what the next change will be here at SU? What's coming down the pipeline?

No.

Fine.

I think that ... the trouble with ... the reason why I feel like that it's not through cynicism, it's just simply the fact that if significant changes are done, like for example we became a teaching place, we're not allowed to do research, we become amalgamated with (another university) etc. These are significant changes which can have a political dimension and therefore that will then be argued in Parliament and a whole bunch of things and that will either slow it up, kill it or maybe [inaudible]

Does any third party sort of influence your reaction to change in the university, your wife, your colleagues, the union position?

Well I'm single. I don't really, no, I don't think so.

Do you know what the union position is on these matters ?

Well people know you won't change I think. Yeah they head up and say 'Oh it's going to put us into such and such style.' They don't seem to be ... they're haven't got it across to me that they're particularly positive about change, no.

We've discussed how you feel about change. How do you feel your colleagues feel about working in a changing environment?

Well I hope ... they have very much the same sort of reaction so that they like think to moving on and changing.

Happy?

They're not happy but I mean it's a question of saying that ...

Practical?

Practical. I think a lot of the ... I mean everybody wants a certain amount of change in their life, not the rotten stuff, I mean the sort of person who's an academic likes change and therefore feels fairly .. I think they would like to think, to be able dictate the changes, but I think largely there's still a lot of freedoms to manipulate or interpret change which I still think is still there at the moment.

Should it be there?

I think that the most beneficial organisations are the ones that have the largest number of people actively working, actually involving themselves in the organisation at every level and more therefore the more freedom to allow, you know, within ... that you give people, especially intelligent more motivated people like you have in academia, the more healthy the overall organisation is. It's when you start trying to stop people from doing that especially when you've got teachers and academics, that's when you run into huge numbers of problems and ...

Do you think the university would like to encourage the flexible interpretation approach or would like to stop people?

I think that it's frightened of ... I think that the type of mentality that I've seen demonstrated from my limited view of the Senior Management is that they don't, they don't trust the staff to, you know, to maybe like management.

Right now the push for strategic change at SU, do you perceive it to be coming down from management or up from academics or somewhere in between?

I don't think the changes are being developed from the academic community, no. I think that there's not the participation and encouragement for participation. It's too much like it's all about money and therefore if it's all about money it has to be driven by people who control the money, that's top down. There are a lot of enterprising activities at teaching and various other things within the university though the scope for them is relatively limited. So it's very centrally controlled, top-down control compared with many other organisations.

Should it be that way? Is there a place for academic contribution?

I think that this is where you have to look at the knowledge base in an organisation and most companies would look at the knowledge base of the organisation that we have and would say that the way to be successful is to encourage that at every level because the average capability of the staff here exceeds the vast majority of organisations in the UK. And not to listen to the staff and give them freedoms it's going to be wasting a valuable resource.

Do you see any positive attributes to top-down decision making?

Well obviously if you've got the final figures that you can work with, then they then know where it is that they can go and therefore they can provide a vision. When I first came here the guy who was there was a very strong person and he led from the top in a very visionary way, had a real idea of where he was trying to get to, he listened to people's input but at the end of the day where he wanted to get to and that was very obvious and that was permeated throughout the staff.

So you have an idea that academics could actually contribute to form a change process. Any negatives to getting academics involved?

Oh I think that, yes, most of the academics do not accept the basic constraints of time and money, then obviously their contribution would be valueless and I have to sort of say we only have a fixed pot and it's no use saying that the government will double income to expenditure, it isn't going to happen. Therefore, as long as you've got realistic academics then that solves the problem.

Why do you think change in SU right now is happening in this top-down way?

Well I think that there are large numbers of changes being suggested at the government level and therefore initiatives are coming out so rapidly from central government that it does make most organisations reaction rather than active and that then permeates down through the organisation as a whole. The number of initiatives from central government is so rapid it adds a sort of scope to how independent development in an organization can be, so I think is very, very limited. I don't think you can stop that from inside the organisation.

OK and it sort of trickles down?

Oh yes that's right. I mean if you're issuing a change every three or four months then rapidly, at lower levels, people have doubts in the situation 'Well there's not a lot of point in me changing something because there will be another edict along shortly, in which case that might compromise what I'm trying to do.' So you tend to be reactionary.

So in that scenario then, where the government is bringing out different edicts all the time, would it make any sense at all for academics to get involved in the change process?

If there was a pattern to this yes, so that one knows where things are aiming to get to, then I think the academics could have a big effect, to smooth out the changes and to make things more, yes, to give a more effective progression, if we had a longer term vision of where we're trying to get to in terms of Higher Education costs and stuff like that, then I think that would be effective.

So do you feel part of the change process that's going on or do you perceive change as just something that gets done to you?

Well, no, no I don't feel part of it but I don't think that change gets done to me. What happens is that I must confess I did believe in the ultimate stupidity that people higher up and the way they all fight against each other means that just about any change that's brought about that I can actually interpret it in my own particular way. So I feel I've got a lot of autonomy and therefore can actively negotiate change at my level and allow the people higher up just to fight amongst themselves.

Have you ever been part of the planning process for a big change at SU?

I was initially when we were the (previous name of university) we were normal people, everybody was involved in the process of change.

Any particular reason why you haven't been involved recently?

Well it's personal choice. Last year I had a run in with a Head of Department. I thought he was going in entirely the wrong direction. It got very, very difficult and really very nasty and as I say I got very disenchanted, I had problems with my boss and I must say I've not involved myself too much. The amount of effort you need to put in for the return is ... especially in the environment of huge numbers of changes from central government, you end up with everybody saying 'oh we can't do that just now, we can't do that just now' and the effort is much greater than the reward.

Do you think you know enough about the issues or the big picture to get involved?

Well I may think so but other people, with whom I interact, may not and then come round and say 'There are things you don't know' and therefore you don't.

So if you don't get involved in change (A6), who do you feel speaks for you on these issues? Do you have a voice?

I think that overall the system speaks for me. In other words ... I know that sounds rather sort of grandiose, what I mean is that at the end of the day you still have a bunch of students who want to acquire an education and a bunch of employers, or the selectors, I don't mind, wishing to employ me. They then hold the whole system to account which means that if you put a ... if anybody was to suggest a relevant change as two new degrees were suggested or accelerated in this particular climate, then the whole system fails because you can't force me or things to run at twice the rate they're currently are and so therefore it can affect us all. The whole system is actually ...

Self correcting?

It might have much more inertia than any individual has and therefore anybody trying to move is going to find themselves in a really difficult situation. And so I let them try and then we'll see.

Do you know what a change agent is?

Well ...

Have you ever acted as a change agent among fellow academics?

In what sense?

Well in terms of there's a change coming down the pipeline and you're going to spread the word and get the academics on side.

Well I mean basically ... I used to have a role where I was Head of something in which case I was then involved in a few changes over the last move, so I was involved with doing that up.

So does that concept, you think, work in Higher Education?

I think if you've got a clear vision of where people are trying to get to and you can show the benefits to all people of that, then you're dealing with extremely intelligent, well motivated people, and so I think that yeah, that could work very well, as long as it's a longer term view. Because time frames are much greater than people imagine, three or four years for a degree. I mean it's a long time frame.

So, if you owned SU, if you've got a Vice Chancellor etc. Do you have any ideas as how you would change the change process, the way things happen around here?

Well I think we'd have to … the problem is I wouldn't have to own SU, I'd have to own the UK government because it's really looking at a five and ten or fifteen year plan of where we need to be in terms of cost and where you need to be in terms of knowledge base and so on and then, having that, you'd want to get people involved and basically how you would want to do that. The succeeding person is unfortunately going to be good enough even if applied by a number of people who have the vision.

You were saying you could see a place for academics to get more involved in the change process. Can you expand on that? How could you see that working?

Well as I say I think the key thing is if it was laid out that someone said 'This is where we need to get to in ten years' which is what happened when we converted (from the old institute to the new) then the academics were very keen to say 'Oh well we need to put this in place, we need to put that in place, we can do this.' And because they're intelligent people they came up with the ideas. And so have more people working on the ideas. But you need to have the vision. You need to know where you want to get to. And it's no use saying 'Somehow we have to save money.' That's no good. We're going to have to say how much money, over what period of time, over what sort of area, what you're going to relax the quality constraints if necessary. All these things need to be defined before you say to the academics … because I think if you say 'Costs need to be reduced but we still need to have high quality, we still need to have research, you know, every single thing needs to be done better, but we still have less costs.' Then people say that it can't be done. Because if it could have been done we'd have done it already, you know. You've got to relax one of the constraints and if managers won't relax on the constraints then Einstein himself wouldn't have been able to come up with a plan.

Do academics need anything to help them to adapt to change or to embed change better? What could university Senior Management do to make change easier or more acceptable for academics?

Well first of all I think that it's reasonable to suppose that from a management perspective that if there's anybody who thinks that change is not going to happen is foolhardy and therefore it's a fact of the job, it's a fact of life. And therefore if people don't have that perspective then they're going to have a hard time. But the other way is to empower the staff as much as possible and therefore to enable them to be able to actively participate in the change process.

In your opinion, are there any communication or staff development issues in this?

It might be that ... I think that you need to ... I think you're dealing with intelligent people, so what you need to do is to set them behind the matter. So you can ... in every situation where I've found you've put academics and professionals to resolve something, they've always tended to really like this and therefore consequently I just think you need to set things up properly and trust people better and therefore say 'Right, this is where we need to get to. How can we help to get to that stage?' And I think most people will ... my experience is most people come up with very good ideas.

That's interesting that you see some trust issues here.

I think that's right. I think that one of the issues is that we don't have a long stem as a university and we haven't got out of many jams in the past, as in fact most other universities who have seen government initiatives come and go and we tend to still believe that they can have a seismic effect. Of course they're going to have change but they're not going to have seismic effect and we still have a lot of capability if we need it to control or at least do a lot more actively than sometimes the management here communicate we can. It seems to be not exactly headless chickens running around; the end of the world is nigh, the government's going to change this, that and the other, a loss making Minister. But there's a lot more that we can do and it doesn't need to be quite ...

I think there's a lack of trust issue anyway in that. Not a huge amount of trust but it's just a question, not that people think that they're lazy or whatever, but I don't think they've made the inventiveness of the staff really.

Do you think the reward process at SU right now for academics has any impact on the success or lack of success of change implementation?

Absolutely! There's no two ways about it. If you want to have a highly changing situation then you have to accept that you need to reward people in different ways and more imaginative ways, otherwise you get continual abuse and threat as a change mechanism which is over 50% of the ... well it's a third of the change. There's the innate need for change, there's the threat and then there's the opportunity. And so if you don't ... if you say 'Right, we have to change but there's no opportunity.' Then it has to be either people's intrinsic wish to change just exactly in any direction. So the only thing you've got there and that's where you have a one dimensional management effectively.

So how could the carrots be reallocated to encourage change?

Well many universities have a much more effective model, a much more relaxed model about income generation, the management of the research monies. At many of the universities the research money is managed by the academic who was the recipient of the award and not simply controlled by the School or the university. That would give people a lot more authority to be able to ... they'd still be accountable, but they'd have a lot more authority to implement change within their own area within the budget. The same goes on income generation activities as well.

(A6) do you have any further comments in this area of change process and change implementation at SU? Anything I haven't touched on that's important to you?

Well I think the big ... the one other area which is the biggest change potentially is the one in which the students perceive the whole education experience and many of them come here almost as a threat, if you don't have a degree then financially it's going to be a long term thing. At the moment we have that as a sort of a mantra, you know, in the economic environment. If that were to change, in other words if people were to see significant opportunities for either part-time study whilst working or even significant opportunities to get a decent standard of living without a degree, you know, if you break that perception, then obviously that would have a radical effect throughout the whole of Higher Education. It wouldn't take an awful lot to do that. So at the moment that seems fairly embedded but if that were to happen that's the biggest single threat actually.

Any final comments?

Not really no.

Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Seven

So (A7) what I'm looking at for my Doctorate in Education is us, academics, our reaction to sorts of change, and all the changes that are coming through our working environment. So if I can look first of all at Higher Education as a whole, from your perspective do you see the market place, Higher Education as a whole, changing at this particular point?

Absolutely, yes!

Can you tell me about some of the changes that you've perceived happening? What have you noticed?

Changes in education then. Certainly there's a lot more pressures in terms of external bodies requiring additional work from teachers, academics. There are pressures certainly from students in terms of their recognition of getting value for money. I don't think there's any major change in terms of industry involvement, of significance since I've been here. This last couple of years then I would say that probably the amount of change that's been expected in terms of the processes, the bureaucracy has increased considerably.

What do you think's causing these changes? So are the pressures for these changes within the UK or do you see any sort of global pressure?

Personally I would see them largely to do with the UK and I'd see them along the lines of the government trying to break down bureaucracy, the bureaucracy of education. They're not being terribly successful at it. I mean clearly a lot of it's to do with funding and they appear to appear to be extremely complex businesses to manage. But it's the external influence through government through academics using what academia should be achieving that probably is the major cause.

OK. So again staying with the market as a whole, do you find these changes for you are mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

In terms of the pressures they apply and the time to get to grips with new terminology, new jargon I find it bad, personally. It's put you under increased pressure. I mean I've not recognised any significant positive change since I've worked in academia unless you're looking at something like the growth of this institution as a generalisation from institute polytechnic to university in a relevantly short period of time. That was good for one's personal ego in a sense.

Can we chat a little more then about your own working environment here SU. Has this changed over the last twelve years?

The pressure is certainly on. When I first came, I came from industry; the noticeable differences were the ways pressures were applied. In industry you have a fairly constant stream of pressure coming at it you. Here it tends to be far more volatile, go through peaks and troughs which took some adjusting to. But the job wasn't difficult. I mean you have, I don't know when I started, eleven hours class contact time. I can remember saying to a few colleagues, you know, a few people I'd get to know 'You people, you don't know what it's like in the real world. This is a 'doddle' One did warn me that come March the brain would feel a bit sort of dead, and it certainly is around that time March/April one feels totally, mentally drained, not physically. But since that period of time as the work rate's gone up threefold, the salaries haven't.

So keeping workload to the side, any other changes you've noticed in your environment, changes happening to you?

In a personal situation do you mean?

Well some people comment on the fact that there's such a push now on quality and assessment, the paperwork's increasing.

Oh it is. Yes, I mean there are those changes. I tend to sort of ignore them until they jump up and bite me generally speaking. We've had some classic examples of recent additions, qualitative aspects where I think on one occasion I counted eleven different emails from different people all saying basically the same sort of thing but nobody actually taking responsibility for ensuring that it happened. Academics, I've discovered, are very good at avoiding them.

Would you say then that these changes that you've noticed are coming from within you or are the changes happening to you? Any of them self directed?

To me it's almost like watching a ball roll down a hill, that these things have got it's momentum, nobody's absolutely 100% sure where it's going to end up but they need to try and sort of keep on top of it.

So definitely you see the pressure for change is outside you?

Externally?

External to you.

Where it's actually coming from is never easy to identify. I think if ... managerially if you wanted to look at what's been happening over the last few years you've only got to look in something like the internal telephone directories at the number of teaching staff there were ten years ago as opposed to administrative functions and compare what you've got with them today. You can see that there are a lot of people out there trying to justify their existence.

So if we look at the changes that are happening now to you and to me, OK, in our business here at the university. Would you characterise them as mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

I think you need to split the teaching element from that of the administrative/ other aspects of the job. As far as I'm personally concerned I still like to get in the classroom. I do enjoy being in there with the students, which I consider essentially is I'm paid to do. They are trying to change that now. This year especially, they're bringing in this return and read approach, so are student directed learning, which I must admit I do have trouble with. I can't sort of picture myself in the second term delivering alternate week teaching. I mean I guess I like the routine that I've got and I know that it works and I'm comfortable with it. So we're looking at change here effectively. As far as the external elements go then … they get done but they're not, as I see it, priorities. I've got three boxes behind me, yellow, quality assurance control boxes which were supposed to have been completed by what, September. They're still empty. I'm not proud of it. They'll get done as and when the pressures on to do it. It's the difference again between what's important and what becomes urgent.

So you see yourself as changing. Are your colleagues' work changing as well? Are their roles changing?

Not necessarily … well I'm sure their roles are they are being influenced the same way I am. There is a high level of anxiety and stress within the department which I'm sure somebody somewhere is aware of given the sort of questionnaires we're getting out about stress levels, pressure levels. And that has an overall effect on the atmosphere. If people are feeling a bit down and dejected then it's not the happy bunny place that, you know, it ought to be.

So does change impact on your relationship with your colleagues?

Yes it does in the sense that not everybody agrees to what's being imposed. The contributions to bring about the change, the input elements, are very weak.

Some of the academics say there's a burden to change. Do you think change is a burden in any way?

It's a burden if it's not perceived as being necessary and it impacts on the way people feel comfortable about doing things, yes. I mean change for change sake is not necessarily good new and there does seem to be a lot of it in Higher Education.

So if change is a burden, who picks up the pieces?

Rephrase that.

If it is a burden on people who then is sort of carrying this burden? Is it us, the academics?

It is to the point that as and when somebody goes down because they're unable to cope, that workload is then pressured out or spread out across others. Again, I mean it's the mystery of how things get done around here.

How do you feel about your relationship with Senior Management? Do you feel you have a relationship with them?

I don't have a problem as far as I'm aware. I mean the Senior Managers that I'm involved with relatively understand and generally speaking allow me to get on with my job. They're not the problem, the immediate chain of command. The problem areas are those other Senior Managers, Senior Academics, who want obviously to do their jobs that

influence you in what you do. My relationship with them varies as they would in any business.

If you think about your life as a whole, especially outside of the university. How do you personally feel about change in general?

Maybe this is an age thing. I mean I've always prided myself on ... I've been an innovator of change. I mean in industry that was really what my job was, was to bring about change. I've taken businesses through, large businesses through from being bureaucracies to modern day's markets to organisations. So I'm quite familiar with the sort of impact that change has.

Do you like change then? I mean some people change excites them, some people change worries them.

I like it if I understand the rationale and the reasoning behind it and I see, I think like most people, how it is going to benefit. I don't like it if it is perceived as just being a change for change sake.

When you have change in your life, any sort of coping mechanism you use?

Yeah, I haven't had a break yet.

Fair enough. Talking about big strategic change ...

No, let me rephrase that. Let's just go back on this one. The job, the work you do doesn't leave you much else in terms of how you deal with life in general. I'm not suggesting that, you know, you work long hours every week of the year. That doesn't happen. But you do work to pressures. As I've said after six months of teaching the

brain used to feel like a bag of cement and not a living organism But you only need
something external to come along, like a bereavement, whatever's going to push up your
sort of daily stress level points, for a period of time, and then ... now I find I'm ... I
buckle. I can cope with a certain amount but then I tend now to switch off. And because
I know a little bit about stress and what's happening I respond fairly early to, you know,
getting down the doctors and getting whatever it is that they're on this week, you know.

So looking at big strategic change at the university have you noticed any big sort of
strategic change to policy or process lately, in the last couple of years? Some of the
lecturers have maybe sort of tended to think of widening participation, or quality
assessment issues.

Quality assessment has got to be one of them. I mean there are other sorts of niggling
things, you know, that come along like parking, issues that you could do without frankly,
the things that sort of people would pick up on and be relatively small in the wider sense.
No I think the major change is to do with standardisation of procedures. My
understanding of academics as professionals were that they're the people that ought to be
responsible for acquiring a level of qualitative service themselves. But now there's that
standardising issue as well and not everybody agrees with it. Everyone you met had a
view about that issue. And the other is in terms of the attitude of the customer, if you can
call it that. There is this drive from customers saying well how they want these things.
It's like the recent ... the most recent example is I've never prepared lecture notes, my
belief is that the student turns up at the lecture and they need to take down the notes. They
know other colleagues do regular, copious lecture notes. But now we've moved into this
thing called Doubles which is a facility for students where we are being asked to put our
lecture notes on. They're very terse; this lecture focuses on bom, bom, bom. But it's
something we didn't have to do before and something that I don't think is absolutely
necessary. I would rather the student paid and did what they were supposed to do at a
lesson.

Now, chatting with some other academics, some people think that the strategic changes going through now are very profound and embedded and some people say 'No, it's just window dressing.' What do you think?

Well I think academia is no different to any other sort of business. There's a pendulum that goes backwards and forwards.

The changes that we have here at SU, would you say they were window dressing or profound change? Is it a lasting change?

Oh I think in terms of me personally and the influence it's had on me they've got to be profound in that the market is being looked on in a very different way, students being the market I suppose.

When these changes come down, when you get these emails saying 'Do this, do that,' what's your usual reaction to this?

Delete.

What if it comes back?

Delete.

So would you say that you feel you're ignoring it or feel that you're consciously fighting it?

Email is probably the worst communication invention so far developed by man. Look at the way it's being used. You come in every morning and you switch on your machine. There are, on average, 96-100 emails coming through a week of which maybe three or

four are relevant to you demanding attention. And you know darn well that if you delete the rest of them nothing's going to happen until something starts to get critical and it's urgent. Then you do it. I'm not going to read eleven emails with attachments on the same subject by different people saying the same thing all with a petty interest in it. Now you are getting me going.

Do you think that accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

Of course is it.

Do you think the change at the university here, do you thing that we're at the beginning of a process, middle of a process, end of a process, or that change will just continue to going?

I would say actually we're probably in the beginning of some sort of major process. It's early stages anyway, not necessarily in the beginning in terms of how students are taught in this country.

Do you have any expectations of what the next big change will be?

I retire I would think.

Does any third party influence your reaction to change?

No.

How about the union? Do you ever read the union position or colleagues?

Colleagues, I mean obviously have views on it and it is interesting hearing what they have to say. But there's not really a forum which is a comfortable medium for sitting down and discussing issues like that. The whole culture of university life lends itself to the individualist doing their own things. The procedures that we go through in terms of the communication, one feels you feel lip service to it but don't actually mean very much. It's called invisible management if you want to define it as a mechanism.

We've discussed how you react to change. Do you have any perceptions about your colleagues react to change? Are they doing the same thing?

Yeah, they all tend to keep their head below the parapet, only put it up when it's necessary, in the main. No, that's wrong. I mean I suppose if I was analysing this and you may well say if you look at industry practitioners then their response is similar. We think of people that have come from industry working here that tend to view in the same way that I do. Whereas academics that have made academia their career, have gone through the mill, have seen it all before, have been here a long time, don't seem to react the same way.

That's interesting.

I mean I sort of ... I suppose I've come from a business environment where you have a conscience in terms of getting things done right. And one of the big adjustments was coming into this sort of environment where nobody seemed to laugh.

So how do career academics react that you have noted?

Far more consistent in their approach, they tend not to be quite so stressed in my view.

That is interesting. How do you think the university wants you to react to changes?

With open arms!

Any particular reason that you feel that way?

I was running a business, trying to bring about change then that's what I would like to think would be happening with my employees.

Where do you feel the push for strategic change comes from at SU? Is it coming down top-down? Are the academics getting involved so bottom-up or some other place?

I suppose in answer to the question, if I had to give an answer, it would probably be from top-down.

Why do you think?

Because I don't get the feeling that in terms of departmental heads they're great innovators of change.

So where's the driver coming from upon them?

Academic standards probably.

Yeah. Do you think the academics contribute to big strategic change?

In their thought processes, yes; in their ability to bring it about, probably no. Academics are good at being academics that doesn't make them managers.

Do you think academics want to get involved in big change decisions?

I think there's probably a wide gap between what the senior levels of management in academia want and understanding the government's needs and wants, the people undertaking practices at the sharp end.

So do you think maybe academics don't know enough about the issues, or the big picture?

Absolutely!

If they did know enough about the issues and the big picture, do you think they'd be interested in getting involved?

They may be more responsive. I'm choosing words carefully here. But my experience of academics in the purist sense is that they like the debate, they don't find it very easy to arrive at conclusions.

So is there a positive aspect to top-down change?

No. I think there needs to be more of an input through from grass roots level. But it is a complex business I don't deny that. I mean running a business like this where you've got a lot of intelligent people, all with a view on how the world should be operated. You know, they can sit and talk about that.

A lot of the people I've interviewed say yes that there should be a push, bottom-up. But they question whether enough academics would do it.

I can't think, in the X years I've been here, that even somebody with good academic qualifications, coming in from industry, has moved through into the higher echelons of managing this business. You've got people on the Board of Governors that may well be competent, commercial managers, but I can't think of any Senior Academic responsible

for a department who has a real commercial understanding. I'm sure they have something. It's like I say academics are good at being academics and not necessarily good at being managers. You've got classic examples; I mean who's our Vice Chancellor? (X), no?

(X).

(X X). I'm sure she's a very pleasant lady. I've only ever seen her at Graduation Day and I think in the six or seven years she's been here I've seen her out and about three times. Now I don't call that visible management. You can go along once or twice a year and listen to her 'This is what we're going to do this year' speech, and even that hasn't changed that much over the last few years. I think if you want change to happen then you've got to drum people down from that level to the real world and just get them talking, just be visible.

So do you see some communication issues here?

Major communication issues. It's very nice to write a little email to somebody who's passive, I've done my job. Get out and talk to people. Oh no, you can't do that.

So, if you see the change as top-down, and you don't, right now, perceive the academics as really getting involved though maybe they should. Who do you think speaks for you?

I mean some academics are instigators of change. I mean if I was a career academic, somebody who in my youth, then I would want to be maybe pushing for deliverance from that change. You've got one of the older hands as you well know sitting in front of you that's been there and got the T-shirt and probably wants now just a relatively quiet existence before retirement, not fighting change, but then not taking it on board as willingly as he might have done twelve, fifteen years ago.

So who speaks for you? If there's a big strategic change coming through, do you think you have a voice?

Nobody!

Nobody! You don't feel you have a voice? You just feel the change comes down and you do it.

It's imposed.

Within SU have you ever acted as a change agent and instigated change?

Yes I suppose, again in my early days, and then I saw my role as … I've always used my role as being a trainer more than an academic. One of the things that I sort of instigated was the entrepreneurial side of teaching. I started sort of involving courses doing activity events. These are relatively small things like in the terms of the way a part of the university operates.

So if you were God, how would you change the change process at SU?

If this were my business, my money and my investment, I would want to see a much more pro-active effort at the top end doing two things. No. 1, trying to explain what the external pressures on them are in terms of the change agents, where they're coming from. Is it the government? Is it combos? Is it individuals in Higher Education and I would want them to be more visible at this level, and gauging the response to that.

Do academics need anything to help them adapt to change? Is there anything the management could be doing to make the change process easier for us?

Yeah I think if you're looking at the quality of work life in general terms the whole cultural environment which you're working in needs to change to become more positive, more flexible. At the moment if you were to ask me the question 'Can you describe the cultural values of this department of SU education?' I'd say there was a group of people that had good intentions, knowledgeable in their fields, wanting to do the right things for students, trying to keep on top of their job, not understanding why all these things are coming along that's interfering with those ... that focus that they have. It's not that they're negative in that they don't want to know, it's the way that they manage is the problem.

Do you think the reward and recognition at SU impacts at all on change implementation?

Well again you've got a management here that's trying to apply itself to bringing about a performance management system but without applying the right component parts to it. We've had something like appraisal being introduced which has failed utterly as a process because it's only part of the system. Other elements of that system are job descriptions, specifications, performance related pay processes. And like any system it needs certain things in place for the whole thing to work properly. What we're getting is a mix-match, a jumble, according to the subject I'm talking with the students. I mean for an organisation this size not to have something that specifies what the role of a Course Manager is, what the role of a Year Tutor is, what the role of the Senior Administrative is, how a course should operate organisationally, I can't believe academia's not done that, you know, basic management things.

So do you think rewards, and when I say rewards I mean pay and time remission, is it used in any way to reward change?

No it's not and when it is it's done badly.

Should it be used to reward change?

It can be. It can be.

Do you have any other points you'd like to make that I haven't covered about your changing environment here at the university?

At the end of the day, like any other job, if your pay level is acceptable, you do it. And there are good things about it, you know. Sitting here talking to people like you for example. But mainly it's to do with the response you get I suppose from the students. It's very nice at Graduation to have just that one little person come up to you and say 'Hey, you know what you talked about in such and such lesson, I saw that advertisement and it really was helpful that I knew what was going on.' You think 'Oh well, it's been worthwhile.' It doesn't take much. If they're not the validatory rewards that you get say in big business where you can see your efforts materialised in budget achievement or, you know, sales. The mere fact that they get through the course, you know, I suppose in some sense an achievement. But the genuine thing is when that little person comes up and say 'That was useful.'

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Eight

OK. The first thing I want to talk about is Higher Education as a whole. When you look at Higher Education in Britain today do you perceive it to be changing, to be static? What's your call on it?

I see it to be changing. In the last few years I've found that the students are not coming in as prepared as maybe they used to be from an academic point of view. So, we have to teach them the basic skills more than we used to have to and, although the government say it's going to change, I think it's going to take a while for that to happen.

OK other than sort of the quality of the students, any other changes you're aware of?

Not as much. Staffing seems to be quite an issue. A lot of people have left and I don't honestly see replacement, they don't seem to re-employ as much. It seems as though it's getting tougher to get staff.

OK. Anything else, Higher Education as a whole?

As a whole? Not really. I mean I tend to be very sort of insular in my views that I treat it as a job and I just come in and out and I don't want to get involved in any of the politics. So I tend to bury my head in the sand and not worry overly about all of that side. Maybe I shouldn't. So those are the main things that I've noticed.

If we look at these changes then, do you perceive them as being UK oriented or do you think there's some sort of globalisation issues?

Again, at the moment I have no experience of the sort of universities in other countries, so I couldn't comment too much on that but we do seem to be encouraged to get a lot of

overseas students in here as well because they bring new money. And again that's ... a lot of people have had a lot of problems in our School in the fact that their English, written and spoken, is not particularly good. Yet we're encouraged to take these students. So that has been quite an issue I think. Not on my course but on other courses, these students really do not understand, and they have some cultural differences as well which they find difficult.

So these changes that are happening in Higher Education, do you feel, in your opinion, they're mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

Mostly good. I mean the ... I don't think there's been any of the sort of major overhauls in Higher Education since all the new universities were created and that was before I was really in education and so I don't think there's been as many overhauls. I think all this sort of emphasis on either teaching, research and the way that some of the funding councils are directing their money. It sort of seems to go to the elite and the smaller universities don't get as much.

So how do you feel about that?

I think that's annoying, the fact that they see some of us like teaching factories, I don't know, just teaching and then all the sort of Redbrick Oxbridge type places are getting all the research money; from the point of view that we've got some good research in this university yet we don't get any where near as much funding as some of the other ones because we haven't got the sort of reputation. Which I think is annoying. I think it should be a lot more even handed.

So if we were sort of thinking along a Likert scale then between what's happening now is really good and what's happening now is really poor. Where would you feel the perception of the Higher Education is right now?

Sort of middle ground, I don't think it is as good as it used to be. I mean it's ... I remember when I was at university and there were very few computers, we didn't have the internet. We only had sort of clunky old Unet machines. And now we've got wonderful facilities for the students, it's all very computerised. So I think from that point of view, yes, it's a lot more equipment based, there's a lot more actual sort of hands on stuff going on which is good. Whether that's to the detriment of some of the sort of sound theoretical advice that we're giving, used to give the students, I don't know. So I think, on the whole, it's most probably sort of similar area.

If you think of SU, right, and yourself as a senior lecturer and course leader, is your working environment changing over the six years you've been here?

Yes. I mean I started as a demonstrator so I didn't have to do as much admin work; I didn't have to get involved with the meetings as much. Now I've got all the managerial stuff to do and just went through validation which was horrendous. I have to go to a lot of pointless meetings, I feel anyway. I really feel that meetings are managed badly, not chaired very well, normally they have quite a weak chair so they just drag on. Anything that goes on over an hour is basically a waste of time and we've had some three or four hour meetings before. So, you know, I mean that's just in our School I think. I think it's getting better now. A lot of people have stopped going so they can realise that they have a sharper management meeting. So we stopped doing as many.

So if you feel there's more admin and more meetings what's causing this do you think?

I'm not sure to be honest. I mean a lot of it is to do with the process, sort of ADQ and things like that and there's all the teaching and learning elements. So it seems like a new initiative is put in place so we have to have loads of meetings about it which we don't necessarily need and we get a lot of junk email every day and when you've finished there's always more than ever. However the structure in our School changed with the

Programmes Administrators are now doing a lot more of our admin work. So that has actually taken a lot of the load off me being a Course Tutor now. They will prepare a lot of the reports. We've got a lot more sort of assistance now. So, from my point of view, that has made it a bit easier because I know my PA will do the things and she will tell me what needs to be done. So that's actually quite nice. I like that.

OK. So you were talking about the fact that there are a lot more initiatives coming in. So these initiatives that you're reacting to are ... are they coming from inside you or outside of you? Who ... where's the driver coming from for these changes?

Well a lot of the things are coming from ADQ, all the new guidelines coming in, what we're going to ... what standard student handbooks will they have. That seems to change year on year on year and different things. There's a lot more emphasis on students call services now than there used to be. So you've got your accounting services and this, that and the other and the workshops and things. So there seems to be a lot more emphasis on that than there certainly was five years ago.

So is the demand coming in from the quality or from the students? Where's the push?

I don't know really. I presume that some of it comes as feedback from the students and a lot of comes ... seems to come through ADQ and we seem to get a new quality thing from them nearly every other week at the moment. So there are a lot of these new regulations like Effective Handbook and everything else. I think everything personally is quality driven. So I don't know, again, whether that's really necessary. It like it just filters down. But they never ... the annoying thing is that we never seem to get any justification as to why these things are coming through. It's just 'Here's another edict.' When you have to revalidate a course we have to produce briefing documents explaining exactly why we're doing it and what has changed. Yet this ... they actually suggested that it would be a while and we would laugh about it. We had to brief you, why don't you

brief us on your changes rather than just saying 'Right here's the changes.' Because we never know, you know, there's no real feedback from it. It just 'Well it's an edict, there you go.'

So these changes here that we're discussing, if they were on a Likert scale between how you feel about them, between feeling very positive, feeling very negative, where would you be?

On the negative side I should think because it always means extra work and, you know, we have a system in place, it seems to work and then it gets changed and again during the revalidation the documentation and what we had to do changed two or three times, which is very annoying. It would be nice if it was set out at the beginning of the year and this is going to run for a year. Then in the down time we can then 'Right, now everything needs to be updated.' But it seems to happen all the time all the way through the year.

Are these changes just happening to you (A8) or to your colleagues as well?

No to everyone, I think you see it more being a Course Tutor because you're more aware of the fact that because you get emails saying you have to do this and then you have to filter it down to everyone else.

Some people say there's a pressure to change. Does change impact in any way on your relationship with your colleagues?

Not particularly.

Do you ever discuss change or what's happening with your colleagues?

Yeah, but it's, you know, we just see it as an edict from on high and right we've got to do that. We have no real control over, you know, any of that. It's just part of your job you're low on the food chain and you just do things.

Is there a burden to change? Who carries the burden?

Sometimes it is a very small element of what you do. So it works quite well, for instance the Unit Monitoring Reports we do now for the programme monitoring. It used to be that we just had, as Course Tutor, had to write narrative, the local staff who's in charge in union advice saw the Board, so that might not be as easy because they sort of reflect on what they are doing. So things like that are positive I suppose but it is hard getting your hand bitten some times. So there's that side that a lot of people just don't want to do that sort of thing. So, it's swings and roundabouts.

Tell me about your relationship with the senior management here? Do you know the senior management?

Yeah, one of their ... our Head of Department, Head of School. So that's the sort of level that I go up to and it's good we can go in their office and discuss things and [inaudible] that's OK. It's still very closed ... again I don't really want to get involved in the politics [inaudible]

If we come out of SU and we look at your life as a whole.

Yeah.

How do you feel about change in your life in general? Does change excite you? Does it worry you?

No it doesn't worry me, I quite enjoy it.

Would you say you've got quite a high tolerance of change?

Yeah. I mean I just take things as they come that's why I quite enjoy it all, having different things going on. So, partially it's why I like the job because you're challenged every year, there's new elements you teach. The fact that you've got different students every year, one year you can teach something, you can teach exactly the same thing the next year and the students won't get it at all. So you have to think of different ways of teaching the same subject. So that's actually enjoyable. I really like that.

Thinking of yourself in your role here as a Course Leader, tell me about any recent strategic changes to policy or process that you've experienced or noticed, things happening?

Well new document preparatory standards, what else is happening? The sort of ... there's quite a few teaching and learning initiatives going on. Probably on my course they don't affect me as much because it's a part-time course. So full-time courses there's a lot of policies that have been set in place now. Fortunately a lot of this isn't applicable to my course. So that does actually make it difficult sometimes, but there's one set of documentation and you've got to fit into the model and we did have an argument when revalidating the course that you couldn't have Level C and Level I units in the same year because that goes against the rules, like if they choose C and do 120 credits in one level and then 40 credits at another level. Now you can't do 120 credits in a year part time so that's split across between years with the actual top up grades. And that's been running for the last 15 years and all of a sudden ADQ said 'You can't do that' so we really had to fight to get that through and the externals and the industrial people that were in there didn't see a problem in it at all. But it went against the rules and we really had to fight to get that approved.

So you've mentioned quality issues. Any other strategic changes that are happening right now that you've noticed.

Not really. There's been problems with real estate as it were, having to put lectures later at night, sort of six or seven o'clock lectures and I know, again not particularly on my course but on other courses it's impacting, car parking attendants and things like that.

Widening Participation does this impact at all

Sorry?

Widening Participation, at (name of School)?

Again on my course we get quite a Widening Participation. We get a lot of mature students. We get a lot of people that are sort of working and want to change their career and they can do it a day a week. So I've been seeing that ever since I've been teaching the HNC/HND because we do get that sort of wide range. I haven't particularly noticed it in the full time teaching; you know full time courses teaching yet because I've been teaching final years. The Widening Participation is still coming through, so I've not really noticed it.

So if we go back to the quality and learning and teaching issues you were thinking of. Do you see these changes as sort of window dressing or profound that have been embedded at university?

I think a lot of them are window dressing.

Why do you have that perception?

I find that all the learning and teaching initiatives very sort of wishy-washy. My opinion is that the students are here to learn and they ... the onus is on them in Higher Education to apply themselves to learn. We're there to guide and support them. And now a lot of the learning and teaching are trying to spin people and we're not school, school is seen ... they have this attitude that they can spin vote school in the last few years and that's not my opinion of what Higher Education is. The onus is on them to learn and understand the various elements and we're there to guide them through that process. And I personally disagree with some of the sort of wishy-washy give them more, give them more. It's like, well no, it's a lot more work for us to come up with these new things and to be honest I think you do actually learn better than they teach themselves.

So when these changes on quality, learning and teaching issues come through, how do you usually deal with these changes? How do you react to them?

It's just a case of 'oh I can't be bothered' and then implement. Again, on my course, a lot of the time they're not applicable so I don't have to have to particularly implement them. And they're not coming from other courses that they're actively on. Mainly it's more at managerial level that the effects come in rather than staff, the teaching level, so they don't affect me as much. So I think I'm lucky in a way because being part-time manager of the course it is different. As long as we keep the quality up which we do, a lot of the areas aren't applicable. Students are valuing part-time courses which are more applied because they're learning the theory behind what they're actually doing at work and we share a few units with a full-time group and last year my HND students out-performed all of the undergraduates on that.

So when applicable changes do come through, you implement them?

Implement them, yeah, sometimes grudgingly because it's just more work. I mean this is what I don't like here; they always seem to come at the wrong time of year. You've

either got assignments of you've got marking or it's exams and writing exams and all these changes seem to come in at the wrong ... I mean they never seem to come in over the summer when you've got the time to actually sit down and do it. They always just come at the beginning of term when you're at your busiest.

Do you think that accepting change is part of your job of an academic (A8)?

Yes I suppose it is. Again some would feel the computing and the graphics field is very fast changing anyway just from the point of view of teaching, you've got that as well. And I'm used to it now so now I just hope I haven't got to do this and carrying on.

So if you think of the university in the change process. If you look at it sort of as a line of development, are we at the beginning, at the middle, the end?

Well I think it's more of a continual process. It's more of a loop rather than ... it's a never ending process of change I think.

Do you have any expectations as to what the next strategic change to policy or procedure will be? Are you sort of prepping yourself for anything?

Not really no, just wait and see what comes is normally what happens. I know there's a possibility of some foundation degrees and things like that to keep them happy, again, when we validated the HNC/HND it's basically your model is there ready so that it could become a foundation degree if needed. So we were looking at that as a possibility. It does fit into the model of a foundation degree, so that's most probably one of the biggies whether we will actually create that or not.

Are there any third parties that influence your reaction to change, family, friends, the union?

Not really no.

Do you know what the union position is on what's happening in Higher Education now?

No. No I'm not a member of the union in any way. I've not particularly the sort of person on the politics side.

We've talked about how you react to the changes that are going on right now at SU. Would you perceive your colleagues to be reacting about the same? How are they reacting?

I should imagine so. I mean most of the reaction is to do with how 'Oh man there's extra work to do.' So that ... it all seems unending paperwork and everyone hates paperwork and I think that's the biggest annoyance with it all and, you know, I think that's about it.

Do you have any perceptions about how the university wants you to react to new policies and procedures?

I don't know really. I presume they just expect us to take it. You know it comes down to change and you want it to work.

Do you get any perception they're looking for feedback?

No.

So you saw it as a sort of food chain. So where do you see the push for strategic change coming from?

Well it comes from on high, generally directed by the government in their sort of education policies. I think sometimes they're a sort of knee jerk reaction to things, Widening Participation for instance. I don't fully understand Widening Participation, it seems quite bizarre. We're getting the people coming who really aren't prepared to work at a degree level. Yet the government's saying 'Yes, we want everyone in there.' So we're either going to have to lessen the quality of the degree or fail people. Again the emphasis is on not failing people and keeping attention up, so that I do find that confusing at times.

So you perceive the change implementation and development at SU to be basically top-down?

Yes.

Do you see any sort of push coming from academics, bottom-up?

There are sort of people who'll fight for things from the point of view of the likes of some of the academics climbing back up, call it Heads of Quality and things like that. So yes, but generally nobody fights. Well that's my perception.

But you don't see change initiating from the academics? You see some feedback, reaction but not so much change. Is that what you're saying?

Yeah not so much change, yeah.

Should academics be involved in the change process?

I think so, yeah, because we're effectively the ones at the coal face doing all the work and again we sort of, you know, we'll say things and ... the problem with lots of academics together in a room is that they all have their own opinions and they will defend them to the ends of the earth. So it does again, it's probably about a three hour meeting sometimes. You just get two or three people arguing a point.

So you perceive it as a top-down decision? What's the positive or negatives of top-down?

Positive is we don't have to do any extra work in the admin strategies. Again I think it's a matter of ... there's never any justification for the change. It's just 'We're doing this' or 'The government say we've got to do this.' or 'HEFCE are saying we've got to do this.', and it's never ... well there most probably is some publication of why but we never really .. I never really sort of find out why.

So if we had some change generated and directed by the academics, what would the plus or negative points of that be?

We'd know why. Negative would most probably be a lot of extra work implementing those changes and actually just coming up with the changes.

Why do you think change is happening at SU with this top-down process?

I don't know really. I presume it's just the way it's always been and I presume it's the way of promoting it.

So when this change is happening, do you feel part of the change process or do you perceive it's something that's getting done to you?

Something that's getting done.

And how do you feel about that?

I just accept it as being part of the job. My main role is as a teacher, an educator. So I ... primarily it's ... the role, my role is teaching to a set scheme. Usually the units I'm teaching are on a path, units that I've written. So I've had full control over what I'm teaching and so from that point of view, yes, I make the decisions, yes, it has to be, we know it has to be sort of get through a quality process. But at the end of the day that is under my control and that's what I like doing. So I'm quite happy to not get involved in the sort of managerial side.

Why not?

Why not get involved in the managerial, because it's a lot of extra work for very little gain. I mean primarily I became Course Tutor because I get more money for doing it and that's quite big money [inaudible mobile ringing] I mean I would do this amount of work because I'm getting paid for it. I'm not particularly doing it for any other reason.

If you were to get involved in sort of any major change process. Do you think you know enough about the issues or the big picture?

Most probably not, as I say I do keep out of the sort of politics side of things.

So when these big changes are happening (A8), who's speaking for you? Do you think you have a voice in this?

Our management tends to do it and they do canvass opinion at the time. So again I sort of it happens at school level and everything winds up in the school. So again that's not bad.

Have you ever led change, yourself, as an academic?

From the point of view of course revalidation, changing the course, yes. The scheme that we've got in place now for the HNC/HND is vastly different from the one we've been running for the last 15 years. So that was quite an interesting process and we responded to sort of all the script of what the customers wanted. But, again, with lads going in (local company) and the other companies unfortunately we haven't yet improved the share because people are just not doing part-time education as much any more.

And if we return to the big picture at SU, have you ever acted as a change agent for that, going back to quality, learning and teaching initiatives? Do you know what a change agent is?

Not particularly.

It's basically when an academic is on side with a major change and is going to lead that change, help to embed it.

No, I've not, not particularly done that.

Are you comfortable with the concept of change agency within Higher Education?

I've never really come across it before.

If you look at strategic change, you have a perception that it comes down from management and your job is to implement I, correct?

Yes.

Would you make any changes to that or do you think that works?

I think it ... well from my point of view yes it works and I don't have to sort of worry about it. I just know change is going to happen. It's just, I find it annoying that it happens at the wrong time and something so minuscule. It does become tedious. But I'm quite happy not getting involved in that process.

A lot of people say that when change happens the academics aren't prepared for it. Is there anything that you feel academics need to adapt or embed change, anything that could make it easier to make these changes?

More warning and change coming at a non-busy time of the year. And sometimes it's justification for the changes because we can be quite belligerent. It's just like 'Oh God, here we go, more things.' It would actually be nice to say 'Right we're changing this for this reason.' Rather than just say 'Right, you must do this.' So that would be nice.

So you perceive maybe some communication issues here?

Possibly, yeah. Certainly when I was revalidating the course those changes and things that we had to change, I did find annoying.

How about staff development issues in terms of embedding change?

There are workshops, you know. They did decent workshops for the new writing down year specifications and things like that which were quite useful. From the point of view of becoming the Course Tutor I was just thrown in the deep end. Luckily my colleagues, other Course Tutors, were supporting me and telling me what to do and that's been really useful because I just go and talk to them and they say 'Right, this is what you do' and things like that. And now I'm getting keener. It's my third year now, so it's actually ... I'm getting quite good at doing it now because I know how, so I did have a lot of support from that point of view. Also I had stuff about my career, I'm studying for my (Masters

degree) this year which is painful but I knew it was for a year and part of my stuff and that's really good as well.

Do you think the reward process at SU; has any impact on the success of success of change implementation?

Sorry, the reward?

Yes in terms of time remission, pay. Is there anything to reward people for changing?

I suppose I got, yeah, an incentive for being Course Tutor, which I guess is my Course Tutor increase of salary and that's quite good and I did get some remission on my timetabling as well. So yes, that was helpful. [inaudible]

Do you have any further comments in the area of how change happens at SU and how people react to it?

Not overly no. I think we do tend to accept it I think from the point of view of being just your normal academic, we're different from management. We just sort of get on with it and grumble I suppose.

OK.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Nine

OK. So I'm doing an EdD (A9) on change in Higher Education and how academics react to changes in education in their working environment. OK. If we look first of all at Higher Education as a whole, right, outside of SU, would you perceive it as changing or static? How do you see Higher Education right now in England?

I suppose it's changing but gradual rather than dramatic change.

What do you perceive is changing? How is it changing?

Well the biggest change is that students are now paying fees and are therefore, in a way, customers and that's changed the attitude a little. There's also greater numbers on courses that I teach and . . . so it's become a little less personal. And, although I don't know if this just me personally or everybody but I also find there seems to be increasingly large numbers of competing demands on my time.

So you do perceive some changes. What do you think the driver is? What's pushing these changes? Where are they coming from?

They're coming from money, the question of funding, the question of ... well as I've said before the fees and the pressure to keep and retain students. That's part of it, and the general sort of responsiveness to changes in subjects and disciplines and industries and that kind of thing which is always there.

So are these pressures for change coming from within the UK or are they global pressures?

That's an interesting point because I've been talking about what's happening in undergraduate teaching but I'm also involved with the post graduate teaching with people

from overseas, particularly from Asia and the market is becoming more competitive. We seem to have been able to attract good numbers but not like the figures we had before. So there's a global competition but I think the changes are, well short term they are changes of government policy, which is driven by issues of public funding, which in turn is driven by changing ideologies, which is probably something to do with the global market.

Sort of inter-related?

Yes, yes.

So again staying with the big picture, Higher Education, do you perceive what's happening to be most good, mostly bad, bit of both?

I think it's bad that Higher Education now results in students ending up with large amounts of debt. That's bad because it introduces all sorts of instability into the economy which hasn't really hit yet but I think over the next ten years the impact of that debt on graduates behaviour is very interesting. I think that's bad. I think it's bad if that idea of Higher Education as expensive puts people off. There isn't a lot of evidence for that but I'm not convinced it won't work that way. So in those terms it's bad. I can't immediately think of any things that are particularly changes for the better.

That's fair enough. So if we leave the big picture and sort of come down to where we're working, here in SU. Is our working environment changing, our role?

Our role isn't changing essentially, but over the last ten years I think the job has become more bureaucratic. We're driven by this idea that quality means filling out lots of forms and ticking lots of boxes and using exactly the right words in handbooks and that sort of thing. There's a lot more of that sort of work involved. As I also said the courses are recruiting larger numbers so you're not able to get to know the students as well as you used to. There's also, I think things have changed in our department, I think in others

there's a whole tier of middle managers whose role is open to speculation and debate. Which means that there's a, you know, the old sort of idea of a college of equal colleagues has gone.

So you perceive this change is happening, do you think these changes outside of you or are they being generated from within you? Are you making these changes?

None of the changes that I have mentioned are within me at all. I have made changes to what I teach and the courses that I am directly involved with and if I feel I've contributed to and made positive changes. But those are, if you like, sort of fine tuning and updating, keeping on top of the job. The things I've been talking about have sort of been brought in sort of top-down.

So you feel management's making these changes?

Management, yes.

Forces outside you?

The organisation.

The organization?

Yes, yes.

How would you like to term them, these changes in SU, that you've been talking about? How do you feel about them then, mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

I think the increases in numbers is inevitable and I haven't got any strong feelings either way about that. I think the increase of bureaucracy in terms of documentation and that sort of thing I don't ... I think it's probably more negative than positive and similarly the changes in the sort of structure of the place I don't think have been particularly positive.

So you feel there have been changes in your own working environment. Changes in your colleagues work environment as well? It's not just you, its colleagues, their environment's changing?

I think most of what I've been describing is general, yes.

Does the pressure of this change impact in any way on your relationship with colleagues?

There's two ways it could. I think day to day it doesn't. But I think some of the changes have made people less co-operative, more sort of 'Well I'm not paid to do that sort of thing' kind of attitude has crept in amongst some colleagues which hasn't impacted on me personally but it's something that I'm more aware of than when I first came here.

Some academics talk about the burden of change. How do you react to that phrase, the burden of change? Is there burden to change?

You mean do I think of change as a burden or a ... ?

Yes ... a joy?

A joy. It can be either but changes within the university and changes with any job are probably regarded more as a burden or as a sort of threat or an unsettling element than a positive element.

So if change can be described as a burden within your own working environment here, who is it that picks up the pieces and makes things right again?

In the end it's you. You have to adjust to the new demands, re-adjust priorities, develop your own system of shortcuts, priorities, to deal with it because I don't think in any of the changes I've been talking about there's been very much practical help to cope. We're just told this is what we now need to do and you have to work out a way of doing it that fits in with your modus operandi and doesn't take up too much of your time.

OK. How would you describe your relationship with the Senior Management here at the university?

Distant, if you mean the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

Yes. Do you know them personally?

No I don't and I don't think I need to. I mean I occasionally have dealings with ADQ and then find they're human and reasonably helpful but for most of my daily or even monthly work they don't impact on me directly at all.

Talking about your life in general, how do you feel about change? How do you handle change, outside of the university, looking at your whole life? Does change excite you, does it worry you?

I think it goes back to whether you're in control of change. Things like decisions to change jobs I've made some decisions to change jobs because I've wanted to and that's been exciting. I've had to change jobs because I was redundant and initially that's a bit alarming but nevertheless it's also an opportunity. So I don't think ... I think I can see a bit of both in changes.

Do you have a coping mechanism in life in general to handle change?

I am probably ... I'm trying to think of . . . there's a technical phrase but my approach is sort of get on with managing the detail rather than worrying about the long term strategic picture. If I've got to adjust to change then I adjust to change on what I need to do immediately and then I find that the big things fall into place.

OK. We're going to talk about the university here and change that's happening right now. Have you noticed any recent strategic change in the university to policy or processes, anything that's caught your attention, that's happening right now?

Well there's the ... I don't quite know what to talk about ... there's the feeling that's been there for a long time but it's accelerated about the larger groups, less frequent contact, and the fact that they're knocking down the partitions in (university building) and you'll have bigger seminar groups, that is something that seems to have accelerated recently. Strategically there's talk about trying to prioritise between research, teaching and sort of industry relations and consultancy which I can't actually say has actually done anything that I'm clear about. But that is an issue that we've all got in our own jobs and the fact that it is actually being tackled by the university and by the government as a policy thing that you can't always try and be all things at the same time, I think that's interesting but it hasn't actually impacted on me. Is that the sort of thing?

Yes, that's fine, yes. Any other changes to policy or process that you've noticed and you're dealing with right now?

Changes to policy or process?

Some other academics have commented on the Widening Participation scheme.

Again I'm aware of it and I think in principle it's a good thing but I haven't actually seen much evidence of it.

These changes that are coming through right now, would you interpret them as being profound or just window dressing or is there any other term you'd use to describe them? How deep are these changes?

At the moment I think they are purely buzz words. I can't say that they're actually impacted in any great . . .

Any particular reason that you feel that way?

Well if you go back to things like Widening Participation or strengthening links with industry ... Knowledge Transfer, that's the buzz word isn't it. I mean they're all wonderful things but I'm not actually convinced that much is happening or if it's happening it's very effective. It's sort of ... 'This is an issue, we're going to set up a committee and appoint a few people to write papers on it' rather than actually doing anything.

Would you say that accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

Accepting change is part of being alive I think so yes.

If we look at change at the university sort of as a process would you say that the change process we're going through now at SU is at the beginning, the middle, the end?

Well if you follow through some of those things we're talking about I think it's at the beginning. I don't think we've actually changed dramatically over the last ten years. We may ... if you actually take through the implications of Widening Participation and in

Knowledge Transfer Centre and that sort of thing then it could be but at the moment it's not. So we are at the beginning or sort of dipping our toe in the water I think.

Do you have any expectations for the next strategic change that you think you're going to have in your work environment? Are you expecting anything to come at you next?

No, I think I've got too many different things to do already. None of which I think are going to go away immediately. I suppose another change that I haven't talked about is what I think Laurie Taylor called academic drift, that I started off teaching on HNDs and I'm now teaching on post-graduates and have been told I should spend so much time teaching first years. So I suppose that's a process that's still going on but I wouldn't say it's a massive strategic change. It's another of these sorts of incremental things that have been happening.

Is there any third party that you think influences your reaction to change, family, friends, colleague, the union?

I try not to listen to colleagues because my experience and my experience before I came here was of organisations in much more dramatic change than we've had to put up with. If you listen too much to the grumblers and the cynics and the moaners it gets you down. So I tend to avoid people who spend too much time grumbling about change.

How about the union position on any of these issues? Does that impact on you at all?

I can't say it does. I'm very ambivalent about unions. I think they're a good thing and I think their job is to question and I suppose to put a brake on change but at time they can be obstructive and I don't like industrial action that affects the customers, in the students. But no, I'm not particularly aware of the union as much of a force at moment.

We've talked about your reaction to change within your job. How do you feel your colleagues react to change in their jobs??

Can you generalise. There are people who grumble and resist and sort of retreat into an area of unco-operation. There are others who sort of jump on the band wagon and use all the buzz words and try and sort of be associated with the side that's winning sort of thing. So I don't think you can generalise.

So your perception is mixed, very individualistic?

Very mixed, yes. There is a ... I think if you look at the School there are people who are very resistant and opposed to change almost for the sake of it and there others who are trying hard to be seen to be agents of change, for whatever motives, be on the winning side and use all the right words.

Do you have any sort of feeling for how the university wants you to react to changes in policy and procedure?

I don't see the university as having a particularly strong ... I mean 'the university wants' suggests the university as something sufficiently cohesive to have a collective will. I can see that the OVC have certain policies. I can see that certain Heads of Department and other Senior Management within the School have their own pet policies but I'm not ... if you're saying do I feel under pressure to toe a party line or ascribe to a dominant ideology, no I don't really.

Fine, OK. Where do you think the push for strategic change comes from here at SU? Do you perceive it's coming down from management or up from academics or a mixture or somewhere else? Where is the push coming from to make changes?

The kind of policy changes that I've been talking about are entirely top-down because they're about efficiencies. They're also about pleasing external stakeholders like the government. Other changes, in terms of teaching methods, use of IT, that sort of thing, I think some of those have come from individuals sort of building momentum within the School or even within the course. But again it ... things coming out of this conversation hasn't really sort of crystallized. There are two types of change. There are the changes that are imposed on you from above and that you've got to react to and the changes that you want to make within your course, School, subject which I don't think are in conflict. Different things and the sort of feelings about feeling pressure by change or responding to change are all relevant to the top-down stuff. Whereas the other stuff is stuff you get involved in and interested in and some of it may be adopted more widely, some of it isn't, but, you know, we're talking about two different things there.

Do you think the academics contribute to the big picture in any way? Should they contribute to it?

Yes of course they should. I mean we are ... we were involved in a process called 'Visioning' and sort of trying to come up with a vision of where the School should be going and I was involved in that and some of my ideas and those of other colleagues were picked up. So at that level we are consulted and involved. The School's got this executive of Senior Academics which tends, in a way, to sort of formalise and take over some of the dealing with and initiating strategic changes and that's, in a way, a process that the rest of us feel a bit sort of uninvolved in. So ... and also I think there are genuine attempts to have meetings and explain policies and that sort of thing. The trouble is that a lot of us haven't the time or, let's be honest, the motivation, to go to many of those. So I don't think you could say that the university is failing to do it's best to sort of consult and involve people in the change process. It's just that if it's not your actual job to be involved in policy committees and things, there are a lot of pressures that mean you tend to sort of not get involved because you've got other more pressing and more interesting things to do.

Let me just write down . . . then you believe that the change that's happening is not something that you're part of this change process, it's something that gets done to you? Would you have sort of chosen to have it done to you because you don't have the motivation or the time?

Maybe it's difficult to generalise. I suppose because most of the changes are sort of gradual and not particularly either threatening or exciting you tend to let them happen to you.

Do you think that in general academics have enough information about the issues, or enough of a big picture to get involved in change management?

I think it's not so much a question of not having the information it's having the time to deal with the information. There's plenty of information out there about policies from the government or from the EU down and there's plenty of discussion documents and strategic planning documents around. So it's not a question of ... it's almost a question of information overload. I don't think having more information or more words in documents on the 'P' drive or anything like that is going to help. It's simply ... it's more a communication problem in terms of putting it over in a way that involves them noticing. Are you alright with this machine?

I'm just finishing off so if we could just shut the window for the last five minutes.

Yes, OK.

We shouldn't run out of air in that much time. So you feel the ability's there for academics to participate if they choose to do so?

Yes I think so.

Is there anything the university could do to encourage people to choose to do so, other than these communication issues that you have brought up?

It's difficult because I mean it's almost like, well it is politics isn't it. But if you try and over simplify and dramatise it you're accused of spinning and sound biting and the rest of it. But if you just sort of have jargon laden consultation documents you're accused of obscuring it and encouraging apathy. So I can't think of anything that needs to be done. As I say I think that in a way the ... you could look again at the sort of hierarchy and communication down the hierarchy and whether you've got levels of management that actually slow up the communications process and create a sense of uninvolvement or disempowerment. But that in itself would be a change.

You mentioned change agency before, have you ever acted as a change agent yourself?

In terms of changes within courses and within the School I'd like to think I have, yes.

So you are quite comfortable with the suitability of change agency within Higher Education?

Am I comfortable with it? I'm not quite sure I understand the question.

I've had some academics say that it's basically, . . . they feel a little more of them versus us and spy in the nest.

Well that's the danger and I think that's one of the problems of this structure where you have somebody who is responsible for encouraging the rest of us to do things. I think in fact you can get a feeling of 'Not another email about teaching and learning methods or Widening Participation or anything like that'. That's why I said I think that in a way having people who's job it is to look at different types of policy actually cuts them off

from the people who actually have to do the bulk of the teaching and the course management. So I think in that kind of way ... I'm thinking more of change agents being people who have ideas and want to contribute and want to implement things.

So you see a change agency actually as an upward process rather than a bottom layer downward process?

The effect . . . I think the effective agents for change are the ones that sort of ... maybe responding to outside stimulus but are actually working from where they are with what they've got upwards. Whereas if you have somebody sort of trying to be a change agent simply because there's a sort of Senior Academics post to do so or they hope to get one by doing it, I think that's where what you mentioned can come in and I think there's certain people in these corridors who would be ... would share the view that you've just articulated.

Do academics need anything to help them adapt to changes at work?

Time! That doesn't really come out but in talking about sort of pressures and difficulties and that sort of thing and responding to change. One of the problems is there are a lot of changes and a lot of policies, all of which are good in theory and laudable aims but it's trying to find space in what you do to respond to them all that's the problem. And so if you want somebody to change in one particular way it inevitably means that something else is going to be ignored. So that's really ... clarity of expectations and therefore giving people time to do things properly, I think is, something that the university could look at and it's got lots of contradictions in it. If you want more people to do research, if you want more people to do consultancy and run teaching company schemes and that sort of thing, then somebody else has got to do their teaching and how do you motivate somebody who's doing all the teaching when somebody else has a lower workload and seems to have more glamorous tasks. That's the problem that the university has got to sort out if it wants to achieve all it's rather ... they aren't conflicting objectives in terms

of the university but in terms of individuals they are and I think that's where the challenge is. I haven't actually got an immediate answer to it.

Are there any communication or staff development issues that would help academic change acceptance and also help to embed change, so it's less of a window dressing and more of a profound process?

There must be. I'm just trying to think how best to express it. I think in communication you go back to empowerment, reinforcement, reward even it's psychological rather than monetary. I don't think we're very good at that.

I was about to ask if you thought the reward process at SU helps or impedes change implementation or has any impact on change implementation?

There isn't a reward system. I mean apart from . . . I don't . . . I mean it's easy to say because you'd be accused of being cynical and personal but I don't think the introduction of this two tier thing of Senior Academics has actually helped anything. The Senior Academics themselves feel overworked and bogged down in paperwork and the ones who aren't feel bitter and twisted because their desserts haven't been recognised. So . . . and, in a sense, in this sort of job the rewards have to be sort of intrinsic, you know, you've got good feedback or good relationships to students, you've been published and are respected by your colleagues here or elsewhere, that sort of thing.

Is there any thing they can do to the reward system to help implement change? You seem to be saying there aren't any carrots.

Abolish it. Abolish it. Because I don't think it's working at the moment and everything they try like posts, performance related pay and that sort of thing it actually disincentivises the people who get it. If you go back to sort of community of equals who are respected and applauded for what they do, rather than make it go through

competitions and interviews and hoops. That's just my personal thing. I think it works better in this environment when it is a collaboration of equals rather than a sort of stratified system of incentives and that kind of thing. But that's just the way I prefer to work. Other people probably wouldn't.

Are there any final comments on this topic area?

Only that I've been here for far too long and it's still, there's still a lot less change and problems of change than I encountered in my previous work. So, although it's an interesting subject and it's a necessary subject, I don't think the pressures to change within the university have yet impacted as strongly as they do in other industries.

Fine, thank you.

I hope that's helped.

Thank you very much.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Ten

(A10), my first questions to you are about Higher Education as a whole. So if you look from your own perspective, do you perceive that universities in the UK are changing or static? What's your take on that?

Most of them are changing, yes; I would think most of them are changing.

Why would you think that, in what way?

Why they're changing, I think it's because of government initiatives, also because of competition, increased competition between universities. And I think the ways that they are changing is because they have to perhaps look differently at funding and therefore funding is determining more of what they do. And also I think they have to think as well about ... it's becoming much more market orientated, so they have to think more carefully about the sorts of courses that the market wants. There are sort of two things, what the government, the sort of courses the government thinks we ought to deliver but also the sort of courses that the market now wants.

So these changes that you perceive yourself, do you feel they're within the UK or are there any sort of global force working here?

I suppose the things that I notice mostly are within the UK but I think probably because we're sort of much more mobile globally, that we are also responding to the fact that people are not just being educated in their own countries as much. So there are all sorts of opportunities from, you know, from ... within other countries; which again means that we have to think about the sorts of things that we deliver that's going to attract them.

Do you find the changes that are happening now are good, bad, bit of both? How do you feel about them? This is for the market as a whole.

Yes. Good I think. I think well on the whole. I sort of ... I strongly believe in employability. So I'm very sort of . . . to me it's important that graduates go out, that they're going to have the knowledge, skills and attitude that the world needs if you like. Not just for them to get jobs but what the world generally needs. So it's about giving them an insight into themselves and therefore they are capable of getting these skills. So, yes I think we need to think very much along those lines, but I also ... I think I regret what seems to me to be the increasing loss of areas where it is about learning, you know, and it is about thinking and it is about questioning and not just improving yourself in terms of what you can offer to the rest of the ... about personal growth.

OK. If we leave Higher Education as a whole and come down to SU, do you find your working environment here at SU changing? You've been here a long time, it's X years, so has it changed?

It's changed a lot, yes, it's changed considerably.

What sort of changes have you noticed?

The ways that we teach, definitely, they've changed enormously. I think also the whole sort of environment, even though it was a (previous name of institute) in those days, it was very much on the, you know, the sort of the academic and the teaching side of things and I've noticed a huge growth in numbers of administrators and, you know, quality committees and all of that sort of thing, so many things that weren't here in the early days. So whereas the focus was very much on the academic side in the early days, now there's a whole range of other issues which mean that academics have to take ... have to do a lot more than just their teaching side of it, their teaching and research side of things.

Any other changes?

I think it's always been vocational. I think it's probably more business like. I think the university is more business like than it used to be, generally, you know, across the board. I think it's ... change has probably accelerated. It was a ... it has always been a place that's been able to change, but I think the change now is accelerating.

Would you say (A10) that these changes are coming from within or outside of you? Who's directing these changes?

A fair amount from outside, but I think also it's ... there's a personal development aspect to it that, you know, as you're looking at what you are doing, you're looking as an individual to grow and develop, but also to look at new ways to be aware of the fact that the world is changing outside and therefore to make sure that what we're doing here, not just with the students, but in the sort of wider community, is fitting in with what the changing sort of requirements are.

And how do you feel about that?

I think it's good because we're less sort of a weird place that only a few go too and we're sort of stretching out much more into the wider community and having a big impact. So I think that that side of it is, to me, a good development. And also I think it's breaking down some of the traditional views of what universities do. And although people might not be doing say specifically degrees or qualifications at that sort of level, there are actually other learning opportunities that people in the whole community can engage in. So, for example, the sorts of programmes that we run now, lectures and all sorts of different sessions and learning on many different topic areas, anybody, you know, who wants to come along can come to those. So it's not some kind of argument place that only a few people can come into.

So these changes happening to you then, you see them as 100% good, any down side?

Not 100% good. I think probably the downside is actually in keeping up with it all and being able to do it all effectively. It's so quick in many ways that it's a concern about wanting to do so many things and whether we're actually doing it effectively or not. I think that's a concern.

You perceive your own role is changing. How about your colleagues work or roles? Are they changing?

I think so yes, and probably one of the main things is the administrative side of the work. So there's a great deal more in terms of reporting back for the purposes of the university that colleagues have to deal with and have to do. Also I think, because students are demanding a service and a quality of service, then we have to report back to the students far more than we used to in terms of giving feedback, you know, making them understand what's happening, involving them in all sorts of things that we never used to do in the old days at all. So, you know, taking on board their ideas, listening to their concerns and so on, which are all things that we haven't done in the past and now we do much, much more. That's not a concern, you know, I think that it's their university so they should take a part in that.

So all these changes that are happening right now around you (A10), do they impact in any way on your relationships with colleagues?

Yes, I think we can't, we haven't got the time to sit down and discuss things any more like we used to, you know, it's such very, very busy times that the sort of the philosophical and the academic discussions are one of the things that's gone, yes. So the relationship is different in that way.

Some people describe change as a burden. Would you perceive change to be a burden?

No, no. I like ... personally I like change and uncertainty and I'm aware that that's a personality type as well, part of the sort of the personality but for me personally, no. I sometimes worry that I'm keeping up with it, you know, and performing and doing the right things but I haven't got a problem with change itself.

How do you describe your relationship with the Senior Management of SU? You've been here X years.

That's right. I think really the experience that I've had is that you sort of ... you're left to get on with things, you know and so you get on with it.

Do you feel you know Senior Management?

No, not ... some maybe. I suppose over recent times, since I've come back in again full time, I've got to know more who people are. But certainly in the old days they were terribly remote people, you know, you didn't even see them, you wouldn't have known ... you couldn't have, if you knew the name you couldn't always put the face to them.

So do you find them less remote now?

I think they're less remote now, yes.

If you come out of the university context and into your personal life (A10), how do you generally feel about change? Is it something that excites you or worries you?

Excites, I think, yes. I like change.

So when you have big changes coming in your personal life do you have any sort of coping mechanism or just get on with it?

I think I get on with it. Yes, I get on with it. I don't see any point in looking back, you know, what's happened is gone, you can't change it.

OK. Now looking at the university as a whole, I'm talking about large strategic changes to policy and procedure, big changes that are coming down. Tell me about some that you have noticed or experienced lately.

I think in terms of the learning and teaching agendas, things like flexible learning, is something that's, you know, that is spreading so much more quickly. So the whole aspect as far as learning and teaching is concerned. I think in a way we've always been the sort of institution that's involved in knowledge transfer because we are so strongly vocational. So I suppose in a way that hasn't changed that much but we've become much more focused about it and we know what to call it now. So it is a focus in response to a strong direction of the university.

Any other strategic changes that you've experienced?

I think as well with the Widening Participation agenda that's certainly something that in recent years has had a big impact and has brought through implications for how we recruit people, how we monitor students, how we track them, the sort of student support that's provided as well. So I think that has added big changes to the university.

Do you perceive these changes to be window dressing or profound? Are these deep seated embedded changes or just tipping your hat?

I think the knowledge transfer side has always been there really so it's not a huge leap for the university. It seems to me to be part of our natural progression. So in that respect it's not a deep seated change. I think with the learning and teaching side of things, and that's ... I guess that's what I like, part of what I like about it, why I keep coming back to the place, is the fact that the university is always been prepared to do different things, you know, and have a go and to be, in many ways, the front runner in different ways of doing things.

You see it as profound change?

I don't think it is profound change. I think it ... it seems to me to have been a natural progression because we're all ... it's always been that we ... our students are, we're preparing them for the world of work. It's always been that we've been looking carefully at the way that we deliver in terms of learning and teaching. So it's been a progressive thing rather than a fundamental change.

So you seem to be suggesting that you find the strategic changes that have happened so far to be sort of natural to the university and quite well embedded?

Yes, I think they are the foundations.

Embedded in the culture?

Yes, I think the foundations are already there.

Do you think that accepting change is part of your job of an academic?

Yes.

Why do you think that?

Well I think it's important. We can't … I'm not saying all change is good, it's not all necessarily good, but I think everybody has to accept change. You can't just think that the way that you do things can continue for any length of time because it's such a dynamic world that we're in now. You have to change in everything and that goes for work as well.

So if we look at strategic change that's coming through the university now, would you say that we're at the beginning, or the middle or the end of this change process?

I think we're a fair way along because to me it's been a progressive process. I think we're past the middle. I think we're, you know, we still need to continue going and moving on and moving forward.

But we've made a good journey so far, a substantial journey so far?

Yes, we're past the middle, yes.

Do you have any expectations of the next strategic change you think will be coming?

I don't think so at the moment. No, I think … I suppose because what we're already doing seems to have roots in the past and there's a lot of it in the things that we're looking at. So I don't see any major changes to that within the sort of shorter term.

Does any third party sort of influence your reaction to change, friends, union, family?

No, I don't think so, no.

So you feel it's your own sort of thought processes?

Yes.

How are your colleagues reacting to strategic change? Do you have any feedback from them?

I think some people find change difficult and don't like it. So some of the aspects about changes, for example, in the approach to learning and teaching, some are less happy with, you know, the different ways of doing things. In terms of other impacts I suppose really it's everybody's looking at the amount that they have to do and the amount that they have to do to be successful, or to continue doing, delivering the sort of the better lines really in terms of dealing with the students on a day to day basis.

Do you have any perception as to how the university wants you to react to change in policy and procedure?

I'd think that the university wants me to be happy with change and, you know, accept it and get on with it and continue with it.

Any particular reason you feel that way?

It just sort of seems to be the culture, yeah, I think it seems to be the way, you know, that if we're ... we're in a competitive environment, you know, and if we're going to keep fighting on that and improving our league table positions and so on then we have to do that.

OK. Now again we're just talking about your own perceptions on this, because that's all I'm interested in. If you think about strategic change where do you perceive the push

coming from?. Is it coming down from management? Or is it coming up from
academics? Or is it coming from somewhere else? Where's this push for change?

It could be any of those.

Yes?

It could be any of those.

Can you elaborate on that as to why?

I think some of it is a push from outside because of what is happening either at
government policy level or generally in the world. I think as well it's from the top-down
in saying, 'Well OK, how do we cope with the environment? These are the sorts of
things we need to do.' But I think as well bottom-up. People can see how we can
improve and if they're sort of champions of certain things or certain ways of doing things
then it can be bottom-up as well.

So what sort of changes do you see coming from bottom-up? When I say bottom, I'm
talking about the academics, ourselves, what sort of changes are coming from us?

I think perhaps some extending or different attitudes or different approaches because
now, I mean I'm noticing a difference over the years, we have more people now, many
more people, who've got outside experience. So it's bringing in all sorts of different
perspectives. So you've got people who've got a range of experience and they're seeing
things from a number of different viewpoints other than just that of the traditional
academic's viewpoint. So I think that's quite an impact on an organisation like this.

That's interesting that you see that the pushes for change coming from all these different directions. Anything you particularly like or dislike about this sort of multi- direction? Or why do you think it's happening this way?

I don't think I see anything particularly difficult about it apart from there is, you know, obviously so much change going on from so many directions. Sorry, what was the second bit?

Why do you think it's happening this way? Why do you think we've got these multiple drivers?

I think it's different in terms of who's being recruited into Higher Education. As well the sort of the environment we're in is having an impact on the type of organisation that we need to be.

OK. So you feel that right now the academics are making a contribution to change in policy or process. Are you part of this? Do you feel part of the change process? Or do you feel that change is something that gets done to you?

I feel part of it, yes.

Have you ever been part of a planning process for change?

Not on a specific committee or group or anything like that, no.

So who do you think is speaking for you on this?

I think it's through general day to day work.

If you feel that the academics have a voice and that you're part of that voice, any specific sort of mechanism you have for having your voice heard?

No. I don't think it's a sort of channeled voice in that way. I think it's something that rubs off, you know, it sort of spreads that way.

Do you feel that academics know enough about the issues involved or the big picture to get involved in the big decisions?

Probably not, probably not.

Should they?

Yes I think they should be, yes and I think that's a responsibility both ways. You know, people are very busy and the communicating downwards gets lost sometimes. But equally people should be able to look beyond what they're doing on a day to day basis and find out things for themselves. You have to; you can't always rely on others.

So you were referring before to change agency, the idea of people within a group helping to implement change. Have you ever been a change agent?

I think so yes, yes.

In what way have you helped implement change?

Particularly on learning and teaching and I think I've done things without really thinking … mostly without really thinking it through probably but sort of thinking 'That would be a good idea' in terms of the learning environment for students and having, you know, sort of having a go. And I think that when you do get the opportunity to work with other

people and share with other people, then you can spread that. And so things that you've done that are different or unusual or outside the norm, then, from yourself, you can spread that outwards.

So you feel that change agency is a suitable strategy for implementing change in university?

It depends what you mean by a change agency. Because I sort of see rather than some people who are concerned with change and everybody else having to sort of follow in, but really, in many ways, everybody's involved in that and they don't always know it.

So everybody is an involuntary change agent?

Yes, yes.

They're all part of the system?

Yes.

The change process that's being implemented right now at SU, do you feel it could be improved in any way or are you happy with the way that change is implemented?

I don't think I've got any solutions, but I think sometimes change is sort of a rolling thing, you know, and you've hardly got started on the last change before the new change is coming up. So there is a ... sometimes a bit of change overload, I suppose.

Yes.

Yes, sometimes a bit of change overloads.

A change on a change before it's fully implemented.

Yes, yes.

So the perception you're getting from this is?

Yes. I'm not sure what we can do about that and in some ways you have to say 'Well, no, we can't see that through to the end. That's not right now. We have to move on and do something else.' So I think that can leave people with uncertainty and sort of loose ends and are not sure why things are changing day to day.

Do you think academics need anything from Senior Management to help them to embed change?

Perhaps recognition of the part that they can play in it, yeah, I think absolutely the lack of vision for the part that all academics can play and the fact that probably many people have great ideas that aren't always, for one reason or another, picked up on.

So do you see some communication issues?

It's probably more ... yes, it is communication, but it's also about knowing what's going on. You know, we're all so busy, we are very busy doing the doing.'

Do you think the average academic wants to know what's going on?

Yes.

Do you think the reward process at SU has any impact change implementation? Are the carrots being placed in the right direction?

I'm not sure that I can directly relate the carrots to any particular ways of behaving.

So it's the same carrots whether you behave one way or another way is your perception of it.

Yes.

Could the reward system be adapted to reward change implementation? Should it be adapted?

Change implementation isn't the only thing. So again I haven't got any good answers on that one. Change implementation isn't the only thing that you should be reward.

So what else should be rewarded then?

Yes, I mean it is part of what we do. So part of it is changing, so perhaps a reward for the innovation, but as well it's about recognising that people are doing a good job. Students are going out and getting very good qualifications and I think quite often what we forget beyond that is the sort of jobs that our students are going into, which in a way is a product of both their efforts and our efforts; also the relationships that we have with organisations beyond ourselves, with other universities, universities overseas, business particularly.

So we're successful.

Yeah, I mean I can't myself see any carrots that link to those things. It would sort of ... yes, ... I'm not sure how.

So we're successful but in the reward system right now you don't see a direct link to success?

Yeah, that's right. No I don't clearly see how it links to the success.

Do you have any further comments in this area? Any area that's important to you that I haven't touched on?

In terms of change generally and anything related to change?

Yes.

I don't think, no I don't think there's anything else, no.

Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Eleven

(A11), I'm doing my EdD on change in Higher Education from the perspective of academics, the perspective of Lecturers and Senior Lecturers. So looking at it from your own perspective, looking at the . . . let's call it the market of Higher Education, right, the overall business. Do you see it as changing or static? What's your take on what's happening now?

I think I've been in Higher Education for what X years now and it's always changing. So I don't think you can say it's the (personal name) factor.

What changes are you noticing, or the sector as a whole, Higher Education?

I think the fact that it's increasing the pressure on finances or budgets within Schools, which means that certain things could be limited. Also I think the other pressures are, from the students' point of view which can react with the staff's, which are things like accommodation and lengthy days and those sorts of thing.

OK. So do you think these changes are UK based or is there any sort of globalisation pressure that you can think of?

I think a lot of it is coming from the UK government because of the way they are changing the funding to the universities. There's pressure on the universities to make it pay while the government is paying less per student.

So you see these changes mostly as sort of being driven by the UK government?

I would think so, yes.

Overall, do you perceive this process of change in Higher Education to be mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

Probably a bit of both but I think, I think the pressure's getting greater and there's a limit to how far it can go. So I think there comes a time when you can't expect more and more and with limited resources.

So that's what you mean by a bit of both. It can start off positive and then . . . maybe be negative.

Yes. Yes.

OK, looking now at your own position here at SU, do you find, Oh you've been here a long time, it's X years!

X+ years!

X years then, do you find your environment in SU changing?

That depends on what you mean by 'working environment'. Do you mean the environment that we're actually ...

Your culture, your role, what you do.

Yes. It's changed enormously, yes. It certainly has. The work load has increased; I don't know how many fold. There's a lot more pressures and I think the other thing that is changing an awful lot is that there is now so much paperwork, so many protocols, so many forms to fill in or things like that, unit monitoring forms for every unit. We've just been accounting to a QAA last year. So that was a lot of forms and procedures to go

through. But I think everything is so procedurised now more than then. I'm not sure that's a bad thing because I think students are more aware and therefore they're questioning the system more and when, in the good old days, when it was sort of more come and go as you please, it just wouldn't work now. So I think it had to change.

Do you perceive that these changes are coming from within you or outside of you?

They're coming from outside. I need to change to go along with what's expected.

So you feel the direction for change is outside of you.

Yes.

The forces are outside.

Yes.

How about your role, has your role changed over the last few years? How long have you been a Programme Leader for?

Two years. So it has changed, yes.

Is the role of Programme Leader changing?

It has changed from a number of years ago, yes. Again because of the increase in pressure and procedures and documentation and all these things that I find at times, because of the quality requirements I'm require then to check up on the other members of my team and it's difficult being a Programme Leader because you're the same level as most of the rest of them.

OK. On the whole then, these changes happening to your working environment here at SU, do you see them as mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

Probably a bit of both.

What's the plus and what's the negative?

I think the negative is that it is all these paperworks and all the things you have to do and do it by the book and do it by the latest guidance notes and all those sorts of things. But, as I said just now, I just think the world has moved on and we're in the situation where now students are paying for their education, they're expecting more. I know the parents aren't in the equation but they do expect more due to the fact that they're paying more. The universities have just moved on and we've got to move on with it.

Alright, so where's the plus then?

I'm not sure about it. What is a plus? I think things are done more to a system now. In X School I think we're ... we've always been very good at doing systems because we're related to professions, you know, (name of School) and therefore we're used to systems, doing things in a logical way, in fact to a system. But I think there is a measure of good in some things now, because I don't think there's room now for ... how can I say this, perhaps freeloaders. I'm not sure whether that's the right word, but people just drifting along not doing very much. I think the space for them has disappeared.

Interesting! So you perceive there have been changes in your own working role. How about your colleagues? Are their roles changes as well?

Oh yeah, yes.

And do all these changes impact in any way on your relationships with colleagues?

No. I don't think so. I've got colleagues who've been long term colleagues who are now Senior Academics and no I don't see a consequence there.

Some people say there's a burden to change. Do you think there's a burden to change?

I think perhaps the burden is getting used to change because nobody likes change and therefore you have to readapt the way you do things and that needs ... you need to think about it. I mean one thing, small thing, which has happened recently is that students like to have the lecture notes on the internet in advance of the lectures which means that I've got to make sure I think about it at least two days before and update last year's and write the new ones and get it sorted. So, it's not a burden. It just means you've got to get on with things, perhaps think ahead a bit more.

OK. How would you describe your relationship with Senior Management at the university? Do you know them? Do they know you?

Do you mean School management or university management?

Both.

School management I would say well. Within the School things have progressed over recent years and I think the ... there is good interchange there or feedback between the management and the lecturers. So I think that's improved enormously. I think that's quite good now. Within the university? Sorry I've forgotten the original question.

Do you feel you have a relationship with them? Do they know you? Do you know them?

Some of them yes, partly because of the QAA we went through last year. So that brought us in along with (name of Senior Manager) [inaudible] so from that point of view, yes. I mean I know them all. I'm not sure they all know me.

OK. If we come outside of the university now and look at your life as a whole, how do you feel about change in your life in general? Is change something that excites you or worries you?

Both, I think there are always worries with change because you don't know what's going to happen. But I think life would be very boring if it stayed completely still and everything was the same all the time. So I think it's a bit of both really.

So, again looking at your whole life, how do you usually cope with change then, with the risk of change?

Well how I cope with uncertainty usually is to plan. So I suppose it would be planning and thinking it through.

It's a good coping mechanism for you, to reduce risk.

Yes. I think so.

If we look at the strategic level at the university now, up to the top level and we're looking at overall policy and processes. What sort of strategic change have you noticed over the last few years?

On programme specific things?

Well some people have responded with Widening Participation or the increase in quality issues.

Yes, oh yes.

Have you noticed these things?

Oh yes, certainly, oh yes. Increase in quality definitely. I mean there is far more notice taken of what we do in this School. Even down to the extent now that someone up in OVC looks to see whether we've responded to External Examiners comments in an appropriate manner and dealt with them all. So that sort of thing. But that's ... I do appreciate that has come out of quality the fact that it was part of the quality system. Yes, certainly Widening Participation, because we're involved in Summer Schools now. We're also involved in mock HE days, where we provide a day out for 13 or 14 year olds. And also with the offers that we make we have to be aware of Widening Participation.

Any other big strategic changes to policies, procedures, you've noticed, experienced?

I think the pressure on progression, statistics, is always at the forefront. I think also the ... I think it's a good thing, staff development; in the way we're encouraged to look at other ways to teach and communicate our units.

Would you describe these changes as window dressing or profound embedded change?

I think most of them are profound embedded change.

Why do you feel that?

I don't think there's any way that we are going back on them. With the Widening Participation agenda, things like quality, I can't see that we're going to turn around. I think there's going to have to be a halt at some stage because we can't go on doing more and more things. But I would have thought … perhaps a change of government will spring things differently. They'll come out with a different agenda and some of these things will go on by. I don't know. But I suspect quality is here to stay.

So when these changes happen, is there anything about your thinking or action processes? Do you implement them straight away?

Well, the thing is if it's difficult I leave it to the last minute. I'm like a typical student.

Do you question them or do you just implement them?

I do question some of them, yes. But it depends where they've come from and what means they've come by. I mean if a new guidance note has been … I've learnt a lot in the last two years of being Programme Leader and I think the one thing I have learnt is if a guidance note comes out to tell you to write your ARPM and include A, B, and C, just do it because that's the best way to do it.

So it's easier to just do it than interpret it or fight it?

Yes. Yeah.

Do you think accepting change is part of an academic's job lot?

Yes.

Why do you think that?

I think it is part of anybody's job. You can't stand still and therefore you've just got to accept change, move along with it because times change. No-one was using emails eight, ten years ago, so life has changed enormously and I think you just have to go with it.

So if we see sort of change as a line of action, do you think the university right now is at the beginning of the change process, in the middle, at the end? Is change continuous?

I think change is continuous, yes. I don't think it will ever stop. Where we are I don't know, I just think it's a continuous process. That every year something new happens and every year we need to accommodate it or react to it.

Do you have any expectations of what the next strategic change will be or how it will impact on you?

Well as far as we're concerned it's going to be our merger with the (other School) which is next year so that's going to have some impact. We're not absolutely sure what yet. So if nothing else eventually it will mean a location change because we all eventually need to be in one location. But there's going to management changes and changes to the way things are done. Trying to bring two Schools together is always going to involve some sort of give and take on both sides to get the systems together and though overall we're supposed to be using university systems, it's the way that Schools interpret those university systems which I think will need to be brought together.

Is there any sort of third party that influences your reaction to change such as your spouse or your colleagues, or the union?

I don't know really. Not the union, no.

Do you know what the union position is on some of these change issues?

Not particularly. I did read the ballot form that came the other day and I duly voted and sent that back but not particularly, no, although I do have the NATFHE paper and do glance at it sometimes.

So you feel that when change comes to you at the university you decide it is better just to get on and implement it. How about your colleagues, how do they react to change?

Some of them need a little bit of persuasion to provide things which are now required.

And where's that persuasion coming from?

Me in the first place, if we're trying to get together the Unit Monitoring Forms for my ARPM which is due the end of this week, so I need to chase them. But it's also coming from above me because it's coming from the School Quality academics. And I think in general it's coming from . . . a lot of this comes from the procedures at the university which is then fed down through to us through our Senior Academic.

So you feel that basically the change comes down, you implement it, may have to persuade some colleagues in terms of implementing it. Do you think this is how the university wants you to work with these changes?

I do see why not. I think the university tends to feel as a whole that, especially ... because I actually went to Senate last week, the reason for that was I'm not on Senate but the school member who is on Senate couldn't go and was teaching so I went in his place. And I did get the impression sometimes from those sorts of level of committees, which I don't normally go to; that things that are decided at that level, they assume other people know and they don't always know and assume it gets around through to systems. I think

a case in point was changing the set-up dates which we didn't really have a chance to have a look at but I think other Schools did comment more than we did. So that went to School Quality but if it weren't through School Quality perhaps it would have come direct. So I think there are issues like that but ... I'm not quite sure how else the changes could be implemented.

So that leads us very nicely into the next question. Where do you feel then this push for strategic change comes from? Do you see it as from the top down? Or are the academics being active and is change bottom-up? Or is change coming from somewhere else?

No, the top-down.

So why do you think it's working like that?

Because I think that the OVC have got pressures on them from outside for the university wide agenda.

Do you think academics are contributing to strategic change?

I don't think we've got a choice.

So we are contributing?

Yes.

Are we just implementing the change or are we making the change? Because if we're making the change then that's a bottom-up you see, strategic direction.

I think the direction's coming from the top but I think we're being required to change to follow that. I mean the requirement that everyone should be research active, I've forgotten what it is now, one of the options by 2006, research, enterprise, and all of that. Again I don't think there's a choice.

So it's more the academics implementing change rather than making change?

Yes.

That's your perspective on it?

Yes.

Should academics make change or should academics simply just implement change?

I think it's a two-way thing. I think that academics are professionals in their own right and therefore they have a lot of knowledge and there are things which they need to change, yes.

So what do you like or not like about this top-down process?

Perhaps I don't like the fact that it is coming from the top and therefore we're required to implement change and we don't always have a say in how it has been put together. But, on the other side of that, the other lesson I've learnt, is that if you keep raising your head above the parapet and question things you might get involved in the work in the Quality Committee. That's not always wise. I've done it a number of times.

So why do you think change at SU happens this way then? Why this top-down process?

Well I think it goes back to the fact that the OVC here have pressures from outside and I don't think it's them that are always making the changes. They're reacting to changes in the environment and in the education agenda on a national basis.

So do you feel part in any way of managing change, or do you just feel that change is something that's being done to you (A11)?

I think on our level we think we have some ways of managing it, yes because we're not told we've got to do A, B and C. We're told we've got to balance a budget. It's probably because I'm an (previous job) I put it this way. We're told in the School we've got to balance a budget so that has implications on class sizes and frequency of seminars and whether you can go to a conference and that entire sort of thing. Within the School it's devolved and the School has some freedom. But on the other hand the university is now a business and therefore it needs to run as a business and therefore you can't have any part of it, any School, working outside of the general strategic plan. It just doesn't work.

Have you ever been part of the process for strategic change at the beginning of the process?

No I don't think so.

Should academics be in this role? Be in at the beginning of the policy process, making the policy?

Well, having said that, I think I have been in on things like ... I'm going to a progression working party this afternoon, and the fact that, again, it's come down from the centre but we need to look again at our progression. But it's up to the Schools to decide how to deal with that and therefore I've been in at the beginning on those sorts of School policies, but not university policies.

In terms of being involved in university policy, do you think academics know enough about the issues or the big picture to contribute?

Not completely, no. I could give you a very good example of that but I don't know whether you ... do you want me to?

Yes, an example would be lovely.

Right, OK. I took myself along to the VC's speech at the beginning of the year and she was telling us there about all the plans for expansion. And she was also telling us there about the fact that they only got planning permission if they had a green transport policy. Right, I don't agree with car parking charges BUT there were very few people at that meeting and the vast majority, I think there were about three besides me, and the vast majority of people don't understand the fact that the university wouldn't have got planning permission if it didn't have a green transport policy and that's what is driving the agenda. They're just thinking that car parking charges are because the university wants to implement them, not the fact that it's come from outside. This case is not national government, it is local government. So I think on something like that I think we're not always informed enough.

So do you ... who speaks for you then on these issues (A11)? Do you have a voice?

Yes. We have a voice through Senate and our representatives on Senate are very good actually and they always ask for our points and they always feed back to us.

As an academic do you feel then that you've led change? Have you ever acted as a change agent?

At programme level, yes.

Are you comfortable with the concept of change agency within a university? This is where you get academics on side with their change and get them to spread the news.

I think at programme and School level yes.

So we've chatted about the change process at SU. Do you have any comments then as to how the change process could it be improved or do you think it's just working fine now.

No I think that ... I think there's this trade off between needing more information and members of staff not reading or taking note of information. There's information overload and therefore there's lots of things we ought to know but we don't because either we don't read the emails or we delete them or because we've got so much else coming through that we miss the important things.

So any ideas on what sort of process would help this implementation change? What could management do to make it easier for us?

I'm not sure about that.

Well you did say there were some communication issues.

Yes. But the problem with that is ... I think there are communication issues because I don't think we're always aware of what goes on at the higher levels, but then it's a question of does everybody bother to read any minutes that do come out. I mean I always read the minutes of our School Exec, but they're very short and to the point of course. If everybody was sent the minutes of Senate, for example, would they read them? They probably wouldn't.

Is there anything they can do then to address communication issues? Or is it just a lost cause?

Well it shouldn't be, there should be a way around it. I'm not sure that I'm the person to come up with the idea, bearing in mind that when I went to the VC's address there was about 50 people there from the whole of this campus. So someone had made the effort to set a time, book a lecture theatre and went on and did an address and about 50 people turned up, which must be quite soul destroying. So that avenue doesn't work. The other avenue is they attach it to pay slips and now they're saying that there's too many of those. Another avenue is by email and we all know we get overload. The other avenue is paper and if you get anything too bulky it ends up usually in my briefcase and I don't read through it. So I'm not sure …

It's a lost cause then?

It shouldn't be. But I think it needs somebody better than I to come up with some way of making sure that there is good communication and that people read it.

How about the reward process at SU, do you think the reward process has any impact on the success of change implementation? Do the carrots go to the people who implement change? Do more carrots go to the people who implement change? Should more carrots go to the people who implement change?

Yes. I think that we're stuck in a little bit of a time warp. I think there's a lot of inequality. And I think there's not enough recognition and carrots going to those who are willing to take responsibility. Not at Senior Academic level I mean below that.

At our level, at academic level? The carrots may not be being used to their maximum advantage?

Yes. Whether they are available to be used I don't know but I think there's a lot of ... a lot is being asked of people. Some people take up the challenge and work with it. Some people bury their heads and ignore it. I find it's not always the people who are ... perhaps let's put it this way ... there's are some people who have been here for a long time who are perhaps not taking the responsibility that they should do to the level of the salary they have. I'm thinking back to the position of people who were here, the Principle Lecturers, who are still Principle Lecturers but don't necessarily have jobs that require that ability. So I think there are these anomalies in the system which is ...

Interesting point! Do you have any final thoughts (A11) on your perspective to this issue of strategic change at SU? Anything that I haven't asked you that you think is important?

No, I don't think so. As I say I think that one of the lessons I've learnt is that there are people who are paid to be Senior Management and there are people who are paid to be in OVC and I feel that I need to do my job as Programme Leader at my level. And there are people who are paid to take on a lot more of the burdens and worries than I need to take on because otherwise, the alternative is never ending and its stress and trying to do what you can't do. I think then you end up in not doing your own job properly. So I now feel I have to take a cut off point and my cut off point ... I have been told off for this, it's very naughty ... but I am Programme Leader for my degrees and therefore that is my mission. Not these other degrees but because I'm Programme Leader I believe I need to stick up for my degree and when I go and fight for something it's for the (X) programmes. Because that's where, what I'm Leader of and I think that somebody else needs to fight for the School because they're Senior Academics and ... (inaudible) and they're paid to do that.

So it's their job, let them get on with it.

Exactly!

OK.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Twelve

I'm doing a Doctorate on changes in Higher Education. So the first few questions I want to ask is about your perception of what's happening in the bigger picture. OK? Do you perceive that universities in the UK are changing or static? What's your take on it?

I think they're certainly changing. After six years you can see a difference in the types of students that we're getting and I think most of that is down to the Widening Participation. We're getting a much wider band of experience in the groups and that's what's making the teaching much more demanding. We're also moving away from learning by rote and more to things like problem based learning, more activity in practical based learning. The theory is not as extensive, I think, as it used to be.

Are there any other changes in the market of Higher Education that you've noticed?

I think it's a lot more competitive. The changes to polytechnics and universities, so that you have more traditional universities competing with newer universities, and also because of the way that companies are changing also, that you notice that the demands on getting students and getting the right type of student, we're actually in a very competitive market. I think there has to be specialisation now if you want to be able to get your numbers, certainly on courses that are common to most universities. You've got to have a reputation.

Anything else?

Not that I can think of off-hand.

OK. Do you think these changes that occur to you first of all are sort of funding, competition and Widening Participation? Are they are they coming from UK pressures or are they global pressures?

I'd probably see them more from the UK. I'm not so aware of what's happening in universities in other countries. I know that America has a high quotient towards diversification and I saw something about the University of Philadelphia where there's a push for greater diversification and greater backgrounds because they felt that it was beneficial for the students to have a wider experience of different cultures, different people, getting more people into the university environment. That's the only thing I've seen. I've not seen it from the political aspect.

So you're saying overall your perceptions are mostly UK?

It seems to be very government driven. There is this determination. I think part of it is also ... I think there is an international issue in the sense that we say how well our graduates are doing. So if you actually say that you've got 30% or 55% of students going to university, you're creating this perception of the country because recently I saw something on BBC news comparing the number of people who went to university in Germany, France and Britain. I think in years gone by we wouldn't have seen such crap. That level of participation seems to be some sort of benchmark under which the education of different countries are valued or evaluated.

Do you think overall then this sort of change is overall good, overall bad, bit of both?

I think a bit of both. I think the point being that you have people who are capable of getting the most out of a Higher Education environment, and they might not be the people you would expect, they might come from different backgrounds and different experiences. But I think to have a sort of carte blanc where everybody goes to university,

the danger is that these are advanced subjects in many cases and it's very, very difficult to and not entirely fair on somebody who doesn't have an aptitude for a particular subject to be forced to go to university because it's expected of them. I think we've got to have ... the level of thought to be able to do Higher Education by proof of what you've done before and also want to go, not go just because society demands it of you.

Anything else you think is positive about these changes in the market?

I think the real positive thing is people who never thought they were ever going to get a degree are getting one and it's changing their careers. And we're getting people into industry and other areas of academia that we'd have never considered getting them there before and we're getting real benefit out of their thoughts and their ability and the input that they're giving into the system and because they make us think in a different way. Which I think is very beneficial because we are supposed to push the boundaries and try and come up with new things.

Anything else that you'd term negative to this process?

I think that the problem is that we've now got groups where there is such a diversification in ability. It's very difficult now to do the teaching because it's very hard to find a balance between the students that are capable and therefore we can't take them as far along the subject as you would like. So therefore those that really could go far as undergraduates, can't fully achieve because you have to hold them back to be able to cover those that are probably the weaker students. So the depth of knowledge that we manage to cover and the really, really important subject matter, very often I don't think we get as far as we would like to get. So, I think there is an aspect where quality is descending somewhat.

OK. If we then look at SU and your own personal environment is your working environment changing?

I think so. I think there's a greater degree of pressures to be honest. I think the preparation of materials is getting harder and harder because you have to teach on multiple levels. So, if you're putting together a lecture or a seminar, you have to have simplicity which will allow beginners to be able to do what they need to do, but to a level of depth that those that have got the ability can then expand their own thoughts. So you've actually got a seminar which has got the same instructions but is working at different levels depending on the student. And I think that's an awful lot more challenging. It's certainly takes an awful lot more thought to actually sit down and analyse what the outcomes you want from the teaching material that you're putting together and it's very hard to predict what outcomes will be. Very often you write these things, you go through theory and you try to think about ways of structuring it, you then go into the seminar sessions and they don't work quite the way you hoped so you find yourself having to be very adept.

Any other changes happening to you in your work environment?

There's more of us which means we tend to be a bit crammed together. It can get very, very hectic in our office at times. Our concentration is murder in our working environment. It's not like you could have a university office that is open plan because of the amount of money. So when there's four of us in the office and we've got final year students in ... and because we're all doing the same subject areas, you get cross talk going on. It makes it murder. You find that most of the time you're working at weekends or evenings because it's the only time when you can get peace and quiet to actually do the work. You find that you end up with very, very intensive spells during term time and then, in the summer, you can then do a little bit of research and training etc.

So have you noticed any sort of change in workloads during the time you've been here?

Yes. There's definitely more of it. No two ways about it. Like the time I'm taking to prepare lectures, also the way in which we create materials. Because of the diversity of students we have to use much more modern techniques such as Powerpoint. We have to have interactive teaching materials and materials that are animated. I feel there's certainly a pressure to do that. Therefore to strengthen the weaker students we also have a culture where it's very difficult to get them to read the material. So very often you have to do a lot more teaching than learning in the lectures and I think that then puts the pressure to get it right . . . and there's also an awful lot of motivational study we've got to do. We've got to motivate them to realise that it is a learning environment and we've moved a long way from that sort of 'Do this' 'Read that' 'Come back'.

Some of the other academics also mentioned quality issues. Do you find . . . ?

I do have a problem getting them up to a level of quality whereas if I was to send them out into industry I'd feel comfortable.

I think they were referring more to the fact that they find there's more emphasis on them proving that they're delivering quality.

Yeah, there's an awful lot of paper work that's produced that is …

Have you noticed that as well?

Things like the … what is it? The (X) Report. I can't remember the . . .

Well the Unit Monitoring Forms.

Yes but there's a particular one that comes round about twice a year which is the . . . what we are doing . . . comes from the government, clarity in Further Education, something along those lines. I can't remember which one it is and it's a paper exercise I think most people feel. We've got to the point where I'm absolutely sure there's a large number of secretaries that when they don't get them back just fill in the one that was there last year; which means that the information that's actually going back to government is entirely meaningless because unless there's some value associated with these activities, people don't do them or they bypass them. I mean I teach systems and I know what happens to a poor system, people completely work around it.

So these changes that you've mentioned are these changes coming from inside you or from outside you? Who's directing these changes?

I think to be honest with you there's a duel drive because the thing that you want to be assured is that your students get to where you want them to be and also that they reach the quality expected; which is getting harder because one of the problems we've got is to maintain the level of quality you've already got, you've got to be very careful that you don't get a drop-out. If we're bringing in students who are slightly weaker, what actually happens to them is that they get demotivated, disillusioned and then leave. So, we're recruiting the wrong people anyway. But I think the quality aspect of it is it's very difficult to feel that you're dumbing down, you don't want to feel that you're dumbing down. There's a lot of push to simplify things like assessment so that we can mark them quicker because of the timescales that we're given. I mean 15 minutes for a project per week is ridiculous. It's not possible. It's an unreasonable amount of time.

So where are these changes coming from then? Do you feel that you're making some of them or . . . ?

I think that the accounting system that we've got for things like marking are totally unrealistic and there's no way I could mark exam papers at the speed of which the university says. I mean I'm also dyslexic and they take no account of that whatsoever. So I get 15 minutes to mark an entire exam paper that might have advanced concepts in it. Now I've got a choice. Either I end up working very, very hard, putting in time that the university says I'm not allowed, or I make the way in which I exam and assess trivial in order to make examining possible within the timescales that they've given. So far what I've done is I've put in a hell of a lot of long hours. I was doing 17 hour days during the marking period last summer. I got so bad that I actually kept a diary of how many hours I was working because my workload became farcical to be honest with you. The problem with that is also you're reading these papers and trying to mark them but you're that tired after 17 hours you can imagine how you feel about the quality of your marking.

So these changes we've discussed, do you feel this is change that's being done to you or you're generating any of this change?

I think wanting to keep the lectures to a quality where I'm actually producing materials that have things like interactive . . . I could be lazy and get away with it so I feel that the quality aspect I drive myself. The aspect of things like marking I feel that I can't go with the university model because the university model bears no reasonable parallel to real life.

So the changes you perceive as happening to you, within your role, again ...

Things like marking and assessment are things that are being pressurised and placed upon me. To make a simple marking scheme ... but the problem is, it's not easy to make a simple marking scheme on advanced topics. That's the whole point of Higher Education. You are not going with answers that are just 'Yes, no, right or wrong.' They're written in natural language and they are very complicated and there is enormous diversity between

what is a good answer and a bad answer. Every single answer will be different. To say that I can read it in three minutes is unreasonable.

Well you're changing environment then; again you would say it was mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

A bit of both, I think it pushes me. But I think in situations where we have unreasonable rules like the amount of QAA that we have to do where we have accounting practices, time practices and so you get allocated this for this task, this for that task. One, they've very unrealistic. They put periods of time in that result in you being very genuinely pressured and if you want to do your job you basically have to say 'Well this is the level of quality that I'm going to stick to.' But it leaves it down to the personal individual and I feel very often that the way the university manages its time actually goes against what we're trying to do and that it's only through the efforts of the staff that we manage to retain any quality at all. I think if we were to stick to those timescales what would happen is that the quality would fall through the floor and we'd have graduates going out into industry that nobody would want. Then we wouldn't be able to recruit. I think where we've done well is where the departments and the people in the departments, the individuals who are running the programmes won't let the quality descent. They've created a very good reputation outside and that's why we can recruit. I think if you put more pressure on to take more students and have less time with unreasonable accounting practices, either the staff that are doing that are not going to stay or they're not going to be able to do the job. Which means the quality will descend, resulting in the recruiting getting worse. We won't actually be able to then compete with other universities who, after all, are still trying to get the same good students that we are.

So these changes that we've chatted about are they just happening to you or are they happening to your colleagues as well?

Oh no, they're happening to my colleagues as well.

And how do you perceive your colleagues are handling it?

The same, long hours, I have one colleague that doesn't appear to go home, you know. It's just … keep working, keep working, keep working.

And do these changes impact or change in any way on your relationship with your colleagues?

Yeah because when we're all under pressure, especially if we have units where you have more than one person working on them, if you have demonstrators or you have joint units, if you're under pressure to always do the work, the ability to then communicate with them disappears. So, for instance, if you've got a teaching team where you are working with a demonstrator, ideally I want to be able to discuss with the demonstrator what the aims and objectives are of what we're doing. I have no opportunity to do that now and because of the way human beings are, there are misunderstandings, there are different styles. Therefore you end up having to manage the problem of having three people on a unit with different styles and the students coming up with different answers. You've only got one person marking it. I've got to be very careful that I'm not marking them down for the opinions of the demonstrators instead of what they're forming themselves.

Some academics say there's a burden of change. Do you think there's a burden to change?

I don't think so. I think it's an absolute necessity to change. I think human beings by their nature tend to be somewhat conservative and we can't remain conservative. I mean

that the fastest way for the university to go out of business is not to change. But I think change for the sake of change is useless, that does create a burden.

And do you interpret that there is some change for the sake of change?

Oh I think there's lots of change for the sake of change. I think there are a lot of politically motivated decisions from outside the university to do this, to be perceived to be doing this, to be perceived to be doing that and that puts additional pressure on the academics. I mean the car parking situation is a wonderful example of it. It's very politically motivated but they're not taking into account things like the way we work. I've not been asked about how I work and the point is I have to bring in papers, I have to take marking backwards and forwards and I have to move computer equipment. I have to have a car moving backwards and forwards. The distance my car is from where the university is, is neither here nor there because I cannot carry a base station of a computer up (X) Avenue. But the political motivation to change the car parking because we have to be seen to be green is ignoring the actual working practices. The fact that we are here 'till eight and nine at night sometimes, I need a car. Those sorts of things where there isn't consultation as to 'How do you work'. Very often we get things like questionnaires that come out. Anybody who's designed a questionnaire will look at that questionnaire and say 'I can tell you what the answer to this questionnaire is before I've even ticked a box, because it's loaded and I can see how it's loaded.' That causes a bad relationship.

I was about to ask, how do you feel your relationship is with the Senior Management?

Very often you feel as if you're working against them and there's no communication going backwards and forwards. The feeling that ... there is a sense, in the department certainly, not just myself, that there's almost zero communication going on between the managing body of the university and the actual staff. You know, for instance, things like playing to our skills; we have single lecturers on single units. We don't have crossovers

between the units. There's no sense of team, you know, and we could work an awful lot more efficiently and a lot more effectively. But at the moment when you're firefighting ... there's an old adage about, you know, when you're up to your armpits in alligators it's very hard to remember that your objective was to drain the swamp, you know.

Good point. How do you feel about change in your life in general outside of the university? Is change something that excites you or worries you?

It's something I'm trying to do all the time, force myself to do it because you have to change otherwise you don't develop. I think that's something ... the whole point of university is not to tell you what to think it's to give you the opportunity of how to think and how to learn.

And you personally then, do you have to force yourself to change?

I think you do because I think human beings, as I said before, I think they are fairly conservative. I think what people like to do is that they get into a routine and they're comfortable with that routine and unless you say 'Look, have I let myself just coast and am I really ... ? Because otherwise you'd look back and you think 'I've spent an awful lot of time not doing things.' So, if you continually review, and say 'Where am I now?' I mean one of the aims I had before I was a demonstrator was become a lecturer. So that was an aim. Now that I've got that I'll look for a different aim and I will change the way in which I develop. So I'm looking at different way in which I teach and trying to improve on them. I was doing that as a demonstrator but I've got more opportunity to do now to do it as a lecturer.

So if you have a big change coming up to you in outside life, do you have any sort of coping mechanism to make it easier?

Some degree of planning and thinking about it in advance so that you don't just try and do it. I don't tend to ...

You prefer planned change rather than unexpected change?

I prefer some sort of control. From what I teach I know that plan control is very, very difficult. It's one of the bug-bears of what I teach in X, we still only have 26% projects that actually work on time and to budget. Everything else seems to go wrong. So you very quickly learn that you can have a rough plan but the chances of it staying the same are relatively slim but if you have no planning you're basically diving into the lion's mouth.

So you were chatting about some of the recent strategic changes you've noticed here at the university. Would you ... I mean you talked about change for the sake of change, would you say these changes are profound or window dressing? What's your take?

I think sometimes they are window dressing but they're used for other purposes, they're more used for political purposes than actual practical ones. So, the strategies that we've got are mainly marketing perceptive. They have an impact on the way in which we recruit students but they have very little impact on the way in which the university actually operates. There's very little strategic consideration of the way in which we do the job and the operation, the day to day work. We look so much at the big picture; you never actually see the small picture and let's face the real strategic information, it comes from the operational information of how you work. You get the operational information and then you use that to understand the picture as it is and then you use that to develop a strategy that's plausible within the way you work, things like capability maturity models that are used in computing. We don't just suddenly say 'I'm going to change the entire culture of the organisation' because it won't happen. If you try to do it that way what you'll do is disgruntle people to an enormous extent and they'll all leave. Or alternatively

they'll be miserable, you'll have very low morale and the working environment will be dreadful. Which means the quality of the product it creates is very poor and things like the capability model say 'Well you have to have a mature attitude about change and do a bit at a time.' You can't just sledgehammer people into doing things.

So you see some of it as window dressing. Can you think of any that you'd say is a profound change that is really embedded at university?

I think some of the things of making us look back, having to join the ILT ... well I say having to join the ILT, it was suggested that I join the ILT, was a very good exercise. It took a lot of time but it did make me look back at the way in which I work. So having a process where there's a greater degree of professionalism in the way in which we teach and the way in which we fail that sort of thing where we have time to properly reflect is very, very helpful. But we need allocated time to actually go back and say 'How am I doing?' As I say, if I'm always firefighting I'm never going to have the time to say 'Well what's the pedalogical value of what I'm doing? Am I really teaching them well?' I'm going to be more concerned with 'Do I have lecture notes to present to them tomorrow?' than I am 'What is the quality of the lecture notes I'm presenting?' And I think things like joining the ILT have been very positive because now I'm more aware of the material, more aware of the techniques. There was time allocated during the summer to actually do it but it meant at the cost of other things.

So you do see change as part of the job of an academic?

Oh yes. I mean I would say it's a critical part of the job. I don't think you can be an academic without change because, let's face it, we're supposed to be at the cutting edge of knowledge. Therefore whatever we're teaching is going to change. I think the stuff we teach; very often people say 'You're teaching that already? It's only just come about.' But I think that's where we should be. We should be at the forefront of change.

So if you see change as a sort of equation are at the beginning of the change process, in the middle, the end?

I get the feeling that sort of ... what is it Churchill said 'We're at the end of the beginning' wasn't it. We're not at the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning. I think that' where we ... we've gone through a sort of first stage where we are looking at. I think there's a lot of errors, again, looking at how we work. We had an Achieving Excellence exercise which has actually done more damage than good. It didn't achieve excellence at all because of the way it was presented it was actually insulting to the staff. Most of the staff had studied more about the material than the person who was presenting it. Most of them could write papers on it and one of them had even probably written a book on the subject. For management to suddenly decide that they've got to put through a process that we're very familiar with caused chaos because they didn't perceive how we worked or discussed with us or look at what the skill profile was of the people that they were asking to do this. So, I mean that, that actually made us go backwards.

Do you have any expectations for what the next strategic change will be?

No, but there is a certain sense of dread because very often we feel as if those things haven't been thought through. They're just somebody's idea and rather than say 'Should we look into whether we should do this?' people go ahead and do it and it causes chaos. I mean it's the same as the Achieving Excellence, that procedure wasted an awful lot of money. Whereas if somebody had approached us and said 'We want to have an Achieving Excellence programme,' we could have got our own people in house to say 'Well what do you know about Achieving Excellence? Can we run our own peer sessions? Can we talk about where we would get more benefit?' Because most of the academics do have respect for each other although they'll argue quite vociferously with each other, they do have respect. You know, there's the old joke 'What do you get if you

get two academics in a room? Three opinions. You know, you will get that. It's sometimes the way that we feel when the management will say 'We're going to do this and we're going to discuss it with you.' And then we get these questionnaires. You look at the questionnaire and you say 'No, they've already decided to do this. It doesn't matter what I write down here.' You know, it's that ... and we know . . . I mean I teach systems and I've always said that the worse thing you can do is ostracize the user because there's no better self fulfilling prophecy than 'It won't work.' If the user says 'It won't work' they will make damn sure it doesn't. So if you impose these decisions, the resistance will cripple you. Look at what happened to Achieving Excellence, nothing has come out of it that we can perceive.

So when these strategic changes arrive how do you personally tend to react to them? Do you just implement them? Do you think on them? Do you fight them?

It depends upon whether you can implement them. If I'm told I've got to mark this in 15 minutes and I've suddenly got a lot of 30 students, my attitude is 'Oh God, there goes my weekend.' Because I know I can't do it. If it's something, for instance, like the car parking, I will probably start shouting and say 'Look have you really thought about what you're going to do to the staff? You've already been told 54% of academics are suffering unreasonable stress and you're about to introduce a measure that's going to make it worse. Have you considered that? You're going to change their working environment. You're going to give them less money. People are already disgruntled. When you've already got a hornet's nest buzzing for God's sake don't take a stick and start hitting it. You know, oil on troubled waters, a little bit more subtle conversation is needed. They're intelligent people as they wouldn't be academics if they weren't.'

So when strategic change comes to you, you're more inclined to open a discussion than get on with it?

Yes. If it doesn't look like a foregone conclusion then you'll stand up and say 'Look, I'm not arguing for the sake of arguing, I'm trying to tell you here I'm feeling as if you've already made the decision. You pretended to consult with me but I don't feel you've genuinely consulted with me.'

Does any third party influences your reaction to change?

A lot of is the students, yeah.

Students?

Yeah I mean it's a funny one the customer/supplier relationship that we have to perceive students as customers and I do actually look at what the students say and we have for instance changed the units . . . [loud phone interruption]

How about the union? Does the union influence your reaction to change?

The union is not that strong, I don't think there are enough people in it. I don't think the university management takes much notice of it to be honest with you. So, I am a member of the union because I do believe that actually people together are more effective than a single voice. You do sometimes feel there could be an attitude of 'You're a trouble maker' and if you're in a group it's a damn sight harder to have a go at you. But I find the union, at the moment, is still relatively irrelevant.

Do you ever have any idea what the union's position is?

Not too bad. They normally do give us some feedback but a lot of the time they're saying 'We're not sure we can do anything about this or what actions we can take.' The majority of lecturers are pro-student and don't want to actually hurt their students and very often

the only way to upset management is to hurt the students. You know if you take actions that upset management or interfere with the administration of the university it doesn't really have that much impact overall. You take a single day's strike and the media are down on the doorstep with cameras because the students are outside because you're not letting them in. But most of the people who teach have got a very high sense of responsibility; therefore to actually get to the point at which they're walking out management has done something pretty extremely wrong.

This is how you react to changes. How do you perceive your colleagues react to changes?

I think the lot that I work with is quite good with change. I don't think they ever like it being imposed upon them. But I think, to be honest with you, it's a relatively dynamic crew. I think there are some people who don't like change. I think it's inevitable. People as a whole I think from a psychological point of view like to be in an area where they have structured rules and they know what they're doing and they know things are going to stay the same and I think there always is going to be resistance to change. That's why we have change management systems. But I think, because we have to continually relearn things, because we know that our material is not going to stay the same, I think we have to change in a hodge pot description a lot more than other people. You know, because I know next year what I'm doing is not going to be the same as I'm doing this year.

How do you think the university wants you to react to strategic change?

I think the 'Just do it' syndrome is part of the problem. I think management just wants us to do what they tell us.

Any particular reason you think that way?

Yes because most of the decisions that have affected me have just been imposed on me without any discussion. You know, I've been told rather than asked. You know, we were told we would do the Achieving Excellence, we weren't asked.

So when strategic change happens at SU? Do you perceive it's coming down from the top?

Definitely. Normally it feels like it's a political idea that somebody's sprung up and it would look good to do this. Again without the thought of what is the actual cause and effect, you know.

So why do you think it happens this way at SU?

I don't think there's much communication between management and the actual staff who are doing the job. In fact I think there's almost zero communication. It's ... we go through the motions of it with our presentations from the Vice Chancellor and getting memos and things like that but the big long memos most people don't read. For a start they don't have time. If you do it during term time ... if you have meetings during term time, the team can't get together. We've got a situation now where we're now teaching on Wednesday afternoons; previously we had Wednesday afternoons to have meetings. We now have CTM meetings when the majority of the teaching team is missing. Decisions are being made and they're not made as part of the teaching team.

So is this maybe part of the reason why strategic change is top-down? Academics don't want to get involved or don't have the time to get involved.

I think it's because ... it's not that academics don't want to get involved. I think if you had open forums, I mean we had a situation where we started talking about the parking position and transport over email. We were told to shut up but no alternate forum has

been put up. What we have is we were given a questionnaire with a load of loaded questions and we were expected just to answer them. There was no open forum and when we tried to create one we were told that we couldn't have one.

So you don't feel you've got a voice?

We don't have a voice. I don't think it's even a case we don't feel we've got a voice, I don't think we have got a voice.

How about Senate, School Councils?

You get the feeling that the people who get into that have a political motivation that sits within a department that is suitable for what management want from them; therefore you don't get dissenting voices on Senate. They won't get on to Senate if they are a dissenting voice, you know, it just won't happen. Or alternatively if you don't go onto Senate and you're a dissenting voice you're going to end up in a lot of trouble because you will be singled out as a trouble maker.

So is there a plus point to top-down change since you perceive it is top-down change?

Yeah I think sometimes people can't, at a working level, see why the change is occurring in terms of the organisation because maybe the person at the top does have a bigger picture. I think the danger is that if you do top-down and have a more sort of draconian style of management, you'll actually manage to ostracize the people that are working for you. I think the positive aspect though is you might have a better view because you get time to study what's happening in the Higher Education market. Whereas an average lecturer who's too busy actually trying to deliver won't have that view but that's probably down to the fact that we can't achieve excellence because we're overloaded and you never will achieve excellence as long as you overload people too much because they

won't have time to get involved in the overall working of the department. If you look at things like the way the Japanese management models work in the manufacturing models, they're based around giving people time to actually interact with the process and be able to feed things back to management. How do we feed things back to management, we don't have time.

As an academic do you feel you've led change or acted as a change agent?

Only in a local sense in what I'm doing with the new units and also what I'm doing on the courses. Things like the revalidation are very valuable but one of the problems, as I've said, is the issue of team building so that you have ... there is very much a sense in our department of working as individuals and not working as teams. So you get little course groups, you get individual groups, you don't get overall team work. So therefore we've got a lot of duplication of effort. We've got a lot of people who don't get to discuss things even though they're actually studying the same topic areas and it's all very well to learn things from books and papers which is great but you disseminate knowledge an awful lot faster with people being able to discuss their subject area. And that will improve the quality because we'll be more up to date. But those conversations never occur. You know, we don't have subject ... we talk about it ... I mean every year we have the CTMs at the end of the year where we talk about being able to improve things by people who are doing my unit for instance which should integrate with about four other units. This year I've not spoken once to the other lecturers about what they're doing. There's little elements of it and I'm trying to drive change in it and I've contacted those lecturers, I've got one of them who's already come back to me and said 'Can we do this next year?' which is where we get an improvement. And I do think that I've managed to try and push this idea of we need to integrate what we're doing. We also need to integrate it through different courses because it make sense if I've got somebody who's a better expert than me in a particular area, to invite them to come and do the lecture, because they have a better degree of knowledge and they can present it better. But with our

current timetabling structure and the way the timetable is done, there's just no way we could do that. We have a structure that's been put in place; we get given the timetable just before term. To say that there would be any form of dynamic interaction between the teams to say 'Well you do that lecture, I'll do that lecture.' We've basically hamstrung ourselves and put on a straightjacket.

Do you have any other ideas for better change process at SU?

The difficulty of how do we actually get time to communicate these things in a more natural way so that there isn't this barrier between the management and the staff. Something for instance something like the car parking. Yes we do need to have a Green policy but we are an out of town campus, we know there's pressure from the Council to do it, but there are all sorts of other solutions that we can come up with. Things such as car pooling, having a list on a staff internet site which actually says people who are willing to collect so that we can reduce the number of cars; then we've still got a car. We could have exceptions that allow people to be able to bring equipment in and do marking. We don't want marking left on busses all the way around (our town). I mean if I was to try and get in and out of this campus by bus my lectures would never be on time. But to be actually able to say ... to have a place where we can say 'We know you want to do this, we understand why you want to do this. You can explain the political pressures on you from (local) Council and the government, that's fine. Instead of actually just imposing this charge or, you know, imposing something upon us, we need to have a forum and some way of actually being able to so at least the people that are interested in it can actually make a comment. You'll find they come up with some pretty valid points that are not maybe being considered at the moment.' Not only that, managers I'm sure are not out to piss off the people who are actually working for them. I'm sure that if they can come up with solutions that work better, that make a better working environment for them, everybody's going to be happy but there's just no co-operation going on at any level as such.

So you seem to basically say there are communication issues?

I think it is communication. It's a combination of communication but if we want to have that communication we've got to have a number of mechanisms in place, so we've got to have forums even if they're only internet forums to say 'Well let's discuss it.' It's got to be seen to be open. You know, I very much doubt anybody's going to get vicious or derogatory necessarily, and it's got to be seen that even if we say things management don't want to hear, they have to listen to them. They can't just discount them.

Now do you think the current reward process, in terms of wages, time remission, other carrots impacts at all on change implementation? Some academics have said that whether they change or not it's the same carrot, so why bother.

It's very difficult because you already know what my opinion is of how the time allocation is set up. It's ridiculous. I don't know how anybody can come up with those numbers but they're an exercise in accounting only. As for reward, yeah, I think that's extremely difficult especially when you're in advanced subjects. It's very difficult for me as a lecturer to know that I'm teaching students whose first wage will be greater than I'm getting paid to teach them. That means I'm here for an entirely different reason. I'm here for the quality of life because I could go out and do the 12 hour days in industry again quite happily and be paid a lot more for it.

So you don't think there is a link between salary and time remission and academic reaction to change? You think that academics are here for other reasons?

I would say so. Considering the people around me and what they know about computing systems and how much they could get paid to actually do what they're doing on a daily basis. You can just teach it. They're not here for the money. They're here ... I think

there are personal characteristics that you find in lecturers that their nature towards people, their attitude towards responsibility to society, all those sorts of issues, that means that they are willing to forego some of the financial rewards in return for the . . . I suppose the expression would be something like self-actualisation, the actual mental rewards of teaching, the quality of life that's involved with teaching. I think if the university continually pressurises for performance related goals what will happen is that they'll remove those quality aspects, the feeling that you are teaching and you're doing a good job at teaching. What will happen is people will start to say 'Well if I'm going to work this number of hours and find it that unrewarding, what is the point in me staying.' I think we've already had that. I've seen that in a number of lecturers who've already left. They've basically decided that the environment has changed to the extent that the amount of personal reward that they get out of doing the job does not justify what they're getting paid for it. But they weren't here for money in the first place. It's not that that probably made them leave. I don't think that even if you had offered them more money they would have stayed to be honest. I think their attitude was it's the environment that I'm looking for, not the money. But you can actually degrade the environment to the point at which people say 'Well I wouldn't be treated much different if I was out in industry.'

Do you have any further comments that I haven't covered on this whole area of academic reception of change?

I think we're an argumentative bunch at the best of times because we look at things and challenge them and test them. I think if you're going to bring change into this sort of environment you have to be aware that the type of people that you've got, certainly academics, if you make a suggestion they're liable to go and look up and see what's happening elsewhere, you know. They're liable to look at the various documents. I mean one of the things when they brought in the Achieving Excellence, one of the things that happened are people started bringing papers in by the gurus that had written about Excellence, challenging the process that we were going through. They said 'Well look,

this guy doesn't agree, the model you are using we feel is old and somewhat flawed. So if you do come in with a suggestion, they may come back with a whole load of material saying 'Well look, these are the reasons why it hasn't worked elsewhere, and people have tried this before and it's not worked, you know. Look what happened here.' So I think it's very hard to bring change in unless you involve them. I think as soon as you try to dictate change to people like that, they'll fight it hammer and tongs, you know, because they'll want ... they're the type of people who'll look for real solutions and they'll look at it and say 'I think this is flawed.' And if they don't then ... if they get a voice and they're proved wrong I suspect they'll back down. I don't know, maybe not, because, as I say, academics tend to be an argumentative bunch. But at least you'll make them go through the process. If you just say 'You're going to do this.' You'll always get the answer 'Why?' And if the answer is 'Because I say so' you're going to get some very disgruntled academics.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Thirteen

What my EdD is about is change in the university system and academic reaction to it and what's happening in SU and how we're managing change, could we be managing change somewhat better. Human Resources are quite interested in it and not only is a piece of academic work – it could be a piece of functional work to help us here.

Do you find yourself that universities in the UK are changing, static, overall as an industry?

I think they're changing a lot. I think the changes are . . . there seems to be more competition in the market place, if you like, between universities and so, for example, we are finding that the course that I manage is in increasing competition from old universities as well as new universities; whereas 3 or 4 years ago it was just the new universities. I think the students are changing, they are more demanding, they want to be seen as customers and I think the pressures, the expectations of the university on staff are changing in terms of they seem to want more from us.

What do you think overall, using the term industry of Higher Education, what's triggering these changes?

I don't think there's one single thing. I think the government's drive to have 50% of 18 year olds in Higher Education is a big factor and a problematic one. Personally I don't think our education system, as it stands at the moment, with the degree classification system we have and with the requirement to maintain standards, I don't think that fits with a view to getting 50% of 18 year olds into university. So I think that creates a lot of pressure so I think that's a big driver.

If you made the picture even bigger, do you perceive any global triggers or do you just think it's within Higher Education in the UK?

I think there are global triggers that should be having an impact on what we do at SU but I'm not sure that they are. I think for example, one of the biggest issues for educators is to prepare students for a much more international working environment, and an environment where they will be increasingly competing against graduates from other countries. I have to say that I don't think SU is dealing very well with that as I think we are very parochial still, very conservative, not very international, and I think our students leave with excellent skills for the domestic market to compete against their peers from other universities, but I don't think they compete very well against international students.

Overall, staying on an industry wide perceptive, do you think this change is good, bad, bit of both?

I don't think change overall is good or bad, I think change is just inevitable, but in terms of its impact on tutors or on lecturers?

Just overall – are you happy with the change in the industry right now?

I like some aspects of it. I'm comfortable that because it's a very dynamic environment it makes my job more interesting, and an environment where there isn't big pressure on me to research but allows me to do other things, like if I wanted to do enterprise and the fact that I like to programme manage and I am allowed to do that, I prefer that to an environment where maybe I was forced to do research against my will, as it were. I really think the government initiative is a mistake and I think if that's what the government wants and that's what the universities agree to then I can't see how we can exist on the current classification system. But change isn't good or bad, it's just there.

If we take it now down to yourself working here at SU, how is your working environment changing? Do you perceive any change in what is happening to you?

I'm putting in more hours definitely compared to 5 years ago, even though my role hasn't changed enormously in that time. There are 2 changes actually, one is that I am finding that my colleagues are getting more and more sceptical and cynical and unwilling to provide goodwill to the same extent as they did in the past, and I think that's partly because people think they're being, abused is too strong a word, but taken advantage of. Two I think the students are changing and I know we all say these type of things but I do believe, feel that the students are becoming more and more instrumental, far more assessment driven, less willing to take responsibility for their own actions, and much more litigious and appealing against decisions and so on, so on a micro level they're the biggest changes I find.

Staying on a micro level, what or who is directing this change in the university, where's the change coming from, the pressure to change? Is it coming from you, outside of you?

No - I know you're asking me about levels of control but I think the pressure to change is a combination of external and internal. The pressure to change as an institution comes from the VC or the OVC to make us more flexible or adaptable whatever, but every individual has to make their own decision as to whether they want to change with that or stay the same. I suppose I take the view that you have to change as events change and as the organisation changes and as the culture changes, you have to change with it, but hopefully maintain some sense of standards or convictions of your beliefs and so on.

How have you found, in your own working life, your role here has changed?

My role has changed enormously, because I started off on a scale which wasn't even an academic scale, the role was called (X) and the nearest equivalent that you might know would be a demonstrator, and 3 years later we successfully achieved an upgrade to lecturer status but for the first 3 or 4 years I was here all I did was teach, and then an opportunity came up to manage programmes and that's what I always wanted to do because I've always been interested in programme management or programme

leadership and since then my timetable has always been split between teaching and programme leadership/management.

In terms of my sort of day-to-day activities, they probably haven't changed a great deal in the last 5 or 6 years, the activities are the same but the time I devote to things maybe has changed, certainly the amount of administration and bureaucracy is definitely a lot higher than it was, so I seem to spend a lot more time on what I would say is idiotic, bureaucratic rubbish and a lot more time dealing with student issues, not necessarily appeals and that sort of thing but with students with problems and personal problems, mature students, international students, these sorts of things.

These changes to you, to your working life and role, do you see them as positive, negative, are you happy, do you like the direction it's going?

I see them as inevitable and I wouldn't want to qualify them as being good or bad.

You've got to roll with the punches basically?

Yes I think so, well if you don't you might as well give up and do another job or don't do that aspect of your job. If you take on programme leadership, you accept that it's a difficult job and that you are going to have to deal with lots of paperwork and deal with difficult students and difficult colleagues, but people who do programme leadership do it not because of that but they do it in spite of that. So in that respect I don't know if you are trying to get me to say whether I think change is good or bad. I just think change is inevitable and some changes are for the better, but if you asked me to find one I'd struggle, but that's just the way life is, it's constantly evolving and you have to move with it I think.

Do you have a perspective on change for your colleagues' work or roles at the university? Is the change perceived as coming to you or is the burden evenly shared?

That's two different questions. Everyone is affected by change. The burden of change (and I think that's a really good expression), the burden of change is very varied I think and I have colleagues who honestly, I might be doing them a real disservice, but I can't see that they have changed much at all in 10 years, and I have colleagues who are still delivering very similar material in the same way as they always have done and who seem to be untouched by what is going on around them. But increasingly those people seem to be isolated in all senses of the word and so I think everybody is being affected. I think some people respond positively to that challenge and if not embrace it, maybe embrace it with one arm, and other people accept it grudgingly and move along. It's very difficult for people not to be influenced by the change and I think that the people who don't tend to be as conscious of what's going on around them are the part-time staff, and the staff who maybe teaching a relatively narrow discipline on a relatively narrow band of courses and who don't engage in other activities anyway – so I can think of a couple of colleagues in particular whose . . . If you think about the analogy of having lots of fingers in lots of pies, they've probably got one finger in 2 pies so I don't think they've been touched by change to the same extent that people with more activities in their professional life.

Does this affect your relationship with colleagues? That some change and some don't?

Absolutely, yes definitely, I think it goes back to the other part of the question really, the burden of change, and I think sort of linked to the idea of the burden of responsibility. Why it affects me and why it makes me angry sometimes is I see a very, to my mind, disproportionate burden of responsibility and burden of work between people who are ostensibly being paid to do the same sort of jobs and the people who seem to be "getting away with it" invariably are the people who don't want to change and have stayed pretty much set in their ways. If you wanted to take it further, I think it's because of poor management and the university and School management not wanting to actually tackle those people head on and look at the quality or inequality of work.

How would you describe your relationship with Senior Management? Do you know them?

Despite what I said then, generally well. I pretty much know everybody on exec. I get on, from a working perspective, very well with my Head of School, Head of Learning and Teaching, Head of Undergraduate Programmes and I have to say, in terms of my own development, they have been very supportive. They've supported me a lot and yes, I do know them pretty well.

Talking about your personal ability to deal with change, how do you feel you deal with change outside of the university in your personal life? Does change excite you?

I think I might be a little bit of a paradox really. I think I'm naturally a relatively conservative person and I don't particularly enjoy radical change, I don't mind it. I'm happy to go with it, but I tend to like it if I've got some input into how it's happening and perhaps if I know it's coming. It's difficult because what do you compare it with, because when I tell people the sorts of things I've done in my life, they say that's amazing, you've done all those amazing things and I always think it just happened and I guess that's in a way to do with your attitude to change. Generally I would say I'm happy, I wouldn't go out and seek it, I don't want my life to be turbulent but if there's change I'm happy.

You've probably got a high tolerance to change then?

Yes, reasonably high I would say.

How do you tend to cope with change in your life? You said you like to see change coming?

I prefer it if I can see it coming, so I can prepare for it.

You don't like to have change done to you?

I certainly don't like to have change done to me. I prefer to be involved in it or instigated it myself. Generally in my life I would say I have a reasonably high tolerance of change but I want to have really planned it and thought about it and if not instigated it myself been involved in the process.

Back to the university and your appointment here, can you tell me about any recent change that you've experienced and how you reacted to that?

I can't really think of any examples.

Do you feel that accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

I'm not sure that it's part of the make up of an academic so much as it's an inevitable consequence of working in Higher Education and so it's almost like an essential on the job description, but it's not to do with being an academic. I think it would apply to anyone who works in the university, so it's not about academic versus admin, versus manual, versus anybody else. If you work in Higher Education it is a given that you should be prepared to change.

How would you describe the changes that are happening right now at SU, would you say they are window dressing or profound and why do you think that? Is it a sort of surface agenda or is it a deeper agenda? You said before it is being generated by government triggers.

I think universities are naturally cautious about government initiatives as they know that government's change and that government administrators change and so on, so I always feel that if there's anything being pushed from government level, that universities, to some extent, go through the motions and can be seen to be responding, but can pretty quickly change if they needed to. So that's sometimes why it does looks like window dressing.

Are you a bit sceptical?

Yes but in a way that says the university would be mad not to do otherwise because if you've completely changed your university strategy on the basis of government policy you know you would be going through major transition and major change all the time and that would just be so uneconomic and inefficient, so I guess it's sensible to do it that way.

I can only really talk about areas that I know more about, and obviously the area that I'm particularly interested in relates to my subject of expertise as well is things like internationalisation of the university and there's an example where I do think the university is paying lip service to the idea of internationalisation. If it truly believed in internationalisation it would have far wider teaching foreign languages on cross cultural type modules, and it would be sending far more students overseas, and so international seems to mean something quite different to the OVC compared to what it means to me and so I think that's window dressing.

Bearing in mind as change comes along within the university you tend to be a little sceptical, and tend to say could be window dressing, does this change then what your thinking or action process is when you implement the change? Or do you just say fine, the decisions made, I'm going to go ahead and implement it?

I think I implement cautiously. Take, for example the Widening Participation agenda so there's no choice, we've got to take on more people from the widening participation constituency, I know that and as a Programme Leader I've got targets to try and meet that. I will try to meet those targets but not at any cost. So yes I will take students from a Widening Participation background, and I will try to meet the quota the school has been given, or the course has been given, but not to the point of sacrificing standards, and risking the experience of that student or the staff. The same will go with international students; I'm set a target every year for oversees. I will try to get those overseas students but if I don't get them – I don't get them and if the

School then forces me to take somebody, and they could potentially do, then I will make sure it is recorded somewhere that I was against that decision.

What further expectations of change do you have – what do you think is going to hit you next?

On a purely, and on a very much micro level, the course that I manage is really struggling to meet the numbers and the next big thing that could hit me is that they come back with either – I don't think they would phase out the degree, but the most likely thing is that they will come back and ask for an early review, even though we've only just reviewed. So we would go for review in a year or two times rather than wait for the quinquennium.

How are you planning to react to that?

I'm going to say that if they do that I will probably resign the post and they can let someone else do it, because I and another colleague really drove the last review process and we did it extremely well. I'm not just boasting, we really did it professionally, we treated it as a project, we ran it over 18 months, we did lots and lots of market research, and in my own view and my senior colleagues know what I think, so to say this is not a problem but they're trying to solve the problem because they can't solve it in the way it should be solved and it's pretty boring detail for someone who's not involved in this. Basically (my degree) is a semi-technical, semi-business programme and there's another school within the university which has a course called (X), which is practically identical. It's the ridiculous university set up of separate schools and the internal servicing agreements that prevents us from combining and teaching a joint programme with maybe 100 students, so instead we are both struggling to recruit cohorts. Rather than tackle that as a central issue, the school instead is looking at differentiation and trying to differentiate, but every time we differentiate, X School differentiates itself in the same way so we still end up doing the same thing all the time.

Does any third party influence your reaction to change?

My wife, not the union, colleagues yes of course, my Head of Academic Group, probably my wife would be the top person. It would be my wife, my colleagues, and my Head of Academic Group, to some extent the Heads of Learning and Teaching and Head of School.

So you see yourself really as being able to roll with the punches to a certain extent?

Yes I think so.

How do you perceive your colleagues' reaction to change in the working environment?

I think it varies from people who move with it in the same way that I do. Like in any organisation you've got early adopters, blackguards and everyone in between. I would probably be more towards the early adopter end of change and so on and I would say that most of my colleagues are within that positive half, if you like. Then I have some colleagues who would be very much in this blackguard and Luddites side.

How do you think the university wants you to react to change? Are you accepting change or not accepting change in the way they are expecting do you think?

That's a good question as I had a conversation with a current member of OVC recently and I voiced an opinion that the VC doesn't like people to stand up and complain or argue or disagree whatever and his view was that was wrong and he really did believe that the VC wanted people to voice criticisms, disagree, say what they thought and so on and so forth. What was the question? I've lost my train of thought!

How do you think the university wants you to react to change?

I don't know – I would hope that they would want you to accept but also to offer your opinion and if necessary an alternative view about how to do it maybe. Because OVC is a relatively small group of people and of course they've got to have a strategic view about what we are supposed to be doing, but the implementation isn't usually thought through, in my experience, so I guess what they want is not so much to be challenged on the strategy but maybe to have ideas about implementation.

This push for change at SU, where is it coming from, is it coming down from management, up from academics, somewhere else, within the university itself?

I think the drivers are primarily at OVC level some of the drivers are obviously, because we are quite autonomous Schools, will be at School strategy level, so from exec and I think some of the drivers are coming from the students as well. So those would be the main constituents. I don't see many drives for change coming especially from the staff at least not on a strategic level more on an operational level.

So you don't see really that the academics contribute to change in policies and process?

Not of their free-will! I think it's usually as a result of being asked to do something or told to do something or invited to do something. I don't see a great deal of ... it depends what aspect of the job you mean, if its in terms of policies, procedures, processes, regulations, I don't see many academics volunteering ideas in those areas personally, but that's just my experiences in the group I work in.

It's interesting, you're saying you sort of see it coming top-down, or bottom-up as a student demand.

Yes

How does this change in policy and process happen in SU from your perspective, Widening Participation for example?

Widening Participation is slightly different from the others because in a sense it's imposed and basically one is told this is the agenda and this is the target and the target has to be met and so on, same with recruitment targets or international student numbers.

So there is a certain amount of imposition you feel personally?

Yes absolutely, definitely.

It's change done to you – that's what you said before

Yes I think so, but in other areas maybe not, it obviously depends on the nature of the issue but in an area like how we are going to improve assessment for example, then I will have had quite a few opportunities to contribute to that discussion and to the evolution of the policy, but that's by virtue of being on the School Quality Committee possibly and by being a Programme Leader. Other staff might not feel the same; they may not necessarily have had as much involvement in putting together that type of policy.

If there is an element of change done to you why do you think it happens this way?

Because you can't run organisations like committees, you can't have consensus on everything you need leadership and you need people to take strategic positions and as much as I sometimes resent strategic decisions for the fact that the implications haven't been thought through, that's just an inevitability of organisational behaviour.

Do you feel part of the change process here? Do you feel you are participating in any way?

Sometimes, yes mostly I would say. If you did a time and motion study and thought about all the decisions and all the changes and then worked out how many were imposed on me and how many did I have an opportunity to engage in and how many did I actually make myself, I think the second two categories would be more numerous than the first one. It's just that the first one sometimes can be the most problematic ones.

Do you feel a case can be made for involving academics more in designing and implementing change? Or is it too problematic?

I think people should be invited more to see if they want to be involved so that at least then they were asked and they were given the opportunity, but working with academics is like herding cats, someone once said. I don't know if you remember there was an era – going back about 5 or 7 years ago, where the university mentality was very much built around working parties and there were working parties on everything, all around the university, and that seems to have fizzled out. There doesn't seem to be so many working parties any more, unless they've got different names now and they're called focus groups or something like that, I don't know. But it doesn't feel to me so much of an agenda, maybe that was a device used at that particular time because there was a lot of change going on of a particular type I don't know, What I do know is that a lot of those working parties, because I was on some of them, just went round in circles and never came up with anything because you just had a group of academics sat in a room with different opinions and it became an academic exercise rather than an exercise in actually achieving whatever the goal was of that particular working party.

Although you can see the disadvantages of a top-down change, you can also see some of the advantages in terms of actually getting the job done?

Of course!

When change is happening in the university, who do you feel is speaking for you on these issues, who is representing you? Do you feel you have a voice?

I have my own voice but I don't feel anyone is speaking for me as an individual.

Do you use your voice?

Yes. I'm not backward in coming forward but I'm probably not typical of my colleagues in that respect. What makes it more difficult within the (X) School, and this may be different in other schools, is we have a matrix management structure, which means that "Power" is not easily recognisable or locatable because programmes belong to the School and are managed by Programme Leaders. The people teaching on programmes belong to programme teams but also belong to academic groups and trying to identify where the chain of command is and what is the organisational structure of the School is very difficult because of that tension between programmes and groups. I think that's why, in terms of this idea of someone speaking up for us, or someone supporting me as an academic or as a member of staff. My Head of Academic Group has like all Heads of Academic Groups only has limited power. I even think the heads of school don't have a great deal of power realistically.

Are you a member of the union?

Yes, NATFHE. I think of NATFHE purely as an organisation I would turn to if I had a problem. I don't think of them as an organisation that really does much to represent employees' interests, but I think that's partly because we are a very under-unionised university, so I'm as much of the problem, as what I'm saying is if everybody felt like me there's no wonder we haven't got a very effective union, but I recognise that.

As an academic do you feel you have ever led change or acted as a change agent?

I think so at a micro level, at course level certainly, and possibly even at School level in a sense that we have a relatively inexperienced team of Programme Leaders, and I would be the most experienced Programme Leader even though I've only been a Programme Leader for 7 or 8 years, so yes. Also, because we have within our school, regular meetings between all the PL's and the PA's which is called the PL Meeting, and at that meeting we discuss lots of initiatives mainly to help improve processes and so on at undergraduate level, and to also have consistency across the programmes for certain things.

So you see a change agency the idea of being useful within the university?

Yes, definitely, more for implementation than anything else, because it's up to OVC and it's up to the Heads of School or the execs to devise strategies but not surprisingly it's not their job really to think about implementation; although I think they should do it more than they do. I guess that's just one of those inevitabilities and so it's the people in the middle who, when I say the middle I guess I mean the middle managers if you like, PL's and PA's and so on, it's their job to implement that, and to turn the idea into something more tangible and hopefully to do that in such a way that for the people "below" them it shouldn't be too onerous whatever the change is going to be.

So do you think the change process could be improved at SU? You say that you feel there are implementation problems.

Because I've not worked in enough other places, I don't know whether the feeling that I have about the way we work at SU which is the way I feel there are lots of decisions taken at strategic level without seemingly very much consideration for implementation and operational consequences of that strategic decision. I don't know if that's the norm within organisations and that if we went to JP Morgan or if we went to Barclays they'd say exactly the same, or whether that's something unique to SU. So, it's difficult to comment but what I do feel is – I'll give you an example, a silly boring example but it will help to illustrate the point. We've decided to change the way we run the dissertations on our undergraduate programmes and effectively what

we're doing is we're moving the whole process back so that students are allocated supervisors at the mid placement seminar in February, they work on their dissertation from February to October, they have their first submission of a piece of work in October, and they have a relatively speaking an early February hand-in so we've moved the whole process back. One of the consequences of that, and this is always going to be known, at least it all should have been known, it was certainly known by the people at my level, and ought to have been known by the people who implemented the decision, was that we therefore had to allocate supervisors in February which meant we had to put peoples names against students in February and this had to be loaded in February. So that when we came to then arrange the teaching for the following academic year which is usually done about now, you would have to start with these names already against these supervisors, these supervisors already have this loading. But instead the move that has been tried and we have resisted so far, is to go back and say oh dear we need to move these student from such and such supervisor to another supervisor. Now at the time those of us who had seen that this policy was going to be put in were saying – hang on a minute, have you thought about the consequences of this, and the response from the people who were making the strategic decision that this is the way we are going to operate the dissertation were effectively dismissing it and saying we will deal with it later.

What caused that then, miscommunication?

No, unwillingness in my view for people at the higher end of the university, the strategic end, to want to get involved in the minusi of implementation and them not thinking through the detail.

Do academics need anything from Senior Management to help them to adapt to change? Could Senior Management do anything to make it seem easier?

I think communication is important, I think people will accept a lot if they're kept informed of what's happening, even if they don't necessarily have a chance to change it. We find with our students if we keep them informed of the way things are going

we can more or less get away with anything, but if we don't tell them what's happening and the rumour mill starts and then you get cynicism and scepticism so I think communication is important. Reassurance is obviously important, because people need to know that this isn't going to affect their jobs in the sense that they are not going to lose their jobs, and obviously for certain types of things maybe training and development is important but I think that's difficult because, I'm going off on a tangent here, but people's experience of internal staff development is usually not very positive in my experience. If you take something like for example there's been more pressure on tutors to produce their slides for example in PowerPoint and to maybe to give students copies of slides at the beginning of lectures. These sorts of moves and obviously people who aren't very computer literate for them to adapt to this change probably would require a little bit of training but we find it's better if they have some one-to-one training as and when they need it, rather than send them on a PowerPoint Course, so by communication and reassurance possibly some training.

Do you think the reward process at SU right now helps implement change or doesn't help to implement change?

I'm quite lucky and I think colleagues generally in the (X) School probably, from what I hear anecdotally around the university, we appear to be one of the more enlightened schools in terms of allowances. For example, PL's get allowances for both time and financial, staff have been given allowances for learning and teaching, initiatives, PhD's obviously, we have a big collaboration at the moment with the (X) and (X) to produce an on-line degree, the people involved in development materials about the programme have got allowances, time allowances and I think other schools are following suit. I've been given an allowance both financial and time allowance for 3 years and I think it's only just starting to happen elsewhere. I don't feel that I'm being abused if you like, I'm getting rewarded for the extra work that I do, and if change.... one of the discussions we are having at the moment is we've got two new years of a new degree coming in next year, so we've got a new year 2 and a new year 4. Not many staff are effected dramatically but there's one member of staff particularly who has to prepare for 3 new units and that member of staff is asking for

some sort of remission to take that into account and I know that it is at least being discussed and considered whether or not it will actually happen I don't know.

Any final comments?

No I don't think so. It's an interesting subject, change is really very much to do with locus of control and there are so many stakeholders in the questions you are talking about. I think I should probably shut up here, that's enough for me.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Fourteen

Right, I'm doing this EdD on change in Higher Education and how academics react to such change in education. OK. The first thing I'd like to discuss is Higher Education as a sort of whole, outside of this university.

Right.

From your personal perspective, just looking out at Higher Education, do you find it changing or static? What are your thoughts on this?

Well I suppose, first of all, I've only got a small kind of ... I've only been here five years, so I can only, you know I don't take a really long term view because before I was in HE I probably didn't really have any opinion because it just happened kind of like. But I'd say it's . . . I'd say it's changing but probably not as rapidly as some people think it is and certainly not as rapidly as some people think it ought to. So I suppose if I visualised it, it would be a little bit like . . . I've probably got this wrong because I'm not a geologist, but a little bit like . . . when there are earthquakes and there's movement of plates and they're not all moving in the same direction and they're not all moving at the same speed and some of them are actually not moving but they're just shaking, if you know what I mean. So, you see what I mean? It's a kind of like ... there isn't a smooth transition to anything and there's some movement back. So there are different forces happening but overall, change, definitely lots of change.

So this change you're thinking of, then again from your own perspective looking out into Higher Education as a whole.

Generally, yes.

What do you find is changing?

Probably all of the main stakeholders groups' perceptions, expectations are changing, so you know, are the obvious ones, the government and the funding bodies. They are trying probably to streamline, to make it more efficient. Efficient doesn't mean effective necessarily, but to make it more efficient. Students because they're now increasingly viewing themselves as customers because they are up front expected to pay probably, and I'm guessing but you know, a tenth of the actual cost of . . . they don't see that, they say 'I'm paying to be here', you know, so they're seeing themselves as customers. Parents because parents are into choice, you know, they've started to learn about choice now for things like doctors and all that. So they want choice and they are into league tables so they're now more investigative and 'Oh but you shouldn't go there because it's ... 'you know, that kind of thing. So they are putting pressure on, I imagine, for it to be more responsive to what they expect it to be. The problem potentially being that parents have a . . . there's a wide range of expectations from parents. There will be some parents who simply expect it to be a meal ticket for little Johnny to get a good job. Almost regardless of whether little Johnny works hard or not for three years and they'll be others with different expectations, yes.

So you perceive change happening. What do you think is causing that change?

Oh that's a million dollar question isn't it? What's causing the change? I'd say it's probably about ... if I'm really honest and it's only because of the PhD I'm doing now, starting to do now, I'd say the change is fundamentally because we are now starting to think and act consumer in this area. I'm not necessarily saying I personally do, but that's not what you're asking and that has lots of implications and ramifications. Whereas, until recently, I think Higher Education probably lower, tertiary education and other kinds of public services were not consumer based. They didn't use the same language. They

didn't think in the same way. Now ... so that's a big society shift is causing all of it I would say.

How about global forces?

Well I suppose consumption is a global force I suppose but ... is it? I'm sure it is. I'm not, even though I was a Course Leader of a course that had lots of international students.

So you see it more as sort of a UK change?

I suppose indirectly it might be because the UK is saying 'But we've got to be competitive in a global economy. So what are they doing over there?' So I'd see that as a more indirect force. I may be wrong, because certainly, and one of the reasons I say that is certainly my experience of overseas, non-UK students, is that they've got a perception of our Higher Education system of something that perhaps it used to be some time ago and that's what they're buying which is quite interesting. In a sense they're buying the old fashioned almost version of it and so they, to me personally, aren't driving the change because they want it to be like their mums told them it was or what the High Commission told them it was or whatever.

So would you say this change process, that's underway right now, are you happy about it? Good, bad, indifferent?

I'm certainly not indifferent. Because of the fact that it is like I was saying, I know the tape can't pick my hands up moving here, but you know because the changes are to be in lots of different directions, then I am happy about some of them, comfortable and think some are good, less happy about some others. I know that's a bit of a cop out answer in a way. But, no, the ivory tower's sitting there doing stuff because it simply interests you regardless of every other influence stakeholding is of course archaic and I accept that.

If we come out of Higher Education as a whole then to SU as a specific is your working environment at SU changing?

My working environment, so I've only now got five years to think about.

Yes.

A little bit, I'd say a little bit. I'd say far less than perhaps I perceive other people think it is. I'd say it's changing a bit in the sense of the demands placed on you from students, their expectations and the impact of the efficiencies, I suppose, which from some level will be seen as good because 'God we're cramming loads of students through that one classroom' as an example. Well that obviously may have a negative impact on me a little bit.

So these changes that are happening to a small part of your working environment, are these changes coming from you or from somewhere else, from outside? Are you making these changes happen or . . . ?

Yeah, I see what you're saying. I'm probably making ... I am ultimately making them happen because (Senior Manager) won't hear this tape will he, because I ignore poor decisions from above. I just don't do them if I can . . . and most of the time I can get away with it ... because if I see them as they'll have no value, this is not right, it's been ill thought through or whatever, then I often won't do them anyway or I'll do them with such scant kind of care that it only takes me five minutes. So I suppose it's me that's driving them because in the sense that forces for change are outside of me but I'm selecting the ones that I think are appropriate and I'm doing those ones. The other change is that each year, hopefully, you get better at what you do and you reflect on things and you talk to

people and that ... but they're usually minor changes, you know, 'Oh I'll do it a slightly different way.'

So how do you feel about these changes then, positive, negative, bit of both?

Both, yeah, both, I'm happy for change. I'm, you know, I understand ... I'm not trying to say I know the literature you know, but I understand some of the principles of change management and all that kind of stuff and I'm not someone who .. I try not to be anyway, someone who 'I'm going to resist it because it's change'. But I am ... and I think I'm right to be, I do question the changes and if I see them as really not being right and negative in terms of impact on my or the students or my colleagues experience, then I'll try and fight against them. But if they're not, fine, I'm happy with it.

I'm glad you introduced colleagues. That's the next question actually. How do you perceive colleagues are managing with change?

This is probably a classic third person effect answer but I'm going to give it anyway, less well than me, generally. I think some of them perceive the change to be bigger and I don't, you know, I'll be interested if ever I do read what you find eventually. But my perception, as I said earlier, is that there is change and there's pressure for change but it's not as massive as perhaps a lot of people think it's 'Oh but this is going to change my whole life style and change the whole way I do everything' and I don't see it quite like that. So because I think a lot of colleagues think it's bigger than it is ... and I might be proved to be naive I don't know ... then they are tenser, up tight about it perhaps and perhaps a little more defensive some of them.

Some people have described the burden of change. Is there a burden to change?

Yes there is I think because, and I doubt it's just in Higher Education, and I doubt it's just in SU, but change involves, takes time, in the sense that, what I mean by that is, if I'm asked to do things in a different way I need to de-learn and re-learn and both take time. That is never built into the equation of, not just your timetable, but you know, your life and social life balance. So it does.

So in this working environment then, who picks up the pieces do you perceive?

In terms of?

If change has a negative effect, if change is a burden, who's putting it back together, getting the show on the road?

Probably lecturers and senior lecturers, people that are actually doing it every day take the most of that burden I'd say because I don't think ... and I think almost it has to be in a way because managers . . . people who are more distant from what we're actually, you know, the front line delivery, can't take from you the time it takes you to do something different. You've got to do it differently; it's got to take you that time. And because they don't build it in, they don't say 'Look there's a lot of changes at the moment so we're not going to work on an eighteen hour we're going to work on a sixteen hour or whatever for a year' doesn't happen. It's us that take most of the burden. Of course I imagine that managers perceive that they take the burden, but that's life isn't it, you know, that's the way it is. And of course actually, sorry, one other thing. Students sometimes take the burden indirectly when we individually don't take it well and therefore we're not ready to deliver good stuff to them or whatever, you know, poor quality, or don't turn up in some people's case. Then they have the, you know, they have the negative impact of change I'd say.

How would you describe your relationship with Senior Management? Do you know them well?

I know them as well as I'd like to thank you very much. I'm not sure of the right words really but usually quite adult and as equal as they will allow it because I believe it should be more equal than it is, particularly in Higher Education where I'm not convinced that big hierarchies are good. So I tend, as I think I alluded to earlier, I tend to 'just because it's come from the Head of School does not mean it is right' is my ... I'll still interrogate it. It will have to be through other people now because I've stopped being the (Governance) rep, but through being a (Governance) rep or on School Committee, I'll happily speak up and say for other people or for myself and I'll certainly continue to do that for myself. I won't do it for other people because it's not, you know, it's no longer my, part of my role. So I ... and in all honesty mostly they listen and sometimes they respond. But of course they are working in very tight budgetary whatever.

If we come out of your life at the university,

Yeah.

And look at your overall life, how do you feel about change? Is change something that excites you, worries you?

I'm not a great risk taker if we're talking real risks, you know. I'm certainly not somebody who ... I'm a controlled risk taker. So I don't know whether that's really a risk at all because I will certainly do ... I will evaluate and then go . . . and then take the risk. I'm not a plunger into ... I'm not someone who would suddenly 'Right I'm going to live in . . . (another country),' although I want to. But clearly people who know me know I've wanted to for a long time and part of the reason I haven't is because I haven't just packed my bag and gone, so I'm not deluding myself. I'm not a great risk taker. But I'm not

averse to change, you know, I'm not somebody who ... I'm not a traditionalist in the sense of 'It's been done like this . . . why change it?' at all.

So that would be your coping mechanism then, when it comes to general change in life?

Yeah.

You think it through?

Yeah, probably I would . . . yes, that's probably a good way of describing it. Although I probably I'm not sure I'd see it as coping because that's kind of got a slightly negative feel about 'Oh, how do I cope,' because sometimes it's positive, sometimes it's good. Sometimes I'm glad I've done something that I've never done before or whatever and so . . . do you want me just to say as an example or not?

Sure, yes.

I was just thinking last academic year, oh I'm back to education ...

That's OK.

And I was talking to (X), a colleague, and (X), another colleague, and I was saying 'How could we . . .' because he keeps going on about virtual every bloody things and I'm not convinced it's, you know, it's part of the future or not. So I was saying 'Well I'm going to make, rather than a virtual, I'm going to make the students have a real experience.' So instead of doing a seminar and a lecture on personal selling, I organised a morning out and we went selling, buying, we got experience of other people personal selling and you know it was interesting. (X) said afterwards 'You're really willing to take risks and be innovative in your approach.' So what was interesting to me . . . it was hard work

actually organising it, not a cop out from doing three hours. It took a day to organise it all because I did it well I think. But I thought that to me was a really small risk, very happy to take it, i.e. if it had been dreadful and a student had gone 'What a bloody waste of time.' Fine I wouldn't have done it ... might not have done it again and we'd have given them a lecture and seminar instead. As it was we'll probably do it this year too.

OK. Coming back then to within the university and your appointment. Can you tell me about any recent strategic changes to policy or process that you've noticed?

Policy, there's new regulations as in Assessment Regulations for both MAs and BAs that have come in with which you'll be aware of too I guess. So that's a policy change isn't it?

Yeah.

Procedural change, oh there are bound to be some. We get so many from ADQ it's just hard to keep up with them really.

So you do notice these changes coming in and affecting you?

I notice them coming in and I select which ones are going to affect me, yeah.

Would you describe these changes as window dressing or profound?

I imagine the senders think they're profound. Most of us receivers think they are ... no, that's not all of the time ... much of it is window dressing and much of it misses the real point I think in terms of it becomes another paper chase rather than ...

Why do you think that? What gives you that impression?

Having read some of them and having commented on some of them and having questioned the people that are proposing them to kind of get more aware of why, you know, what's the motive behind them; it's often not the way in which it's presented to you. So it's sold to you in a different way, if that makes sense.

Do you think, (A14), that accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

Yep. Just as I see being critical of everything that's presented to me as being part of my job. And that includes those who present change i.e. 'Yeah, let me have a look. Let me be critical . . . ' I don't mean, you know, I mean critique it, that's part of my job as well then. Certainly what isn't part of my job, in my opinion, is just accepting what people have decided at a more remote base is the best thing to do.

So if you looked at change as a line, sort of beginning, middle, end? Where do you think the university, SU, is right now?

In terms of its changes for ...

Yes.

. . . everything.

Change process, yes.

Oh I see. Oh . . . middle.

Middle?

Yeah, probably just coming out of the middle. Does that make sense? So moving away from this ... I doubt we're learning about how ... we should be beyond understanding what change is about and learning how to cope with it. We should be at the higher end of that by now I would have thought.

What are you sort of expecting to come at you next?

What's coming up next?

What sort of strategic change do you think that will impact on you?

Crudely putting it, making money; using some of the other time that some people think we spend doing nothing i.e. that scholarly activity, reading a book to me, which I did a lot of in August, I didn't put it down as work, but I read it because it related to my work. And those things, well they don't make us money. So I think the pressure will be 'But where are you making us money?' 'Where are you contributing to the bottom line?' And that's something that partly I'm already getting involved in through the Teaching Learning Scheme, although it's not come off yet. So I'm again, I'm not thinking that's definitely bad and I'm going to try and avoid it. I'm thinking 'How can I make that work for me as well?' and in a fair way, so it's fair to the university and still fair to me.

So you would probably be planning to react in the same way that we've discussed so far?

Yes.

In terms of assessing it and then implementing what you think is ...

Yeah, assessing and then trying to kind of pick the best approach for me that will satisfy, at some level, will satisfy those people who say that people ought to be contributing to the bottom line or whatever it might be.

Is there any third party such as friends, family, union, peers that influence your reaction to changes?

That's a good question, I've not really thought of. That generally influence my ...

Changes here within SU?

Right. I suppose a little bit but not a lot if I'm honest, no. I mean I probably ... I'm always interested in certain people's views on something. Not always because . . . it's not a matter of 'What do they think? Oh I'll agree with it.' But it's always interesting to get a certain person's 'Oh that's their take on it.' ... and then somebody else. Deliberately somebody that's very different from that. But, no, I don't have any mentors both officially or unofficially I'm afraid or any celebrity's ear. You know what I mean?

How about union reaction to change? Does that influence you at all?

Does it influence me? It would be one of the ones that I looked at to see along with individual colleagues, I'd also see 'What's the union's take on this?' Because, not because ... I'm a part of the union and happy to be so, but not because 'Right, well they've said it. I'll do it that way.' But because sometimes they will ... they'll pick up something and say 'But the implications of this, you haven't considered this,' and it's just 'Ah, yes, that's a good point;' which of course the managers often won't highlight. So it's about getting info from lots of different sources and different perspectives. Sometimes the union can put ... I mean yes, sometimes they'll put a spin on it and you

think 'Oh come on.' But other times they'll put a spin and you say 'Yeah, I hadn't thought of that, that's worth thinking about, yeah.'

How about your colleagues? How do you feel they react to change?

Ones I know well?

Yes.

How do they? I would imagine some of them are fairly similar to me. I think, if I'm honest, which I'm supposed to be, a lot of them I think probably just accept it but then don't embrace it. So 'Oh yeah, I've got to do that now' and it becomes another tick box thing for them.

So it's not embedded in any way?

No, and it's done superficially and it's not thought about and it's not considered. Their coping mechanism, different to mine, might be 'OK I'll do them but if they expect me to put any effort and time in, that's another thing.' Whereas my approach would be 'I'm not going to do some of them and I'm going to do some of them, those I've considered to be worthy of doing.' And then I'll do them well and embed them as you say. Not all of my colleagues, but I do get a sense that some of them and that's probably because they sense they're being bombarded more and more and I sense less of a bombardment.

Do you have any perception or any sort of feeling for how the university wants you to react to change?

Well I would imagine they would ideally want me to just do what I'm told. I don't mean that in a silly way.

No, do it in a business way.

Yes. They would prefer me to have the kind of relationship I used to have when I was in the commercial world where I was less able and therefore less critical of people more senior than me.

Any particular reason why you think this?

Because I would say a traditional management model, commercial model, is being implemented in many universities now and probably, and I would say probably in this one.

For the time, you've got twelve minutes and I'm on the last page.

Oh fine.

So it's looking hopeful.

OK. I'm not trying to rush by the way.

Yes, OK. So we've discussed that we feel there is strategic change here at SU. Where do you think the push is coming from? Is it coming down from management? Is it coming up from academics? Is it a mixture? Is it coming from somewhere else? Where's the driver for change here at this university?

I would say ... and here's maybe one of our, in my view, problems, is that the push is nearly all down and sideways and probably external to management and then down from them or just down from them. And so academics tend to be more reactive to that rather

than say . . . and I imagine that some of the older, more traditional universities that are established, there's a counter to that to say 'OK, that's your way of looking at change, here's our plan of action for change.' Then at least you're responding not with a 'No, I don't want to do that.' but 'Here's an alternative' and I think one of our problems is as an immature bunch of academics . . . I don't mean that highly personally, is that we don't have an alternative plan of action for change and so the perception is they just want to carry on like . . . they don't want change.

So you see it as a sort of top-down?

Very much.

Trickle down.

In this particular university, yes.

Do you think the academics contribute to change in policy and process here at the university?

A bit!

In what way a bit?

Well, as an example, as a member of (Governing body) I objected to some of the changes in some of the new regulations last year along with colleagues and they went through another consultation process and OK, they still came out half baked in my view but slightly more baked than they were. So there are mechanisms for example Senate, example School Committee. But the mechanisms are, as with all these things I think, there's an in built majority if you like of management. There's an in-built, within the

system, the system itself is built to support the system which is the management system not the academic system. So on the one hand there are mechanisms but most academics don't get involved in it, or they don't put much time into it because they feel they're putting enough time into work. So they don't get as involved as they could and therefore don't take charge. For instance, School Committee could easily be dominated by academics if it wanted to be, if enough academics went and participated all the time. But it isn't, so it's dominated by people with Manager in their title. I know I'm starting to sound like an 'us and them' but I do feel, to be honest, there is ...

You do feel a bit 'us and them' then?

Yeah I do feel a bit of it. Not, you know, I'm not quite ready for revolution but you know what I mean.

So you perceive that the changes are made probably by government and our guys, SU Management, a sort of mix that designs change and it trickle down. Who implements the change? Is it us the academics implementing or is it management implementing it?

I suppose it depends exactly what it is because some things that change don't have massive immediate bearing I suppose on the teaching and learning. The bit, you know, the bit that we're supposed to perhaps spend most of our time doing, in a classroom or in tutorials or whatever, those bits can be implemented by managers and administrators. But ultimately I would have thought anything, any change here that is really significant must impact us, me and my colleagues and the students. And so, for it to work, it's got to be implemented by us.

So you feel it's implemented by us?

Sometimes but accidentally or by stealth, you know, 'I better do that.' So it's not . . . you used the word embedded, it's not embraced, it's not done in a way 'I can't wait to really do this' and 'Let's get' you know, there's not that sense of, you know, there's no excitement about it certainly. So it might be a begrudging 'Oh I'll go about it this way this year' kind of thing, which is probably indicative of a sense of feeling like I don't see the benefit of it particularly.

So if you perceive we've got a top-down change system now. Why do you think we have that? You said you don't think the academics . . . there's not enough of them that really want to get involved.

No they're not.

Is there any other reason why this system seems to have evolved?

Partly it's because we've become a university when Higher Education is being looked at much more in a vocational small 'v' way, so we've got to look at it in a different way. Partly because of the nature of the university we are, we've got to respond. We can't be quite so 'Yes I know it's irrelevant to the economy and no-one works on it but I'm quite interested ... ' and then come up with some bizarre, weird and wonderful. So there are more restrictions I suppose. And time, most people here think they spend enough time doing, you know, just getting through the teaching load and all the marking which of course is going to become a burden.

So overall do you perceive then that you're part of the change process or it gets done to you?

Now back to a personal level then, I'm part of it because of my filter mechanism that I talked about earlier. Because I go 'Yeah, we'll do that' 'No, not going to do that.' And so I feel I'm part of it because part of that being part of it is also resisting some of it where I think it's silly.

Do you feel that if you wanted to contribute to a change process that you know about the issues, that you know enough to get the big picture?

I might not know enough about of all of the big picture issues but I would feel confident enough to know that I could know quite easily if that makes sense. So I think, and again it's probably, I imagine, you know, I'm guessing but 80/90% of academics don't think they can fire off an email to the Vice Chancellor about a question. But you can. And the likelihood is you'll get a response. And if your question is sensible and polite you'll get a sensible polite response. So, you know, as an example if you think 'Well I don't really know about that' you can find out. There's quite a lot of transparency here I think. But it's a bit like 'I've got this beautiful transparent thing but no-one looks through it.'

As an academic (A14) do you feel that you've ever led change or acted as a change agent?

Yes. Usually not on a strategic level for the whole university because of the things I'm involved in but as Course Leader inevitably and rightly you're the key change agent for that particular course and so, without going into the minute details, the MA that I was involved in, lots of changes, some of them simply because I thought they were good and was persuasive enough to get other people to agree.

So you are comfortable with that? You think that change agency is a suitable strategy for embedding change at a university?

Yes. But of course that example was at a level where you're talking about maybe eight other academics, maybe ten, and four or five other people. And so, yes, you can do that. But if it ... I can't quite see how that might translate to a more overall in the university. Maybe it can.

So just a few thoughts to finish off with, we've discussed what the change process is at SU right now and your reaction to it and how you perceive it and ideas as to how the change process could be improved? Anything that you think would help the process?

Well I suppose to try and be consistent with what I've said so far, more involvement in a sense almost ... and I went to a conference at (X) University ... why am I telling you this? Because chatting to some of the academics there over a beer there was a very clear sense that they saw part of their job as being inputters to this process. That wasn't an add-on extra, that was 'No, that's part of my job.' So that's the biggest thing that could come here, having the majority of academics who felt that 'It's part of my job to get involved in this and contribute in whatever ways it might be.' Not as an add-on, not as 'Oh well I'll volunteer for that' begrudgingly or whatever but just because it's part of ... you know we call ourselves a profession and I would think one of the definitions for me to make us worthy of that would be that you want to be and are involved in all the significant changes that affect your profession. Just as the medical profession clearly are. So I think that would be the single biggest change here in SU that would be good. And that can be facilitated if people really thought it was good by, as they do at (the other university), giving you some time to do it, your contribution to the wider university as opposed to just being expected to do that in addition to your X number of hours that you work.

Do you think academics need anything to help them adapt to changes in their working environment? Is there anything that management could do to make change more acceptable or make academics happier about it or make change more successful or quicker?

I suppose ... I don't think there's any one issue

I mean we've talked about the resource issues.

Yes, which is an obvious one I suppose.

And is there a communication, staff development issues?

Well I do think that there's quite a reasonable transparency here and quite a lot of opportunities but it's an opt-in system and therefore many people opt-out and therefore don't get involved in it. But equally those who ... those more Senior Managers who 'make the decisions' as it were or implement the government's decisions give ... there is a transparency but to some extent it's like 'Look you can see what we're doing' but that's not quite the same as 'Look come and do it with us'. So getting people involved at an earlier process, not just getting them to be able to see what you're doing and of course it, as with so many different places, organisations, it seems that the way things are structured, if you want to become a Senior Manager in the traditional career sense, progress, you have to move more and more away from getting involved with teaching, learning, students. And of course therefore that is going to build a barrier and a distance isn't it. When you've got the Head of ... our Head of Academic Standards and Quality or whatever who hasn't taught for over ten years in a classroom, that's a recipe for not good edicts.

Just one final question then.

And I didn't name him.

No.

But it rhymes with ...

Do you think the reward process for academics at SU has any impact on the success of change implementation?

No, if I'm honest. There may be things I'm not aware of.

Is there any way the reward system could be adapted then to reward change implementation?

I'm sure it could because there are not many walks of life where you can't put in the effort, in effect, you know, sales bonuses or whatever the equivalent might be, and them not having some impact. But I don't think they are at the moment because I can't think of anything that makes me think that that's it. I can't even think of anything that I think people are trying to use rewards to do that if that makes sense. And of course there is ... I don't know how wide spread it is but of course lots of academics don't come into it just for the dosh. I mean some of them come into it because if they weren't here they'd be in a cardboard box. But some come in because, you know, they've moved away from it being all about money. So there could be reward systems but I think they might not be just financial ones, they might need to be more about whatever personal development or whatever or in a wider sense of acclaim, academic acclaim might be a way of doing it. I don't know.

Any final comments on this topic area?

On change?

Yes, and people's reaction to change.

Yes, somebody said to me ... it's a cliché I know but I can't remember who it was but somebody said or I read that one of the problems of this idea of change is that most people see change equaling progress and change does not equal progress. Progress equals progress. In other words, you've got to recognise that change can sometimes be for the worst just as sometimes change can be for the better. And the trouble with some, in my view, people whose jobs are about implementing change is that they only ever recognise that change equals progress and it doesn't necessarily. You only have to think of your own personal lives to think of changes where something's happened and they are not progress, you know, so that would be a nice ... and it ... and I suppose last thing, no, I shouldn't say this really, but people don't, you know, people take these jobs for instance they take jobs that are called Head of Quality. You need to think about what quality means before you do anything. Don't go rushing and doing things but what does quality actually mean. So people should, in this area, what does change actually mean. That's all.

OK. Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Fifteen

(A15), I'm doing my Doctorate on the changse in Higher Education but particularly how academics are reacting to this, so I'm not assuming that you have any prior knowledge about what's happening, I'm just looking at your perspective of it, OK? If we look at Higher Education as a whole, some people term it the market of Higher Education, is your perspective that it's changing or static? What do you think's happening right now to the whole?

Oh it's changing very dramatically, and depending what happens with all the different categories of university and so on, you know, some places will disappear and some will do particularly well out of it.

Do you want to tell me a little more then about your perspective as to how it's changing, what you've noticed happening in the market as a whole?

You mean in terms of the government figures of 50/50 that's coming.

That's one change then. Anything else that you're aware of that's happening right now?

Well it's very difficult, I suppose, I mean you've got the broader picture in terms of the numbers that the government are trying to get into Higher Education but then you've got the more specific. I mean on my degrees there's less and less people going down these routes, even at school, never mind when they get here. So there's a particular decline in those areas, despite the push to expand HE. So there's obviously conflict, you know, to a large extent and it's not like we need less engineers supposedly or less scientists or whatever but, as you know, things like … there are popular subjects like psychology, media and so on that attract a huge proportion of students.

OK. So you've noticed Widening Participation, you've noticed there's a difference in the qualifications. Anything else you've noticed that's changing Higher Education?

Well we're a symptom of what happens where we're going aren't we because if you look at some of the syllabuses and things that they have, there are certain areas that are no longer covered at 'O' level, well GCSE or 'A' level, and so you have to make up that deficiency when they come in. So you're forever changing what you deliver. Of course it means maybe a bit more work for the first years to change their attitudes to Higher Education, the balance in being independent learners as well, rather than it just being delivered to them. So that whole aspect has changed but that's inevitable if you change the system beneath it.

So this change in Higher Education that you're noticing, what do you think is pushing these changes?

Well that's quite questionable. I mean it depends what you think about some of the educational theories and things. To me, you know, individually, I think a lot is very low down in school, a lot of it's a bit too touchy, feely, and there isn't enough learning of the basic facts. Learning your time tables when you're five years old are, you know, just a normal part of things and once you've got that you've got that for life, those skills.

So do you think these changes are UK based? Or is there any sort of global pressures?

Well the government claiming in terms of the 50 ... [inaudible] well not the 50/50 model but very much in terms of elite universities and research universities. You know they've seen this sort of practice in China and other countries and they've come back with this 'Wouldn't this be a great idea here' but of course we've got a whole totally different structure and both social culture, economical and so on. And so, you know, it's about how these models best fit. Now you're just creating elitism as far as I'm concerned.

OK. So do you don't see any sort of globalisation? You think it's the UK?

Not necessarily, because it depends which aspect to look at. I mean fees for instance, you see that Australia and these sort of places have [inaudible] I feel it inhibits some people coming and being from a sort of working class background I can see if I was in the current situation, I wouldn't be in Higher Education full stop. Just wouldn't have been able to afford it.

So overall when you look at Higher Education, the changes that are happening (A15), do you think it's mostly good, mostly bad, bit of both?

Well it is a mix, it is a mix. I mean one thing that is better is there are a larger range of courses to cope with different career aspirations, a lot more applications. I think students go away with a better set of skills, transferable skills, than they ever did from Higher Education. So you have got those advantages, but at the same time, despite the push forward, you know, how many people have been excluded by the current system?

So you see it as a bit of both?

Yeah.

OK. If we look at SU now, is your working environment changing? Has it changed over the last X years?

Oh dramatically.

Can you tell me a bit about how it's affected you? What you've noticed.

Well I mean the whole … I mean I think it's a society change for everybody right across, not just at SU, but if you consider that the levels of communication that we have now. You know, each morning you come in, you've probably got maybe an hour or two, sometimes, of email to get back to, full of jobs. You've got your normal post. You might have voice mail messages left. You've got notes under your door from students. And of course all these sorts of mail, the person that sent you something, it's immediate for them, it's a must now but you can't possibly cope with that and that's just a side of all businesses, as far as I can see, everywhere. We've all gone a bit mad with this communication and people aren't very good at prioritising what's important.

Right, any other changes you've noticed over the last X years for you and your working environment?

Well my whole job description has changed. I came in as a sort of early lecturer to begin with, new into Higher Education, at the time the emphasis was very much on the teaching. I was in quite an unusual situation where I've always been involved with developing people. So right from the time I started, we were involved with working with them and that's continued. But my responsibilities now are huge, now I'm in charge of six undergrad, seven at the moment, undergraduate courses, you know, overall. Just the thought of writing the Course Monitoring Reports for all these things!

So these changes that you perceive as happening are they coming from within you or are they coming from outside of you? Who's directing these changes?

Well it's a bit of both. You've got to change and adapt to environmental changes around you. So the situation is constantly changing, even in terms of how much we go out in terms of outreach and so on. The emphasis on Open Days compared to in previous years well maybe for 30 places we may have had 300 applications, you know, which was true of the (School name) courses. Now you really need to convert every other person that

applies. So that's quite tough but you've got to respond to that. If you don't then, you know, it's not just yourself you let down but let down the whole team.

So you feel the changes, in a way, are partly driven by you?

Yes in a reaction to the situation around. You can't sit still. You can't live in a vacuum.

So a change comes in and you respond to that change.

You have to change to that yeah.

Right overall then would you say the changes happening to you over these X years are mostly positive, mostly negative, bit of both? How do you feel about it?

Again, a bit of both, you know it is a mix if you thought about it in those terms. You know you obviously become yourself ... see yourself becoming, not quite draconian but very sort of ... well I suppose I've always been quite irate but those sorts of things come out even more in certain situations because there isn't enough time in some situations to be anything else. But, I don't know really, I'm sure that it is a mix of things yeah and it's just developing in any job and the job's changing as time goes by. I mean it's a matter of moving up in terms of senior ranking and you have more responsibilities with other people working with you as well.

So you feel that you're changing, your role is changing, the work experience is changing, how about your colleagues are they changing?

Well of course, well everyone's always changing, you know, we're all experiencing different things all the time which causes people to change and we can't ... I mean I don't know how anyone lives in isolation of that.

So this sort of situation of constant change that you seem to be expressing, does this affect your working relationships with colleagues at all?

Well sometimes it does because there's obviously pressures and deadlines to be met and if some people ... you see some people not pulling out their finger maybe as much as they could, then of course you get concerned, because it does lead . . . you know it's bad for the team, it's bad for the whole group really.

Some people say there's a burden of change. Do you think there's a burden of change (A15)?

I think there is in everything, I don't think it's limited to education or anything. I think if you're out the business world, it's just as cut-throat, and we're starting to move towards that. I think academics have had it pretty cushy in the past and you know if you still go to traditional universities then they're in an ivory tower often, not always, and I know they have the pressures of [inaudible] and research instead but even that, in some institutes, isn't a huge pressure because they've got the big names and so on. But I don't see why this is any different to anywhere else.

How would you describe your relationship with (your School) Managers?

Well within the School I don't have a problem. They're considered as colleagues, I've been here a long time. I've knew them when they weren't Senior Academics. I suppose outside the School, you know, in terms of the Pro Vice Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor, I mean they're not people that you normally come across, maybe at the odd meeting or something and in a different sort of way.

Do you feel you have a relationship with them?

Not really.

OK. Coming outside of university now, just thinking of you and your whole life situation, how do you tend to feel about change in your life in general? Are you the sort of person where change can worry you or change excites?

Go with the flow I suppose. Sometimes when things happen you think 'Oh well.' But you can't be too reflective otherwise you'll just never move on and you'll never be happy.

So when you have change in your life outside of the university how do you usually cope with it?

You just have to get on with it. You know I think this society's unusual where we have that luxury of looking back. I mean we came across as refugees in the (a date) and you came with what little you had, your whole system had been destroyed. So you just get up and go with it. How else can you deal with life? Especially, you know, with dramatic things that you experienced.

OK. Let's talk about strategic change at the university, big changes to policies and processes. Can you tell me about any recent strategic changes to policy or process that you've experienced, that you've noticed?

Be more specific.

Well some people are saying Widening Participation; some people are saying they've gone quality mad. So big strategic changes, what have you noticed? What's impacted on you?

Well I mean all of those things do, you know, being involved with recruitment for courses Widening Participation's an important thing but not as easy to achieve in this area, you know, compared if you're in a big city like (X) or (X) or wherever. So you've got to be realistic about some of the targets set. But having ... we know that but at the same time I know that we have some of the poorest areas in Europe in (X) where the Travellers have settled and so on, so really deprived economically areas and there's a lot more we can do there and I think that's appropriate that we go out there. I think that's important. In terms of quality control, OK, sometimes you might feel the paperwork's a bit onerous and too much but my concern is maybe we've never really monitored ourselves properly in the past. What does worry me is when you have committee and then you get lots of sub-committees of this and that and there really isn't enough time in the day to do any of that effectively and it just becomes a big joke really. And it's really, you know, people are just being a lot more focused about what should be done and going with that but it can get too complicated.

Any more comments about what I'd call big strategic change at the university? Again this is from your own perspective as an academic.

Well I suppose the university does try and consult, you know, the same as everyone else, whatever development it is, they try and consult. The questions on how effective that may be considered. The university has grown dramatically in the past ten years, you know, so it is quite difficult to get everyone's opinion and then everyone feels too busy to be involved and then when it comes back it's 'Oh but I ..' you know 'I didn't think that this was appropriate.' So it's a difficult one. And what you hope is the people that are leading are quite clearly focused and bear in mind other people's interests.

Would you describe these recent strategic changes as profound change, embedded change or window dressing?

Well some of it's necessary, again about moving the markets. Some of it's dictated and we have no choice, whatever White Paper or all the government initiatives that have come out, you know, you have to toe the line. And OK there are forums if you don't want to toe the line that these things go through. But there's a place where it's appropriate to be a maverick isn't there and there are times when it's not the most appropriate thing, it could be the be end all of everything here. We not the most affluent of universities, we haven't been around very long and I think we're still a poly. You know we had been a poly for very long. So I think you do have to be very careful in terms of just jumping up and down about everything that comes through. How you bring those changes in is I suppose the important question.

So is this, as I say, embedded change, do you perceive it to be deep change?

In what way?

Well, some academics have said the university management looks at a government dictate and then just does some window dressing so it looks like we're following that new regulation. Other people say no, that they're totally serious about this and this is very deep embedded change that we have to come to terms with.

Well it depends. I mean there are so many initiatives coming out on education every day. I mean I'm glad we're not in schools really because that's like every five minutes almost. But, you deal with some more seriously than others. You sort of have to say 'OK, which of these priorities are important for our institute?' and you address those and others you might window dress because you can't do everything. You can't please everybody all of the time either.

So when a big strategic change arrives, in your position, what is your thinking or action process? Do you interpret it? Do you just action it? Do you fight it in any way?

It depends what it is. You know, we've had various things come through the quality committees where you think 'Well actually that probably isn't a good idea' and other things you say 'Well yeah, we think the students would benefit from that, it wouldn't lower standards and so on' so you might go with it. It really depends where it's coming from but of course you'd have to think about it, discuss it and go from there and you've really got to consider the long term impacts of that.

Yeah, because some academics have simply told me it's not worth fighting, just get on with it and implement it.

That's apathy isn't it?

So you basically like to be a little reflective?

Well I think you have to be and I think one thing that I do is that I do think strategically about it, bear in mind my little area might be quite small when you talk about the University as a whole but it is looking at everything in a holistic manner as well and how the pieces will fit together.

So do you think accepting change is part of your job as an academic?

I think it is part of anybody's job anywhere. The world is continually changing and fluctuating but, you know, modernisation in terms of IT or whatever.

So if you think of change in Higher Education sort of as a line do you think we are at the beginning of this change process, in the middle, at the end?

I think it's just ongoing for ever. I don't think you ever get ... I'd be worried if you got into academia and it stopped because where are you taking those boundaries, where are you developing? It really goes against all those principles to me.

Do you have any expectations of what the next big strategic change will be that will impact on you?

Yeah, but I can't think at the moment.

Anything you think is coming down the pipeline that will impact on your role.

Most things do, most things, somewhere along the line, do. At this moment I can't....

Is there any third party that influences your reaction to change? Like a spouse or friends, or the union?

Well I think they do. I mean you know you obviously go and you discuss it with people which includes in my case my spouse, my colleagues here and friends and that allows me to think it through and make my own decisions and decided what to do and so on. So yeah I think that again you've got to have third parties there of whatever natures. It's really up to you who you pick for that. I know for some people, work is a separate thing; they don't talk about it at home. Which is fine, but you still need to discuss issues with colleagues. Sometimes it's about interpreting those changes, what do they actually mean and what does it require? Is it quite a minimal thing or is it quite a major thing.

When a big strategic change comes through do you know what the union position is or does that have any impact on your reaction?

It gives me food for thought.

So do you normally know what the union position is?

Well I'm a member of the AUT so, you know, you get their emails on discussions and all the rest of it and they put the victims on and of course you always hear about what's happening with NAFTE don't you and generally. I wouldn't always say I know about the specific detail but you generally know which way they're moving in terms of whether they consider it favourably or not and depending what those issues are I might find out a bit more about it.

So I seem to have picked up from you that when a big strategic change comes along you tend to reflect on it and then implement it.

If I think it's appropriate.

If you think it's appropriate. What do you do if it's not appropriate?

If it's not appropriate you go through the appropriate channels. If it's a quality type issue or if it's related to programmes you go through those various committees and so on and you feed back and not all change always happens, not all suggestions, you know, are taken up. If you think it's a good idea you might say 'Let's lead on this'.

And do you perceive that's how the university would like you to react?

I presume so.

Fair enough. Right, where does the strategic change push come from at SU? Do you perceive it sort of as coming down from management or up from academics or maybe coming from somewhere else?

I think it comes from the government and other bodies, reports and things that come through about Higher Education. I think a lot of the big [inaudible]

So it's left of the government and then that push goes into where at SU, from your perspective?

It goes into the VC/Pro VC's office and certain things filter through. On other aspects, in terms of courses, that comes from the bottom-upwards, you know, from academics talking to a majority of people, to students and saying that we feel there may be a demand here and taking those ideas up. So it depends what the issues are but the big strategic come often, I think, from higher up.

OK. So you see big strategic changes coming down but you see smaller changes at the sort of course and School level maybe coming up?

Yeah.

Alright, so you feel that academics contribute to change at university but only on sort of like the unit and School issue? Do you perceive academics contributing for the big strategic changes?

Well I think they do. Often it might be Senior Management and so on but each School has its various committees on different aspects that take things through and where things are discussed, you know, with the wider School as a whole as well and then things are taken back. So I think it does work for both levels.

OK, what do you like or dislike about this current process? Are you happy with the way it runs right now?

Well I mean some things go favourably and some things don't do they? So it's a difficult one. I mean I do feel people are genuinely trying and if people could make a better suggestion and different systems and so on, you know, I do feel that it would be given some consideration.

Why do you think change at SU happens this way? Is it simply efficient?

I don't know if it's thought about.

You think it just . . . there's an organic element to it then?

Yes

We've just developed this system.

I think so but then you see if you talk to someone like (Senior Manager) I'm sure that they feel that there's system in place and maybe because we don't work at that sort of level I don't always necessarily see that. In many cases I think that it is quite easy to see how things filter each way but not always.

It's your perspective I'm interested in.

Yeah. Well I think there are systems in place, yeah. I don't think it's always obvious how they work and, you know, don't get anyone to produce a chart, a flow chart, trying to show that which I think they do do from time to time but it would become dated quite quickly too.

So when change is happening (A15), do you feel part of the process, or do you just feel that it's being done to you?

I think it depends how you decide to view the world that doesn't it. I mean I feel that we are all parts of process occasionally yeah, after you sort of say 'Well, you know, this is beyond anything that we've got a choice about and we have to deal with it.' But on the whole, even there it's about how you implement it and that's up to you isn't it at the end of the day.

Have you ever been part of the planning process for any large strategic change?

It depends what you mean by large, by university.

At a School level then?

Yeah, at the School level always, always, yeah, over all the years. There's always been a feeling that you can ...

And you feel that there's a place for academics to get involved at the School level?

Yeah.

Do you think that there's a place for academics to get involved at a university level?

Well they have their representatives don't they on the various groups and things so it's up to them how they use that.

Do you think that . . . some academics have said to me 'Well academics really can't get involved in the big issues because we don't know enough about the big issues and the big picture.' Do you think you know enough about the big issues and the big picture?

Some issues but not all issues, no, some issues but you know you just don't have the time and space with everything else. You decide priorities don't you.

So you find you sort of filter?

Yes.

Do you get enough information do you think on the big issues?

Yeah, there's usually someone to ask if you want something more isn't there and that's the important thing.

So when these big strategic changes come through, do you feel that your academic representatives speak for you? Do you feel you have a voice?

Yeah.

OK. As an academic have you ever led change or acted as a change agent?

I'm sure I have, yeah. Yeah, you know, everything from changes within units to courses and so on, policy sort of circumstances within the School, yeah just sort of how our interface would be. In terms of one of the other things, more generic, general for the university as a whole would be personal development plans, you know, because we sort of started on that a couple of years ago in this School because we knew that was going to

become compulsory by 2005, you know, we sort of got on with it. So that now can be used as a template for other Schools and so on.

So you are comfortable with the idea of using change agency within a university, the idea that if they want to make a big strategic change you can get a couple of academics on side and encourage them to spread the message?

Yeah. I think so. I think there are systems in place for doing that. Whether people take up that as much as they ought to is another question.

Do you feel the change process for big strategic change could be improved at all? Is there anything you think that's missing that could make it easier for academics to understand and implement change?

I think it's really just ... people feel that they're often ... that they aren't in a position to make change. But sometimes it's just advising them what the routes are, just continually reminding people more than anything else. I'm sure other changes could be made there but it's very difficult in such a big institute. You know, you can't go round knocking on everyone's door and making sure they're all OK.

So do you see communication issues then?

Yeah there are huge communication issues within this university and one of our problems is overload of communication.

Do you think that academics need anything to help them adapt to change? Is there anything the university could be doing to help people to adapt better?

I'm sure there is but I can't think offhand what that is. I mean some people ... I mean people come with very different skills. Some are more adaptive than others on that and it's finding the right level for everyone in their work environment.

Does it come down to personality then, individual personality?

Yes it does.

Is there any sort of staff development issues? Anything the university could be doing in that way to help people to adapt?

Again there probably is. I mean there's probably something that is indirectly addressed. I mean there are lots of different workshops and things that are held for different aspects though not necessarily that. But, at the same time, I would feel that if you went to a colleague or whatever and said 'I was thinking we needed this and that' they would actually do something about it.

Do you think the reward process we have right now in Higher Education helps or hinders change implementation? Are they putting the carrots in the right place?

No. No, and I think we have a lot of problems at the other end as well where people aren't pulling their weight and what's done there. In business, you know, people would be given warnings at various stages and things. I feel that, as an institute, we are extremely weak at that and you end up with those that do doing everything virtually and the others, taking a free ride.

So how could the carrots, the reward system, be changed to reward people better when they implement change?

I mean things like, I mean even the personal development and the staff appraisal could be better and I feel much more focused and so on than it is. You should have obviously rewards for those that do well. But there should also be a cut off point too, where those thresholds are for those that really want to do the minimum as well.

OK. Any further comments in this area, issues that are important to you that you don't think I've covered (A15)?

I'm sure there are but I can't think of them.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Sixteen

The first questions I'm going to ask you is about what I would call Higher Education as a whole, so not within SU, your perceptions as to what's happening. Do you perceive Higher Education to changing, static? What's your take on this?

Changing, constantly changing I would say in general.

Can you expand on that? In what way do you find Higher Education changing?

Are we talking from the teaching point of view of just whatever?

From the whole market perspective.

Well obviously the question of student fees is affecting student expectations I think. And then if we're looking at things like 'A' and 'AS' levels that's affecting the quality of the students that we're getting or going into Higher Education in general. I suppose I would say those are my main ... well the expansion of course. I mean the government's intention to continue the expansion of Higher Education is causing lots of troubles.

So the two changes that you perceive is the change in the type of student and overall student intake, which is being caused by the expansion of Higher Education, yes?

Yes. And also their expectations and demands if you like in the way that their financing has changed.

What do you think is driving these changes? What's making these changes happen?

I suppose government policy but I don't think we can just pin it onto the current government. I think universities are competing more with each other in a different sort of way than before.

OK. Do you think then that is a change within Britain or is there any sort of global force to it?

I think, well I know a little bit about the French and Spanish systems. I don't know much about American systems. I think we tend to be in the forefront of these sorts of changes and I think that is true. The French system is still effectively not privatised in any way. There are private universities but essentially we're dealing with a non-privatised system, and the same for the Spanish system.

So you see that the drivers are mostly within the UK for these changes happening?

Yes.

OK. On the whole, do you feel that these changes are good, bad, bit of both? How do you feel about them?

In terms of the sort of opening up of Higher Education, I would like to feel that is good, but my feeling is that it's a diluting of what's going on in the universities in terms of the sort of privatisation effect. I just feel that yes there is an opening up but it's still not being opened up enough and this question of sort of pitting universities against each other in financial terms. But on the whole I ...

So you've got a mixed reaction?

Yes, I mean I think I would like to say yes a lot of it is positive but I actually feel that it's quite negative.

OK. If we then look at SU, do you find ... you've been here X years I think. In those X years as your working environment changed?

Yes. Well I mean I suppose ... when you talk about the environment do you mean the physical environment or just the whole ... ?

Anything to do with your job role are changes happening to you?

Yes I've been asked to shift from teaching one subject to another completely different, related but even so a different language which is quite a big shift. Not many people teach two languages, two foreign languages. So that's quite a big thing. I have been, because I'm ... I've got effectively three languages to my name, that has been something which has happened quite a lot and I've been moving around. So I've been ... I can sort of fulfill ... if there's a demand for (European language), I can teach the (European language) and then I can, you know. The changes that we had within the department going back to practically when I started ,were severe redundancies and a loss of our own (X) degree which was a very big upheaval and as I say it happened in the first/second year I was here. Because of that and because of the redundancies there's always been in the back of my mind a slight feeling of insecurity about it although I've been here X years. I think, in terms of being in the (X) School, it has meant an increase of a professionalisation of what we are teaching and the way we're teaching it.

What do you mean by professionalisation? It's an interesting word.

We need to be a little slicker and less academic and the focus is really on ... the focus has always been on teaching languages for business but the image of the (X) School that's become more and more important.

OK, that's interesting.

So things like getting the right logo on piece of paper virtually, and yes, our whole professional image I think has become far more important. And with that of course we have the sort of technology that we're using is ... I mean when I started here there were a row of little MACs in that room there which is now just a printer room and that's all people had. So that's been a huge change, the technology. Obviously how we communicate with each other across the university but also what we're presenting, what we're giving now to students in terms of handouts and so on.

Any other changes you've noted?

The sense that we don't really know what's going on but I think that's probably always been the case but the sense now that pronouncements and changes are coming from the centre and although there is a feeling it, a consultation, sort of mood, it really is not really consultation, and I think that's got worse.

So are these changes coming from you (A16)? Are you making these changes? Or are these changes coming from outside of you? Who's directing these changes?

These are coming from outside. They're coming from ... well ... yes I am accommodating to some of the changes but basically they're not coming from me, no.

And have these changes changed your role then over the last few years? Or do you feel your role has continued?

Yes.

As a lecturer you're still expected to do the same things as you were?

Yes. I think I'm expected to do in a more professional ... and I don't mean professional as a teacher, I mean in a slicker manner if you like overall.

So overall, these changes that you've personally perceived, within SU, do you feel they're positive, negative, bit of both?

I suppose a bit of both.

So what do you see as positive in what's happening.

Well there's more of a feeling of corporate identity but at the same time ... I think it's quite difficult because I think the languages, international communication, is very much a sort of ... it isn't ... although we're in the (X) School, we don't really ... and of course we service ... so I think there's a feeling that we're always sort of a little bit out on a limb. I think the way in which we present materials and the way we teach the sort of professional improvements if you like I think that that obviously that is positive. I mean there's a greater focus on outcomes than when I started in what we're actually doing in the teaching, yeah. I suppose there's a focus on teaching and learning.

So are they positive points?

Yes.

So what do you see as negative then to your perceptions of change?

I see a greater distance from the centre than there was. I feel we're just handed down decisions and that, yeah, there's just this distance there. With regard to say students I think negative is that we're at the point where we're quite concerned about the levels or whether we are able to deliver the goods according to students' expectations because I think there's a slight sense of they're buying into a package and I think where it falls down for me is that it's no longer about academic work it's more about going the hoops in order to get your degree.

You say you feel that this change is happening to you. Are these changes happening to your colleagues as well do you think? Are their working roles changing?

Yes, I can see some of my colleagues who are constantly ... there's this feeling of always being asked to do new things. Either, in my case, I changed, I actually changed terrifically, you know, from a language which was my main teaching language, I went into my subsidiary teaching language. But other colleagues, we're all, I think, being asked to do something new almost every year now. Shifting of roles, shifting of . . . taking on something different can be fairly major.

So does this pressure of change impact on your relationships with colleagues? Do you find your relationships with colleagues are any different in a changing environment?

There's less time to talk to people. People are visibly ... sometimes I include myself in that . . . stressed so that you find that you don't have time to talk even about work so there's less availability. We're quite isolated here in our little offices, we don't have many opportunities to get together completely as a group, which is quite rare.

And do you think that a few years back you would have had more opportunity to interact with colleagues?

I think so yes.

Some people say there's a burden to change. Do you think there's a burden that comes with change?

I think it's very tiring constantly having to deal with. I think change in itself is fine but if it's constant then I think you ... yes, that becomes a burden.

So within the SU community then, who's carrying this burden?

I suppose everybody. Certainly teaching staff are having to, but then administrative staff are having to implement it too.

So you feel there is a burden and it's sort of just ...

It's just filtering down to everybody.

Do you have a relationship with the Senior Management here? How would you describe your relationships with them?

When you say Senior Management do you mean my immediate line manager or do you mean Head of the (X) School?

From your line manager going all the way up to (the VC)?

I have a very good working relationship with my line manager who I think is excellent. I can talk to her, I've got no problems. Head of School I hardly know, I've been here how many years and I doubt he knows who I am, but that's it. The VC!

So you wouldn't say that you know the Senior Management in any way?

Yes, I've met her ... perhaps one thing I would say is that I am, I tend to, I'm perhaps a little unusual in that I don't actually live in (town). So . . . I mean I do in the week but my home is in (out of town). So I have a slight distancing and I think some of the reason for the distancing is to do with the fact that I was made redundant in my previous post in (X) which did very strongly affect me, after the restructuring, the place was restructured, and I think that had a huge effect on how I saw the organisation that I was involved in.

On the whole then, looking at your personal life (A16), how do you feel about change?

In my personal life you mean?

Do you think you've got a high or low tolerance for change? Does change excite you or worry you?

I think mostly it worries me. The feel I ... yes, I suppose on the whole I'm not the sort that likes change. The feeling I have in my teaching is that because the change is so constant, so frequent, that you never actually have time to settle into anything. So that whatever you prepared last year is still not right this year, however much time you spent on it. I think that is ... that feeling of sort of relentless about it that is quite hard to deal with, professionally.

OK. So when you have these big changes in your life how do you tend to cope with it?

Are we talking about life or are we talking about my working life, because I see them as completely different.

Then tell me both. In your personal life how would cope with change?

I've had a lot of change in my personal life so probably not very well. Yeah, I find it in my personal life ... I find it quite difficult.

Then how about university life, do you find . . . do you have a coping mechanism here for when the changes come?

If you mean about stress I ... my normal mechanism for dealing with stress was going to the gym. That's been a bit affected, although I can still just about go. But I mean I can only see things like alternative therapies or . . .

Fair enough.

But that's my sort of general way of coping I think. It has been, you know, going to the gym and exercise. I think I do ... I now have an ability to actually stand back from things and I don't think I had that a few years ago. I don't know whether that's age related or what but I do sense now that I can say 'OK, this is what's going on'. I can actually step back to get some perspective on it and look at where I am in relation to it. And so, you know, this is the sort of pressure I'm working under but I know, for me, that I can only do so much. I mean at that point I have to stop.

OK. We're talking now about strategic change, you know, strategic changes to policy and procedures. Tell me about what you've experienced recently, any changes in policy and procedures that you've noticed?

Do you want sort of really nitty gritty or do you want big things?

Up to you.

Well, I'm probably more involved in the nitty gritty actually as I say I tend to distance myself a little bit from the big stuff.

What do you see changing now? Or you've noticed or experienced in your employment here?

Currently we're being pushed with deadlines for all assignments having to be sent to external examiners at the end of this month, all the assignments for next year which is a huge ... has been a huge task. So, over the summer I've had to work really very hard. I had a bit of teaching and then of course the exam period. I've got a huge amount of work to get assignments organised, I mean it's vast, and no time, no chance to sit and think about the actual teaching arrangement. So that's a policy thing.

So you've noticed they're basically tightening up on admin?

Yes, yes.

So what's pushing that then?

Well I presume it's the quality QA thing which is coming up, which is in March isn't it. So yes, there's that, and there's stuff for example over copyright. So those two areas have ... I've seen . . . have forced us into re-examine a lot of stuff and a lot of tightening.

So you've been noticing quality changes coming through, any other changes? Has Widening Participation, been noticeable in any way in your role?

Not in ... I haven't been particularly affected and I don't think we're . . . I mean we've always opened the (department), at least to staff, I'm thinking from outside, at one point, yeah, so. So I don't think we're directly affected in that.

Any other changes coming through?

Well the sender stuff has been … I mean again it's affected the nitty gritty of materials and so on but that's just been part of the issue.

So the big change that you have noticed is quality issues?

Yes I suppose so.

Do you think these quality changes are window dressing or profound change and why would you think that way?

I don't think they're window dressing. I mean they are important, I can see the benefits of that. Whether it's profound is another matter. I think it's more than window dressing but it is about … it's going back in a way the professionalism and the sender thing … I mean some of that, to me, is a bit stupid. By someone who's currently got a disability, some of the things, I feel, could be seen as window dressing. For example producing documents in Area 11 when the books they're going to read are going to be in whatever. OK, so it's a detail. But, no, on the whole I don't think it is.

And any particular reason why you feel it is a middle category like this? You seem to be buying into the change to a certain extent.

I can see the benefits of … I mean all this work over the summer to get these assignments ready so that, you know, that does have benefits. And so does the implications, you know, the materials … changes in our material presentation.

So when these strategic changes come down, your thinking or action process basically is to implement?

Yes.

Do you implement it as it comes to you or do you reinterpret it in any way?

I think, because of the way we're led here, we do implement it as it ... and that's because of my line manager I think.

Do you think that accepting change is part of your job of an academic?

Yes, it's part of anyone's life isn't it because if you don't accept it, then you're dead. Sorry, I think yes, I think they should otherwise we become fossilised, yeah.

So if we look at change process within the university, do you sort of perceive it as at the beginning of a process, in the middle of a process, finish the change process?

No I think we're constantly in the middle of a process.

And how do you feel about that?

Well I think that's the problem. That as soon as one thing has been dealt with then there's some other major process which is ... so the thing is ... OK, yes, that's what I've just said, well, you know, you don't change once you're dead. There's no breathing space between the changes. That's the feeling I have.

No reaction time, embedding time.

No, it's ... you're constantly . . . you're just moving on from one . . . changing one thing to the next.

Do you have any expectations of sort of a strategic change that might be coming next? Or do you just sort of react as they come?

Me personally?

Yes you personally.

I think I tend to react as they come. I don't think I ... I'm not a very strategically minded person.

OK. So thinking about these reactions that you have to change within the university is there any third party that influences your reaction? Do you discuss it with colleagues or the union position or is it a personal reaction?

I would say that I discuss it with immediate colleagues.

And how about the union do you know what their position is?

No, I've just missed a union meeting as well. I've only recently rejoined the union actually. I used to be a member in (previous employment) for a long time. No.

OK. We've discussed how you react to these changes which you perceive as mostly been quality driven. Do you have any perception as to how your colleagues react?

I suspect they, well ... I suspect they embrace change a little more readily than me and perhaps see change more as an opportunity than I do.

Why would you think like that?

Well I'm thinking, two or three of them are quite a bit younger than me and I think that it is an age related thing to some extent. I think if you've been teaching for thirty odd years you can actually be a little tired of constantly have to change. Perhaps they're also more ambitious than I am. I've got to the point where I am ... and that might explain some of my stepping back from things as well . . . that I'm at the point where I don't have any professional ambition. I have other ambitions but they're not particularly related to my profession. So that might count as well.

OK. So you feel that you're not embracing change that readily but you've got colleagues who do. How do you think the university wants academics to react to strategic change?

I think it wants us to jump.

And why do you think that?

Because the fact that there is ... seems to be so little real interest in what we, as individuals, and as a group are doing from the top.

OK. So the push right now, the direction for strategic change at SU, (A16) do you perceive it as coming down from management or up from colleagues?

I perceive it coming down from management.

Why do you perceive it coming in that direction?

Because that's effectively how it's been. Every time we change has been as a result of 'This is what's happening in the (X) School and it's happening in the (X) School in this way because . . .'

OK. So from your perspective then, if we have a strategic change, how does it happen? What's the process?

Well there's usually some consultation...from my perspective?

Just your perspective, yes.

Often the (X) School itself ... but then the most frequent thing is that it comes from discussion, group discussion with my line manager, with our Head of Group.

And then you sort of set it trickles down.

Yes. And then there's discussion with ... how to react.

So from your perspective is there academic consultation? Is this something academics should get involved in, strategic change?

Yes.

Do you think they get involved in it?

From my perspective it's much more a case of executing the changes rather than ...

So you see the process right now as a sort of top-down decision that trickles down that academics implement. But you feel academics could be involved in this change process?

No I think the problem is because the decisions are made, for academics like me anyway, without my having any input. The stage ... the consultation stage comes too late because decisions have already been taken.

OK. So you feel academics could contribute to policy or process change?

Yes.

In what way could they contribute?

Well we'd have to have much more open discussion and much more thought. I suppose it would be a very time consuming process.

So what would be a positive point in top-down change?

It's relatively simple and again from my point of view?

Your perspective just, I'm only interested in (A16).

I don't know.

So why do you think change happens this way then? Is it for reasons of efficiency?

Partly efficient, yes, simplicity I suppose. And I suppose there wouldn't be agreement.

So do you feel part of the change process or is change something that you perceive gets done to you?

Well I suppose more of the latter, but I am part of it if I'm involved in doing it so it's a bit of both.

Have you ever been part of the planning process for change?

Yes but not here.

Any particular reason why you haven't been involved here?

Yes I had, when I was working in (X) before this, I had a managerial post in adult education and I didn't enjoy the stress of the process being involved in Boards and things like that. So my change when I started here was back to a teaching role.

So you feel that academics could become more involved in change process. Do you think they know enough about the big picture or the issues involved.

I think some people do, yes. I think if they're interested in it they do. I think I don't. I think it's quite difficult to have a very solid teaching role, a major … or a research role to be honest … and also to get involved in these big issues. I don't think the two are compatible.

For what, time reasons?

Time reasons yes.

So you think the information is available if somebody wants it?

Well perhaps it's not just time reasons. It's almost as if you're on the other side somehow because the feeling is that what's actually happening in the classroom if you

like is lost by Senior Management, that the practicalities are lost. So you are talking about two different worlds.

So you do seem to be perceiving a bit of an 'us versus them' scenario?

Yeah.

So when change is being progressed, who do you think is speaking for you? Do you feel you have a voice then?

To some extent yes but it's my Head of Academic Group so not totally, no. There is a slight feeling of helplessness.

As an academic have you ever acted as a change agent?

Here or ..?

In SU, have you ever helped implement change? Sort of been sold on something and chatted it up with your colleagues.

Well only at very small levels.

What do you think about this concept of change agency in Higher Education? Do you think it's viable?

I suppose I've not thought about it. I didn't have to.

So, how do you think the development of strategic change and change implementation could be improved at SU? Are you happy with the status quo?

Well I'm obviously not convinced that, you know, I'm not happy with the status quo but

...

Is there a way it could be improved then?

I think if much more ... I think levels of Senior Management need to see what actually goes on a lot more and perhaps more physically visiting Schools, particularly those who are on the periphery of the university campus and just more consultation, more discussion.

Do you think academics need anything to help them embed change?

Well it depends on the sort of change.

Well like the quality issues we were discussing. Is there anything that Senior Management could do to make it easier for academics to embed these changes? Or is the system working fine now?

Well the time factor is a big problem because of the pressure and stress that it causes.

Do you think there any communication issues?

Yes I think that communication is pretty poor from the top.

Any staff development issues?

I don't know really.

OK. The reward process at SU, do you think the reward process has any impact on the success of change implementation?

When you say the reward process ...

Are people rewarded for changing? Should they be rewarded for changing?

I don't perceive any particular reward process.

If you think of . . . I mean the only rewards really in Higher Education is money, prestige, time allowance. Is there anything in this that would encourage academics to change?

Well I think the time allowances are very important because that's the cause of the stress, not having the time to do things and do them properly.

Is there anything else that Senior Management could use as a carrot to sort of help implement change? Or are you just happy with things as they are now?

I don't think the money factor is that important. I mean it is and it isn't but I think the time factor is far more important.

Do you have any further comments on anything we've discussed? Anything you think I should have asked or we should have discussed and we haven't?

No, I don't think so.

OK. Thank you.

[End of Interview]

Academic Interview Number Seventeen

(A17, I'm not assuming that you know anything about what's happening in the big picture of HE. I'm just interested in your reactions as an academic in SU. If you look at the big picture in terms of what some people call 'the market' and other people just call 'Higher Education' as a whole, from your perspective, do you find it changing or static?

I don't know because all I've got to go on is the last three years and my own experience as an undergraduate and I can't, I don't know enough to distinguish between changes over the time and differences between old and new universities.

Which university did you study at?

(Redbrick.)

(Redbrick.)

So clearly there are differences but I don't know whether they're the still the same differences or whether that's due to interchanging everything.

Fair point but in the X years you've been at SU, do you find your working environment changing?

No.

No. Anything happening to you now that's different from when you started. A lot of people comment on WP, Widening Participation, and the fact that our quality seems to be more important now and providing that proof of quality.

That seems to have been the same in the X years I've been here, I don't see any change in that. And the quality things seem to be … they may have been new when I came but they were certainly on the agenda then. Also with the Widening Participation I've not seen any changes in the students that I have had over these few years. Although that's partly because I didn't teach … I mainly teach final years and I've come from a Technical College which is more marks.

That's interesting. How about the Widening Participation issue, how is that impacting on (your School)?

Well (name of School) seem to have either appointed somebody to do it anyway, whether anything happened or not, I don't know. I've not seen any impact on our students.

OK. So when these changes come through, be it more emphasis on quality or Widening Participation, how do these things get handled in (name of School)?

Oh, someone else is appointed to the Executive.

So it gets sorted at the School level?

I don't know if it gets sorted but someone gets appointed to do it anyway. I'm not sure how much it would actually impact us.

Your relationships with your colleagues, here at the university, do you find anything changing in that? You comment that you don't find your own role changing, how about their roles?

Again the people who are teaching the first years have talked about increasing problems that could be related to academic issues. I don't know if they've put more resources into that, given more teaching time to the students. But certainly as far as I can see [inaudible]

They've been brought up to scratch.

Yeah.

OK. Some of the academics here say there's a burden to change. Do you think there's a burden to change?

I wouldn't say there's a cost of change.

Any personal cost of change?

Personal cost! I mean in general change there's a cost but it depends whether it's good or change for the better or the worse really.

How would you describe your relationship with the senior managers?

Non-existent!

Any particular reason why you feel that way?

Well I very rarely see them or speak to them. I come from ... coming from a professional background where really everyone's doing the same work together to here, I would ... it came as quite a shock really. But the fact that the Senior Management is doing something completely ... their working life seems to be completely different to mine [inaudible].

If you look at your own life, (A17), outside of the university, how do you feel about change in life in general? Is change something that excites you or worries you?

No it's ... I had quite a big career change moving down here, change also moving out of home into here. It's something that you do when the old one becomes intolerable, impossible, I think. So it's not something that excites or worries particularly. It's just something that is.

So more forced change then?

Yes.

You'll change if you're forced to.

Yeah.

Rather than changing for the heck of it.

Yeah.

So if you've got a forced changed coming do you have any sort of coping mechanisms that you'd use to make the change easier? Like some people say it's easier if they have other people on side or it's easier if they plan it.

Oh no.

Assess the risk.

No, no. I mean I think the main coping mechanism is to be sort of looking for an escape route if it doesn't work.

Some people say that academics are sort of stick in the muds. Do you sort of see accepting change as part of the role of an academic? Some academics seem to find it hard.

Occasionally you have to. I suspect. There does seem to be too much change or change for no reason or change that seems to have no reason, seems likely to be [inaudible]

Any particular changes that fall into this category?

The ... when I first came here they were very keen on research and boosting the School's research outlet. That's when I came for interview. By the end of my first year they'd switched to being keen on enterprise. By the middle of last year they'd decided that knowledge transfer was the new thing. There doesn't seem to be any particular rationale for this. It's all driven by the government I suppose.

You think that's where the driver is, from the government?

It's partly that and partly the reason d'etre of people within the university really.[inaudible].

Do you see any sort of global pressures in change in Higher Education?

The ... only the financial one I think.

What do you mean by financial one?

Well there seems to be less money put into Higher Education than there was or less money being supplied by the government. So there's . . . certainly the thing that seems to be talked about is that lack of resources. I suppose there ought to be a change in the fact that students are fee paid, but I'm not actually convinced. I expected to see that but I haven't.

So you haven't felt any sort of entitlement from students along the lines of 'I've paid for this degree' more the customer focus. Some people commented on that role change.

No. I'd have expected there to be but I can't see any more than there was when I was an undergraduate and we weren't paying the pittance for it.

These changes you were commenting about and they're quite interesting, you know, 'What is the focus of being here? Are we going to go for this or are we going to go for that?' Do you think then that these changes are profound embedded change or ... they seem to sound a bit more like window dressing the way you describe them.

Yes. A large part of it is, actually is, along with most academic things it's very [inaudible] about describing what you're doing and I can't agree. A lot of it doesn't seem to be any more than that.

Is there any sort of third party influences your reaction to change at work? Do you discuss it with your spouse or colleagues or the union?

Not, no, I probably should.

OK. Do you have any idea what the union position is on change issues.

I think unions are usually against change aren't they.

But you're not exactly sure whether ...

I don't know, I don't know what their particular line on these changes.

So you seem pretty laid back in terms of the changes that are happening here. How about your colleagues? Do you have any reading on the way they react?

Yes. I mean the reason I'm laid back is that I've got an instant escape route. I can go back into practice, yeah. It's the ones who've been here longer and don't have that, that seem unhappier.

Unhappy in what way?

Increasing expectations, the workload has increased, the teaching load is quite high, but then you're expected to also give ... there seems to be an idea that in the future people are going to be pushed to do more than just their teaching mode.

People are expecting that then, that's the perception?

Yeah.

And how do you think they're going to be able to handle that?

Well a large number of them seem to be planning on keeping it at bay until they reach retirement age.

When you say keep it at bay, you mean ignore it and hope it goes away?

Yes, yes. It may not be a bad idea actually. Given that the changes seem to be for change themselves. I mean I don't really know what it's going to be like in a few years time. Yes, certainly the expectations of the working environment.

So basically your colleagues feel that they're not at the end of a change process but they're still in the middle of a change process. And you're expecting sort of continual change yourself?

Yes.

Where do you think the push for strategic change comes from for SU? Do you feel it's coming down from management or is it coming up from academics or from somewhere else?

Down from management.

Any particular reason you sense it's that way?

Well if it's coming up from academics we're going to be doing badly. It's not the sort of thing that most academics are good at and also from their reaction to it. As I said people aren't changing or trying not to change; what they're doing is they're just changing how they disguise it. Being from above and they're just complying in the easiest way possible.

That's interesting terminology 'complying in the easiest way possible.' The easiest way from their perspective do you think?

Yes.

So would you say that academics feel that they have any sort of control over this change or direction to this change? That change is happening to them?

Change is happening to them. That's the other thing that I've seen as a difference from being in practice. That, because of this divide between the management and the academics, you don't feel any involvement in the process [inaudible] which is isn't ... it's not what I've been used to.

So you perceive basically that it's top-down change that impacts on the academics and the academics go along with for peace.

Yes. But go along with, what's the word, they're not accepting it, they're just ... they seem to be vying large decisions between pressure [inaudible]

Is there anything that you like about top-down change, any plus points?

Well there's one big advantage when we've sat through a few meetings here trying to make a decision.

So it eliminates committees is what you're saying?

Well it sort of keeps them down anyway.

Why do you think change at SU happens this way then? I mean change at (Redbrick) doesn't happen this way.

No, but that's because we're a different government structure. At (Redbrick) the decision making body is the academics, which meet and vote on changes. Whereas here the decision making body is the management.

So why do you think that is?

I assume it was the way they were set up back in (date of SU establishment). I've not looked into that but I mean ...

But you can blame it on history?

Well it seems to be a legally embedded structure. It seems to be something that's actually built into the university system so yeah I mean wherever it's come from.

Here in SU do you think academics should be more involved in designing and implementing change? Do you think they should be part of that process?

Oh yeah definitely.

Do you think they would?

It's the only sensible way to run a university.

Do you think they would though?

Would they be involved if they were given a chance?

Yes. Yeah.

It would probably take more to push them to actually change. But then that might be a good thing seeing as the system now is so reactive and keeps changing every year. It

might be sensible to have a bit of resistance to change and then we'll do it when we actually have to.

If academics did get involved (A17), do you think know enough about the issues or the big picture?

[inaudible] If they don't it's probably . . . it's because of the system. There's no point knowing about the bigger picture because it just comes and happens to you. Whereas I would have thought [inaudible]

So it's sort of self prophecy in terms of if they felt more of the process they may be more pro-active in going out and . . . that's interesting.

So when it comes to change, big strategic change at the university, as an academic do you feel you've got a voice?

Oh no. No voice at all.

Would you prefer to have a voice?

If it was a real voice, yes. The worst situation would be to have a voice in a talking shop that didn't have any authority. It would give you no control and just waste an awful lot of time.

Have you ever led change yourself within your department or been a change agent?

No.

Are you comfortable with the idea of change agency being used in a Higher Education setting. Change agency is when the management says 'We'd like this change to be implemented, let's get a couple of academics on side and get them to spread the word.'

It sounds like it's a way of trying to make a top-down process look like a bottom-up one, which doesn't sound a very good thing. Even if you did get somebody to do it they'd just be seen as a management stooge.

Well, if we started from scratch then, in terms of designing strategic change, how would you set up the system?

I'd follow the get up a management structure based on [inaudible] model, which is also the model that I'm familiar with professionally. That you have a wide body of people, the majority of the academics making the decisions and people appointed to management roles on a temporary basis so that they do the change and then go back to academic life to live with it. That would be the biggest difference that I would make to this place.

So what are the positive and negative points of that system?

The positive ones are that people are going to feel more involved in it. And also as I said if you have temporary management they have to, they're going back to the full regular academic job, then ... I'm just trying to think of a longer way of saying it ... then they have ... they can't implement change that they are going to be too unpopular. The disadvantage I suppose is that you are going to end up with slower decision making. Although arguably our decision making is too fast at the moment because it's how Senior Management regards itself.

Do academics need anything then to help them adapt to this changing environment?

They could do with knowing why we're changing.

Are there any communication issues then?

Oh yes. There's no real communication between us. There's formal communication but there's no sort of genuine communication between management and academic staff

How about the reward process?

The what?

The timely remission of money, does that impact at all on change implementation? Are the carrots being used the right way?

There aren't any carrots. There's a national pay structure and there's no, or seems to be, no getting away from it. So that's why things like appraisals are so farcical. There just aren't any carrots to use in terms of pay, none at all. You could have carrots in terms of time remission but they're so ... resources are so tight anyway.

Could the reward system be adapted to help change?

Yes, if you did away with the national pay structures.

Some universities are. Any further comments, areas that I haven't touched on but suddenly come into your mind and you think you've got a comment on, academics and chang?.

There does seem to be a fashion opinion as well. There seem to be academic fashions or particular terminology. You see this particularly in ... I hate to call it quality because I

don't think it does anything with quality, but the quality idea seems to be mainly about bringing what they're doing in current fashion.

You seem to feel a sort of faddish ...

Yeah. That seems to be quite strong and there seems to be some of ... between academic disciplines as well in terms of [inaudible]

(A17) you seem quite demoralized for a (age) year old.

Yes.

Most of the interviews I've had like this have been with the 50 pluses.

Yeah it's not been, the job's not been what I anticipated. As I say I think that's partly because I have ideas of universities which was . . .

[End of Interview]

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUT .... Association of University Teachers

CTM .... Course Team Meetings

FE ....Further Education

HE .... Higher Education

HEFC .... Higher Education Funding Council

IHCS .... Institute of Health and Community Services, a SU School

ILT .... Institute of Teaching and Learning

NATFHE .... National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education

NVQ .... National Vocational Qualification

PA .... Programme Administrator

QAA .... Quality Assurance Agency

UMT ....University Management Team

ARPM ....Annual Report of Programme Monitoring

OVC ....Office of the Vice-Chancellor

VC ....Vice-Chancellor

PL ....Programme Leader

EdD ....Doctorate in Education