##### Researcher

Great. So just to kind of start off, obviously I've had at look your profile. So I know a bit about you, but kind of in your own words could you just tell me about your kind of background and your career and your current job role and what you're doing at the moment, please?

##### Participant 24

Right. Well if you take me right back, I did my degree at [first university] in [subject], a long time ago. And somehow I ended up at [a previous business school] with a [research council] scholarship. And I was doing stuff on [topic]. And after that I then worked for seven years - I think it was - at [organisation]. I was fortunate at the time I managed to get a project, I think I had about three or four projects continuously with the [research council], and in the meantime I did some consultancy and a couple of other projects which were all to do with making money. Because in the 80s there were just no jobs. And then I got a visiting fellowship at [foreign university] for a year and [another foreign university] advertised, so I applied and I had a choice of either going to [the second foreign university] or coming back here. And I think I had applied for jobs, I think I'd only been interviewed at [teaching-focused university] and they rejected me since they didn't think I could teach [alternative subject] or something. But anyway, I ended up at [foreign university]. I was sat in the department of [subject], but I left after about two years. I moved into what was then the graduate school of business, because we had an [alternative social science] master's and, you know, anything to get out of the, you know... business schools are much more fun, exciting. I must be honest to say remuneratively as well, it was better than staying in the [alternative social science] department. So I was then in [foreign university] for, I don't know, till [year]. So it must have been for five or six years. I think six years. I had tenure at [foreign university], which I had to give up to go to the business school because the university then said that business schools were inherently uncertain. Which seems staggering now. So we had to give up tenure. Of course, it turned out to actually be better in [foreign country] terms, to have a five year contract than to have tenure, which proved not to have no real backing in legislation anyway. So I came back in [year]. I went back to what then [previous teaching-focused institution], and I was there for like six years. And then went to [previous research-intensive institution] and I was a [senior role]. Then I was [senior research role]. And then I was approached by [current institution] in [year]. So then I moved down, it looked like fun, the kids were just about leaving home. So my wife said, "why don't you leave home as well?" Seemed like a good idea. So we still, my family still live up in [previous institution city], that's where I am at the moment. But I have somewhere in [city] as well. So I moved down there. So I was the [senior role] for five years and then gave it up, stood down. The school at the time was in a terrible mess. It was, I think, about 25 people. It was known as this "school of anti business". It was dominated by these infantile Marxists, probably why they appointed [an academic from a particular background] to the role. And so it was a turbulent couple of years of trying to sort the whole thing out. I think, certainly by the time I left the role, we had a workable business school. I think by that time we had about 60 academic staff. I think now we're over 100 academic staff. It was very much, it was less focused on research, more focused on just trying to create something that worked from a very dysfunctional organisation. And as I said, it was successful. I think mainly because I think [current institution] itself has a lot of merit. And it became a Russell group university. I think I just made sure that the necessary degree programmes were there and that the necessary organisation was there in order for us to go forward. One of the things I find disappointing about contemporary higher education is its difficult to offer different things. In education and maybe in research terms we suffer from isomorphism, you know, that sort of like, we all claim to be doing something different but we all seem to be doing very much the same thing. So you know, I have to admit, what I did was really what essentially worked in [previous institution]. Except that I had introduced a [integrated master's] in [previous institution], a four-year undergraduate programme, which they've now abandoned, I'm not entirely sure why. Although, I know why in part, because it doesn't fit in with people's disciplinary leanings. You're always battling. Because people are dragged into their sub disciplines. And that's where they want to teach. Essentially, nobody wants to change what they teach because there's a fundamental conservativism in there, because, the method of teaching something new takes so much time and effort, and to be fair, we're banging on about research all the time and new members to staff get that message. And I'm working with two members of staff at the moment, and I suddenly realised that they have a different view of teaching. People think I'm research driven, but I was, I came into a situation in which I actually, when I was originally appointed in [foreign university] I had to develop a master's programme, I revised it, and I felt I was very committed to working with students. And in those days it was a different, different constituency of students. So I mostly taught post-experience MBA students and [another specialised master's programme] students. Whereas my present role, we have no, we have almost no post-experience students, apart from those who accidentally stumbled into the master's programmes. Otherwise the master's programmes are all the similar things that every university is offering. Basically recruit substantial numbers of international students, who for the most part - although there are notable exceptions, of course - really don't intellectually engage with material. And don't have the experience or the sort of background to engage. Anyway, that's a bit, a bit to sort of one side.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that's really great. So in terms of I guess at the moment obviously you engage in research, engage in teaching, what kind of responsibilities you have overall? I mean obviously since stepping down as [senior role] that, that's quite a big sort of admin responsibility, leadership responsibility. Do you have any kind of admin roles at the moment or are you just focusing time on specific activities?

##### Participant 24

I'm just researching and teaching. In fact I cut back to 50% because of this peculiar thing - that you probably don't know about being so young - we can draw our pension early or when we want, because of course the university pension schemes are all changing, I think the old scheme closed in 2014, I think it was, or 2015, or maybe 2016 - I don't remember. And we can continue to work part time. So I now work half time, theoretically. In practice it's effectively full time. I've taken on quite a big postgraduate course, you know, teaching [topic] across [group of programmes]. But it's taken a lot of effort, one to set up last year when I started, and then this year putting the whole thing online. Being old and foolish, I had this idea of doing a proper online MOOT type module. And I'm actually quite pleased with what I - well, it's not necessarily just me - managed to produce. It has taken enormous amounts of times and it goes back to this issue about real tensions between research and teaching in business schools. I think that's a real challenge. And I think we've all got, I mean, I introduced teaching only or what we call "teaching and scholarship" posts to the school at [current institution], because of my experience at [previous institution]. I knew that's the only way in which we could get lots of things done, if you rely on people on teaching contracts, they would do these sorts of things. I think, personally, I think too many appointments have been made in that frame because I always made them on the basis originally that these people would have significant admin roles. And originally I had this idea of sort of pinching some of the best people from new universities, but in reality we ended up taking people actually from a couple of older universities, which had set up schools in [region] which hadn't worked. But one of the useful things about taking people like that was they'd been selected because they were more focused on the teaching. So we actually made some quite good appointments in that way. So thanks very much to [example university] and one or two other places for enabling us to appoint staff who matched the requirements. And one of them has just been, well, two years ago, has just been promoted to a Professor of Practice. So I sort of lobbied at the same time for us to have a proper structure for people who are going down the teaching and admin route. I think I was pushing an open door because, you know, I think in engineering it was an issue and one or two other departments as well. And I think the university finally realised the logic of that, having initially resisted it.

##### Researcher

Ok, great. Thank you. That's really interesting. And you mentioned that obviously the kind of move to online teaching has taken up a lot of your time, designing an online module and delivering it in that way. Would you say then that sort of since Covid-19 and the pandemic that the time you spend on teaching and the associated tasks with that has overtaken the amount of time you would spend on research activities?

##### Participant 24

Yeah, it probably has actually. Well, definitely, if you think in terms of me being 50%, I would have said that most of that 50% has actually gone on to teaching.

##### Researcher

And what about what was it about an academic career that drew you it? Was it the teaching side of it or was it more kind of the research side?

##### Participant 24

It was the research side. Because I went into... if you go back to the 1980s, I was, I'm not quite entirely sure what I would have done if I hadn't been offered the, if I hadn't got the scholarship, the [research council] studentship, but then I went to work in a research Institute. I might've gone to a university if there had been any jobs around, but there were just no jobs really at all. Literally, I think. So I went into... and also I had spun off from my PhD, I had a research project and my external examiner was quite interested in that. And so in a way he assisted me to, well, I think assist is too strong... well, I don't know. He presented me with an opportunity, really, but I already had a project. So I was able to sell that to this [research council] panel which commissioned projects at that time. And they said "we want somebody working on this - thank goodness you've turned up, because we can see who you are" - and I think it helped because my senior person at [research institute] then was somebody who published a major book in the field a few years before. So we saw it as a way also of bringing him into the, into the fold. So really essentially I just really worked... that first project was on [topic] and then I got a project on [topic] and then I did project on [topic]. And originally I went to [research institute] as a research assistant on a [topic] project because they wanted somebody who was a [academic from a particular discipline] because the other people working on the project were really what used to be known as "soft operational scientists". And they needed somebody who had a more [discipline] orientation. And so that is why I joined them. So I think in many ways... and then I did, I was a consult at the same time because I couldn't survive the whole time, couldn't survive the whole time without having done consultancy work as well. But I think I enjoyed that immensely because it was really quite good fun having to devise projects. Some worked, some didn't and you always had to work... you're entrepreneurial. And that was fun. But not being, but when things got so difficult, there was so little money circulating, it became terrible. I could see the older people at [research institute], we were sitting around actually literally deciding how much people should be paid. And given I was one of the few buoyant people there, I was involved in that and I couldn't stand it. So I moved to [another research institute] to get out of that. But then, I had the visiting thing in [foreign university] - I don't know, I had this idea, I think I need a year out sort of thing. I just went around to a few places, originally in [countries], and suddenly I just knew tangentially... it was a professor at [foreign university] who said we've got this fellowship thing, write a proposal and we'll see what we can do. So I went to [foreign university] for a year and that's when the [other foreign university] job came up and one of my colleagues at [foreign university] said, oh, you must apply for this, you're sure to get it. I said, I don't know if I will. They're so competitive these days, impossible to get academic jobs. So I went to the interview, and to my surprise I was offered it over like three or four others. And that's when I went into teaching. And I actually brought a lot of my work actually into my teaching as well, because I think, [first research institute] was a strange - it's different now - it was a strange body then because it had like a strong traditional [subject] element, whereas oddly enough the more research institute part of it was influenced by [other disciplines], but I dipped into both. So if you like, I acquired like a theory of learning about how you learn in groups and everything. And I implemented that through revising the [specialist master's] programme, because at that point in time [foreign country] universities had virtually no quality assurance systems. Essentially I just sat there and rewrote it and negotiated with a couple of colleagues who said it seemed like a good idea, let's give it a try. Because the whole idea was integrated, like it had a single first year with no, as a single course. That's when I did some very interesting things in terms of the teacher training. But then the university modularised it after about two years into that and the modularisation really destroyed the idea of integrating. In a way I got very distracted, I think, from my research by the teaching side of it. And I also ran this interesting programme for [public body], an induction programme for [group] in [profession]. And I did some consultancy and stuff and actually I had like a fun different sort of mixture of things. I did some research as well and I had a stay at [another foreign country] and did an interesting study about [topic] - I had a really fascinating six months in [foreign city] interviewing all these people and everything, got quite a few papers out of that. But by the mid 90s I'd spent too much time doing that research, and [second foreign university] seemed very reluctant to make me an [role] so I decided I'd had enough. And also [second foreign university] didn't know what to do with its business school, which seems truly bizarre now. So I wasn’t sure I had much of a future there. So the [previous teaching-focused institution] job came up. I'd known the vice chancellor before because he'd been involved on the [research council] initiatives. So I went there and then I got hooked onto... actually I spent more time on research, really, at [previous teaching-focused institution], but I was also running a master's programme, running their PhD programme and other things. But strangely enough, I think it was one of the most productive areas of my time. I think there is often a strange mix between doing structured activities, they can often drive the less structured activities as well. I managed to score a couple of research grants, some good journal hits, and that got me the [role] at [previous research-intensive institution]. So I sort of escaped back into the, haha, the elite line of universities.

##### Researcher

OK, excellent. Thank you very much. That is very interesting

##### Participant 24

I'm not sure what sense you'll make out of that. And I think like, well, my career is not necessary that idiosyncratic for somebody in my group because you've probably found in most people you're interviewing in their [age group] like me will have had a sort turbulent 80s - I don't think many people slipped straight into a job or anything. You can compare notes. Do you know [academic]? He is a [role] where you are?

##### Researcher

Yes, I think so.

##### Participant 24

Yes, [academic] and I were contemporaries at [PhD institution]. And he did [hard science] subject, if you like, so he had a different trajectory from me.

##### Researcher

Yeah, I don't know him to speak to, but I know of him. Okay, yeah, that's really interesting. So I would like to talk a little bit about the kind of current institution that you're at. So your time there. So obviously you spent a fair amount of time as [role]. What were the kind of expectations of you during that time? What were you sort of expected to kind of achieve?

##### Participant 24

One of the very interesting things about [current institution], at that time, was, I remember being interviewed and all the rest of it. And I think we had some vague discussions and originally I wanted to start a bit later into the academic year. But then I realised that the annual planning process was starting. So I had to engage in that. So I was basically essentially sitting there thinking "I've got to get something together". So I really had to sort of write some sort of planning thing, make a case, and I think I made a case for some twelve appointments or something. I thought it was wildly ambitious, but why not? Because this was probably the moment to make a bid. And I don't want to go into a job in which I'm doing nothing because I'm stuck because I have don't have enough new people to bring in. So they were actually... it was amazing. Well, I think that, there was a sense someone had to do something in the business school. So it was actually quite an easy process, persuading them to do this. And we were running a surplus, it was like about half a million a year. So it wasn't very big. So they we're taking a bit of a risk... I suppose they could only fund half of the jobs out of that. But I think they, they knew they were taking a risk, but they also knew there was a good chance this would grow. But rather to my surprise, when I arrived, I had my first meeting with the vice principal and stuff, and I thought, well, here we go, there's going to be plans, targets, blah blah blah, like I'd been used to at [previous research-intensive institution]. None of this came up at all. So I thought, well, next time around we'll talk about it. But next time around, blah, blah, blah, and nothing. And I thought, well, do I want to have a... just... there seems to be no framework here. So I'll just get on and do what I think is worthwhile. There's no point in me arguing for a framework. And essentially the vice principal was, I think it would be not entirely unkind to say, that they were a bureaucratic gatekeeper rather than a sort of strategic manager. And the then principal was much the same. I think in a way [current institution] is interesting because in many ways I think of it as being an accidental university, because it's developed because of where it is, I think. I don't think the previous vice chancellor, although they went on to be... I can't remember what they went on to be... they were a very, as as I understand, very laid back. I knew a couple of people from ages before in [current institution] and I thought, initially I thought, I'm not sure I want to go there. It seems a bit, a bit run down, a bit marginal out there. But really there would be a number of key people in some schools who would take a lot of initiatives, but the history had built itself up. And they began to recruit people from [elite university], people like [academic], people like that. So some departments, and of course [another discipline] had a longstanding high profiles. So these things were really built up through, if you like, I think almost collective entrepreneurism. Although [example academic] was very good at persuading the university to make more appointments in [another discipline] regardless of the income. And so I think the very fact that the university was run in a rather loose way was really what gave it it's sort of dynamism. And I think the fact that [region] seems able to absorb an amazingly large number of high quality universities, contrary to what you might anticipate, so that [current institution] was able to... and then, of course, a few years back it acquired the [another school] as well. [Current institution] is really a collection of three or four fragments that have accumulated together over the years, which probably illustrates how it's very decentralised. And I think that's essentially really what happened. There was no great sort of, thing, I think it was a mixture of location, of principals who were wise enough or lazy enough or whatever to not try to dominate the whole thing. And of some entrepreneurial departments who took advantage of the opportunity and the fact that we weren't, we were easy to commute to [another city], those sorts of things, I think were quite powerful. Of course, the other thing about [current institution] is very, very good participation rates in terms of social class, minority ethnic, I mean, we really are by far the best access university of our competitors. And that's one of the nice things about [current institution] as well.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. So I guess kind of on the topic of that kind of role of being [role], and obviously before that being [role] at [previous research-intensive institution], those are obviously quite, you know, important leadership kind of roles. What was it, what kind of things did you do throughout your career to enable yourself to get into those kinds of positions? Like what was your kind of, I guess, strategy for excelling in your career and getting into a leadership?

##### Participant 24

Haha. I didn't have a strategy. I think I genuinely was... it was the case of the opportunity rather than me creating it. In [previous research-intensive institution], probably if you Google it, I think it was about [year] I think, our [senior colleague] was convicted of plagiarism, of plagiarising his PhD. Very interesting story. I'll tell you, I'll tell you about it some other time or if we have enough time later we'll have to go through the story. But it was a very traumatic time because our [senior colleague], first of all, he was suspended by the vice chancellor, and then finally after a lot of prevarication, for months of nothing happening, he was finally sacked because there was no doubt he had plagiarised his PhD. One of the interesting things, interesting stories about who it was who actually found this out, which actually required actually quite a lot of research, because it wasn't easy to find his PhD. That's a nice little sort of detective story. But, so, he was out the picture and so the university put in charge someone else as [role] in the school and he said, I think each department will now have an elected head and all the rest of it. And so our departmental head decided that he wanted to stand down. He persuaded me to stand, you know, I wasn't, I was umming and arring about it. I thought it'd be nice to do something different and the other thing was to keep the other faction out of the role, because we then fell into factions of the... people were still supporting the previous [senior colleague]... it's the weird thing of academic politics. People were very attached to him still, because he had supported a lot of people, in his perverse way he was charismatic. He and I never got on well. I was banished to the, I was thrown out... I was running the PhD programme, but I turned down this group of foreign students on the basis that they couldn't speak English, and he went ballistic and said that it represented X, Y, Z money and so next thing I was transferred out of that, and I was made sort of chair of the MSc examination board, which is like being sort of the academic version of being exiled. So I was shoved off there to keep quiet. And so there were the two factions, so basically I was the reform faction, and then there was a conservative faction, we didn't really know what they wanted. We know they didn't like people who seemed happy that [senior colleague] had gone, although, I actually really disliked [senior colleague] and everything but I still felt the whole thing was really tragic and it was amazingly upsetting. It's a very interesting example of the emotions of a place. Some people, now, you'd be very surprised, it was a very strange time. Anyway, as result of that, I won the battle so to speak, I was elected [role]. And then [colleague], who was elected [role], which was not really the [senior leader role] exactly, it was quite complicated... so in a way, and [another department] elected their [role], but they didn't really have much of a role, really, so [colleague] and I then [carried out role] in the school for like six to nine months. I think it was a really good time, actually. I think it was a very collegial way of doing it. The university kept on looking for people to fill the roles and really struggled to find anyone. That's another interesting story. It can actually be really difficult to make outside appointments. So they finally made, the vice chancellor, this is another story about how vice chancellors operate, the VC was suddenly in a fit of "I can't stand it anymore, let's appoint the deputy [role]", because there was a deputy [role] but they had like evaporated during all of this business, and of course he lacked legitimacy because he was never elected or anything. He was suddenly caught in a difficult position, I guess, but he had applied and he hadn't even been shortlisted. This is vaguely in confidence, but then... he was sucked out and he was made [senior role]. Although to be fair to him, I carried on and when I did the review of the undergraduate programme and introduced the [programme], and introduced a couple of integrated modules and stuff, he was very supporting. So that was great as far as I was concerned. And so I was happy about that and though they were really great initiatives. And you know, at that point in time our undergraduate programme was, it had quite low entry requirements really. And it all really zoomed up once we just, basically it was making the programme look just a lot more interesting and less stoked up. Because previously the poor kids would come in and have to do lots of accounting and finance in the first year, which was a big turn off, both for intending students and existing students. So it was really trying to make the whole thing more interesting, more about management, and less about sort of counting beans. So, hang on, so what was the question? So the question is really about how did I get... so, I was accidental. But in a way, the very time in which I was then, why did I become [role]? I can't remember why I became [role] now. But I did. And then I think, I was a bit frustrated by it because we had like an accreditation event and the [another senior colleague] didn't really know what the research plan of the school was. He didn't really own it. And I was the person manufacturing it. I felt I couldn't really make much progress with it because I didn't seem to have the [senior colleague]'s buy-in to the whole thing. Not that he was hostile or anything, it was just, basically, he wasn't particularly interested. So when the [current institution] thing came up I thought... because head hunters had phoned me a couple of times about things that weren't terribly appetising, and I thought, I know about [current institution], not quite sure about it, maybe it's worth thinking about. Looks a bit off beat. It looks like it could be a match for me. So why not? So let's sort of have my own show. So I guess probably if [colleague] hadn't pursued me I mean, I probably would, I decided to resign as [role]... that's also a question, they were also recruiting all these PhDs in [subject] which I had reservations about. So I thought, I'll go back there now. I'll teach the first year undergraduate course, you know, I'll go back to some teaching stuff and, you know, once you get that under control, actually, you're going to have a better life than having pain in the neck, trying to persuade people to do teaching and trying to get change going, which is so exhausting. So at the very moment in which I thought I shall withdraw from this, this other thing came up and so I went down to [current institution] and got involved and that was actually, it was quite challenging, I'm glad I did it. But I really had to leave after five years because I'm, I don't think I have the temperament to keep on doing these things. So I suppose five years was a reasonable time and the principal was happy with that. So originally I was a three year... there's an interesting story about, they were a bit slow in reappointing me, even though I was sure that's what they would do. But there was a whole sort of toss about that. Anyway. I ducked out after five years and they appointed, in the end, I think... did they advertise? I can't remember actually. But I think, no, I don't think they did. I think they made an internal appointment which was quite a reasonable appointment, somebody reasonably sensible who has been there for some time, and perhaps wasn't as helpful as I was when I was [role], but anyway. I think the thing in a way runs itself now because... people weren't taking responsibility, nobody, basically nothing happened unless I was involved. So as the place grew and people were getting more confident, we were recruiting students and were making a lot of money and all the rest of it... so people thought, well, we know where we are. So they were taking responsibility for their areas and that made the job much more easy. Because otherwise I was, I was running around doing just about everything and there was just a totally impossible case load and I was a micromanager beyond belief. Oh, that's right, how could I have forgotten this? I identified my successor who was a very able female academic. She's now a [role] at [another university] and I thought she was exactly the right person for the job now. She's well liked, she's easy going, but she's also got strong commitments to standards and blah blah blah. And that will make the transition a lot easier. I would've found it difficult to stand down if I hadn't had her there who was keen to take over as head. And I managed to persuade the powers that be to let us as a school agree who we'd like to be as [role] rather than have it imposed upon us. And so that worked well. So that actually is a good reflection on, at least the principal, I'm not quite sure about the vice principal because she was keen to somehow review me after three years. But anyway, that's a whole new story. So I guess, I guess, what I want to say is I was accidental, but I know other people are much more strategic. I think [aforementioned female successor] for example is a more strategic person, who has definite career ambitions in moving up the university hierarchy. But when I stood down, I received a few things from, to be considered possibly on the longlist for these [role] type jobs. There was one new university I'm quite fond of and I've got friends there, and they said they'd really like me to come, blah blah blah. It was very flattering. And I thought, maybe I could do something really interesting on the teaching side there. Then all the talk was about how can they increase the number of postgrads, all this sort of stuff. And, well, I've done all that. I was actually wanting to do something that involved actually things and experiments in teaching, something worthwhile rather than just the usual things. So I thought I just can't be bothered to do that. And I thought the other thing is, you know, I'm actually quite well paid. In actual fact I think that they would have actually a bit of a problem paying me. And also I have a sort of, live in two places and everything. So I'd sort of in a way, I'd sort of promoted myself out of the job. And I don't think I could see myself as a [role]. I think I'd find it too frustrating.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. A very varied background and career history. I do want to talk about research, so in terms of the RAE and then the change to the REF, you have been around for both. Am I right in saying that the impact element only came about when the REF was formed?

##### Participant 24

There was no impact in the 2008. Impact was, it was the first time in 2014. So it was actually quite, quite a difficult time. We were sat around trying to debate what looks like impact and a lot of discussions about that. And that took an enormous amount of time in the process. The second time around was, by this time I was [role], if I'd been sensible, I would actually have stood down. And it was really very stressful, the amount of time it took. Whereas 2008 was quite enjoyable, it was quite interesting, mostly reading blah, blah, blah. But impact, because you had to arrange meetings beforehand, you had to go through all this stuff, it was a lot more work trying to define the almost indefinable.

##### Researcher

And do you think the kind of impact agenda has changed the way that business schools prioritise their activities? Do you think that impact has become something that they're trying to focus on more, or was that always the case?

##### Participant 24

Well, I think one of the interesting things, I think, I think we were all surprised at the actual amount of interesting impact there was out there. And I was actually quite impressed. And HEFCE themselves were surprised. I remember the then [stakeholder within] HEFCE, because I was talking to them about impact, and they said, oh, the impact thing has been fantastic, treasury love it, because it gave HEFCE a whole load of examples of what all this funding was doing in terms of supporting, you know, research, having a real world impact. So HEFCE thought it was great, and the treasury clearly thought it was great. I think that the whole exercise is very important overall for everyone in terms of funding. And in terms of the business school, I think that, yeah, everyone discovered actually they had a lot more impact than they thought they had. Has it changed how we run? I don't think it has changed a lot. Because for individuals, because impact is not, not really an individual thing, that people still need to publish in the journals and all the rest of it. And the ABS list the disciplines attached to that have much, much more influence. I think all schools, probably yours too, I think we do something, we give people extra time to develop impact case studies and all this sort of stuff, which is all actually a waste of time because basically, providing you look at some basic things when you're doing it, when you're working on a research project, make sure you identify the key people and then get something from them about the impact, so you collect evidence as you go along. And that's really critical. But when it comes to writing it up, basically, somebody who is reasonably intelligent, a co-author wrote all ours the week before, because I read them and thought these are dreadful. So I sort of rewrote them all. Actually, I think we did quite well, but I think that basically, because they were intrinsically good ones... but I think a lot of emphasis is placed on impact and resources thrown at impact. But basically, it's just a waste of time. Because I think you've either got it or you haven't. You're going to have people who aren't very good at rewriting stuff as impact, but they're basically academics. You know, all this admin apparatus you bring and all the rest of it.

##### Researcher

Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. And I guess, you mentioned it kind of being a bit of a waste of time...

##### Participant 24

I don't think it's a waste of time. What I'm saying is that, you know, you asked me how it's changed things and I think it's, I think it's changed things in a superficial way. There's a lot of rushing around about it.

##### Researcher

Yeah.

##### Participant 24

I suppose I have to be sensible and say to some extent it has made people think about the relevance of what they're doing. But I think the influence of the journals and the belonging to a disciplinary community, I think is much, still much more powerful. It is a counter balance to that. So there are some good things about it. Definitely. But I don't think it's driven a major culture change.

##### Researcher

Okay. And you mentioned the ABS list and that being a very kind of important thing. Is that something that has sort of driven the way that you have gone about your work in terms of where you decide to publish, where you've sent your articles to it and that kind of thing?

##### Participant 24

Not really. Because in essence, in a way, the ABS list says no more than we already knew - that it's a good idea to publish in good journals. They do have arguments about what's a three and a four and all the rest of it, or a two and a three. And that, I think, is very frustrating. And it's also very frustrating when, you know. Interviewing people now, they produce these CVs and they've got this list, ABS 2, 3, 4. And they say, you know, when they do a presentation of "this is what I'm doing", you know, "I'm aiming for this journal" blah blah blah. But I think, what are you actually about? Who are you? You know, that I find really frustrating and I think that's sort of leading to making the whole thing really... I don't know. Ideas are being forgotten and instead people are increasingly, I think it has made people much more cautious about what they are doing, much less adventurous in research terms. I think it's a disciplinary mechanism.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. Thank you.

##### Participant 24

Disciplinary in the bad sense. I mean, if you're starting out as a young academic now it's a bit depressing really. At least I felt I was always putting forward ideas, trying to sway things. So that's really the basic thing about about, you know, about ABS and impact and stuff.

##### Researcher

Excellent. Thank you. So something else you mentioned earlier about during your time as [role], you had many responsibilities, you know, a lot of stuff going on and you had to engage in some sort of micromanagement. What would you say generally were your kind of ways of dealing with that kind of workload? What did you, how did you kind of prioritise things and stay on top of things?

##### Participant 24

I don't think I did really. I think I, I think it was a very unusual situation because I think I had so many issues. Because a number of grievances were taken out against me by both admin staff and academic staff. So there were actually a lot of difficult issues that built up over time within the school, which the university just left to wither. So it was a very draining time emotionally. So a lot of it was just trying to get the whole thing to operate on some semblance of order with people taking responsibility for themselves. I think it was... I used to say what I'm trying to do is create a job which is actually doable. I think at the end I did succeed in doing that. [Aforementioned female successor] at the end of the day thought it was a doable job and a job she'd rather like to do at that point, by that point in time. But I think in the meantime it had been very difficult in terms of relationships and everything. I suppose I tried to keep some research going, attending seminars and things like that. So I tried to keep that, to keep that going. But I don't think I've got any particular secrets, other than, I think you've got to develop, basically, you've got to not care particularly what people think of you. Otherwise you'll go completely utterly bonkers. And you've got to develop a fairly sort of tough hide. And not be afraid to make decisions, let people go, you know, I had to sort of maybe do things I was quite surprised I would have to do.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's interesting. Thank you. I'm just conscious of time. I know we're coming up to sort of 3 o'clock. I've got, only got one more question I really want to ask to kind of round up the interview. So what kind of, obviously you've got a lot of experience, so what kind of advice or what would you, I guess, do differently or advise someone to do, a kind of younger academic who might be looking to go into leadership positions and kind of, you know, career development, that kind of thing and move on in their career? What are, you know, the most kind of important things in a business school to do?

##### Participant 24

I think, yeah, because I often get asked by younger academics and I think, I think my advice to them is not to worry too much about the ABS list. And to do what it is they really want to do otherwise there is no point doing this sort of work. And the other thing to remember, too, is that - this of course may start to change I suspect now - is that at least until quite recently, the job market has been fairly fluid. So in many ways people are often creating problems for themselves by trying to focus on ABS when the reality is that only so many people can be published in four star journals, et cetera. So, you know, to try and get some sort of balance in it. But if you're not doing something you like doing, there's no point in continuing. It's one of the reasons why probably most of us stay in academia, I think. If you want to, you know, administratively, well, I think, I think, it's not entirely true obviously but it's probably not surprising that most people go into admin roles maybe towards later in their careers rather than early in their careers because by that time you might think you'd like try and do something different. Actually, a thing I didn't mention was boredom. I think one thing why I went into it is because I was just bored. You're doing research all the time, you know, sitting in your room, usually my research involved running around and interviewing people as well, but you get a bit bored by it and it just seems a bit infantile from time to time as well. Reviewers, daft points, all the rest of it. So I thought I'd like to do something new. In reality it was just as infantile as what I was escaping from. I think, so, my advice, my advice is, I think it's, I think it's good to do some admin, because it's good to have a mixed economy of things, to be doing a number of things. I think, I think it's really bad just to try and be a researcher. I think we should do a lot more in terms of trying to focus on what teaching is about. I think at the end of the day for educationalists... and in some ways I'm a bit sceptical about the impact because I think that's another thing that we've got to chase after. We're asked too many different things in academia. We've got too many things up in the air whereas some of the things we're actually doing, like educating young people, we are not actually doing particularly well. We're not offering people much of a choice in different approaches. You know, the similarity in what we're doing is becoming quite striking. And that seems to me to be really, really poor. And essentially what the market has done in higher education is actually driven isomorphism, you know, increasing similarity. But it's very difficult to get people to break away from that because it's not somewhere they see their careers going. In a way opposing it is a bit self-sacrificial. It can be, sort of, it can be a bit sort of destroying. On the other hand, you get to do lots of interesting things. You meet lots of interesting people. We still have a wide choice of things to research, teach. If you're lucky and and thinking of working with post-experience students, it can be a lot of fun and really quite challenging and demanding. So it's, I mean I could've just retired straight away, but I think it's actually interesting to carry on doing this. Does that, I'm not sure that helps you?

##### Researcher

Definitely. Yeah, absolutely. And just on that topic of obviously you could have retired completely, but you haven't, I guess what is your kind of plan from now on? Are you planning to sort of carry on working for another five years? Ten years? What are you thinking? One year, two years? What kind of plan do you have?

##### Participant 24

Possibly a five year time period. I don't really know in a way. I'll just see how things turn out. I don't have like, if you like, I don't have a... lots of us academics don't necessarily have something that really engages us outside... I don't have a hobby, I'm not fascinating by... I don't collect things or anything like that. Maybe if one has something outside like that, but in a way, your research in a way is part of your real interest. That's why you're doing it. It'll be very interesting to see, the next few years could really be quite interesting in terms of how many people stay on. I think age is more of an attitude of mind, than a matter of chronology. But then, of course I would do because that's in my interest to present it in that way. But I think it's really important that, I think, a lot of us still have a strong sense of vocation, I think a strong sense of educational mission, and a strong sense of, you know, the fascination of doing research and sort of capturing, capturing things in words. And I think that's a really compelling thing that keeps a lot of us on track. Ironically, in many ways, I had more fun earlier on in my career when they were a lot less constraints, but certainly in the 80s there was always a threat of sort of like being jobless, which was very close that I'm not sure I'd recommend it to anyone. But being more entrepreneurial, looking for projects and things like that, was actually quite exciting and good fun. But it is difficult to replicate that. I'm trying at the moment with a colleague, but, who know? So I'm not sure that's good advice or not. I often wonder this, because I think to myself, none of the courses I've been on have been very healthful. That is really interesting, actually. Having been on a management course for academics, you realise it's really difficult because you know what these management trainers are going to do anyway, and you've done what they're doing yourself with other groups of people. It also makes you think, I've often thought, what is it I learnt most? A lot of it, I think, is I just learnt actually from talking to people or even talking to post-experience students about issues they face. I've interviewed lots of [group of professionals] and things like that. Thought about their worlds and some of the things, an approach I'd take, is actually taken from things I've learned from them, about how to take things, how to operate, how to see essentially what you're working in as a political environment. If you don't see the political environment, you go mad, because that's what it's all about. Even though the politics is often really rather sort of dismal. In academia some people play politics, lots of people play politics, for such little return, that it's actually very difficult to understand what they think they're doing. It's really quite weird. I think somebody said "academic politics is so vicious because so little is at stake". I can't remember the exact quote. But something like, something like that. I mean, that sums it up exactly. And that's exactly true now - that people take up positions that just absolutely make no sense. And go through all sorts of processes. Anyway. I hope that's been of some interest. By all means come back if you have any further question. Allow me a chance to reminisce. Haha. Good luck with it.

##### Researcher

That's all been really helpful. Thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it. I'll stop recording.