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Understanding academic identity conflicts in the public university: importance of work ideologies

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Our study explores the prevalence of academic identity conflicts in a public university by focusing on the work ideologies academics draw upon when reflecting on the purpose of higher education and academic work. Framing the study are three related propositions: (1) public universities face unique identity problems arising from pressures to align the institution and its academic workforce around a commercial ethos and student as consumer principles; (2) work ideologies play a key role in understanding academic identity conflicts by highlighting the competing and contradictory beliefs on which higher education and academic work is (should be) organised; and (3) academics voice work ideologies consistent with their positions in the university hierarchy. Academic responses to an online survey indicated professors and lecturers shared a deep-seated antipathy to a market ethos that reduces higher education to a narrow economic function. Implications and challenges associated with viewing academic identity conflicts from a work ideologies perspective are considered.

Keywords: Academic identity, public university, work ideology

Introduction

As governments position higher education primarily in terms of a narrow economic role that contributes to business, innovation and national skills development (McArthur, 2011), public universities have responded to this economic imperative by redefining themselves as businesses and shaping all aspects of academic work around a more commercially-oriented, market identity (Deem, Hillyard, & Reed, 2008; Dollery, Murray, & Crase, 2006; Hussey & Smith, 2010; Kenny, 2009; Marginson & Considine, 2000). In the new corporate style university, managerialism and its associated ideologies have transformed the nature of public universities, “making them into producers of commodities that consumers (students) may choose to demand depending on their competing preferences and the institution’s perceived brand image” (Winter, 2009, p. 123). In these statements of branding, “concrete purposes and achievements are replaced by a symbolic avowal of the values of business and industry” with students, knowledge, research and teaching/learning being portrayed as “products of the university” (Saunston & Morrish, 2011, p. 83).

Our paper contends the intended transformation of public universities into competitive, market-driven enterprises has led to distinct identity conflicts in academe (Billot, 2010; Churchman & King, 2009; Winter, 2009). Identity conflicts are defined as cognitive states of separation arising from academic work prescribed by the university that embodies corporate beliefs that conflict with a valued professional self-identity (Winter, 2009). As a state of separation, identity

conflicts signify a different conception of the academic self to that prescribed by the university – a role strain that affects academic motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness (Churchman, 2006; Churchman & King, 2009; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006).

Our conception of academic identity conflict is predicated on the conflicting managerial (utilitarian) and professional (normative) ideological beliefs permeating operating functions of public universities in Australia, the UK and New Zealand (Billot, 2010; Churchman, 2006; Deem et al., 2008; Dollery et al., 2006; Kolsaker, 2008; Winter, 2009). Because identities are not unitary and fixed but pluralistic and fluid in public universities (Henkel, 2005), there exists the context for different conceptions and discourses as to the nature and purpose of higher education and academic work (e.g., to educate students; to engage in scholarly research; to increase external income; to contribute to a civilised society). In this fluid environment, some academics will *align* themselves with the university as an enterprise (managerial identity) or *separate* their academic selves from the demands of a corporate enterprise (professional identity). In our study, we attempt to gain insights into these academic identity types by asking academics to reveal their preferences for a managerial or professional conception of higher education and academic work.

The primary aim of our study is to make academic identity conflicts explicit by drawing attention to the different work ideologies academics espouse in various positions within an Australian public university. Framing the study are three related propositions: (1) public universities face unique identity problems arising from pressures to align the institution and its academic workforce around a commercial ethos and student as consumer principles; (2) work ideologies play a key role in understanding academic identity conflicts by highlighting the competing and contradictory beliefs on which higher education and academic work is (should be) organised; and (3) academics voice work ideologies consistent with their positions in the university hierarchy.

In making academic identity conflicts explicit, we pay particular attention to the language used by academics to explain different conceptions of higher education and academic work (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Specifically, we treated statements of emotional beliefs as windows into the identities of academics occupying various “fixed and largely taken-for-granted positions” in the university hierarchical structure (Ashforth, 2001, p. 4). In taking a social constructionist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), we viewed such statements as a basis for inferring states of separation associated with academic identity conflicts. This follows the theoretical position that beliefs not only mould a person’s language, preferences and behaviour (Sproull, 1981; Trice, 1993), they are central to defining the identity of individuals enacting the same work role (Ashforth, 2001). Essentially, our identity perspective is captured by Hussey and Smith (2010) in their insightful critique of the higher education system in the UK: “As language changes [to reflect the advance of a competitive market ethos], so does thinking, and as thinking changes so does action and with it the whole experience of [higher] education” (p. 22).

A work ideologies perspective

Our work ideologies perspective assumes processes of academic identity alignment and separation are triggered by the “emotionalised, action-oriented beliefs” individual academics use in making sense of their work and the higher education sector more broadly (Trice, 1993, p. 48). Implicit in our cognitive conception of identity construction is the notion that emotional beliefs act as a foundation and guide to an individual’s behaviour by governing modes of

thought and helping people rationalise their worlds (Beyer, Dunbar, & Meyer, 1988; Sproull, 1981). In a moral sense, work ideologies shape the rights and wrongs of academic behaviour by assigning moral meanings to concrete actions (e.g., “education breaks the poverty cycle”) or by legitimating particular codes of conduct (e.g., “academics must generate external income given government funding constraints”). That is, by linking emotional beliefs to behavioural intentions, work ideologies function to shape an academic’s moral identity and sense of self (Blasi, 1984).

An important identity shaping mechanism in higher education is managerialism given it encompasses “ideology, discourses and axioms originating in the private sector” (Kolsaker, 2008, p. 514). Because managerialism emphasises neo-liberal goals such as economic rationality, the primacy of profit, and corporate efficiency principles (Deem & Brehony, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008), it is seen as providing important identity clues as to the core beliefs that anchor (or separate) academics to (or from) their work in a more corporatised environment. For example, an academic taking on a corporate-oriented identity may see their interests inextricably tied to “the management of student learning” (Henkel, 1997, p. 138). This identity may encompass a strong will to render satisfaction to students as important customers with real stakes in their own learning (Barnett, 2011). Alternatively, academics with a strong sense of professional identity (Nixon, 1996) and an unwavering belief that managerialism represents a deliberate attempt to commodify academic work outcomes as products of economic value (Furedi, 2011; Winter & Sarros, 2002), may resist such an identity change as running contrary to “what it means to be an academic” (Henkel, 2005, p. 165). Crucially, economic-consumer conceptions of higher education and academic work trigger competing identity claims as to what is central and distinctive about academic work (Billot, 2010; Churchman, 2006; Randle & Brady, 1997). In the expression of these identity claims, individuals and occupational groups may experience various degrees of identity conflict.

Work ideologies may also serve the status and future careers of academics occupying various positions in the university hierarchy (Deem et al., 2008; Winter, 2009). Viewing work ideologies from a hierarchical perspective draws our attention to the bases of political contention in higher education “among groups and individuals with different social positions and material interests” (Weiss & Miller, 1987, p. 108). Construing academic identity in hierarchical terms, deans and heads of school might be inclined to take on a managerial identity of “formal instrumentality” (Teelken, 2011, p. 8) by emphasising research targets, performance measurement, quality assessments, and student as customer ideals (Bell & Taylor, 2005; Deem et al., 2008). Conversely, academics working in their respective discipline areas might “keep managerialism at a distance” (Teelken, 2011, p. 8) by voicing learning, scholarship, and autonomy ideals consistent with a professional identity (Bexley, James, & Arkoudis, 2011; Nixon, 1996). Both forms of academic identity we argue is premised on work ideologies that serve to anchor or separate academics in their current work roles in the university. A brief description of each work ideology now follows.

Managerial work ideology

A *managerial* work ideology has at its core the promotion and legitimisation of an economic market-based rationality (Deem & Brehony, 2005; Randle & Brady, 1997). Its primary function in universities is to make the provision of educational services more competitive and business-like, to offer students more choices as consumers, and to provide research services that are of benefit to industry (Deem, 1998; Kolsaker, 2008; Furedi, 2011). Underpinning this function are two core beliefs and assumptions: (1) institutional competition and consumer preferences are the most efficient resource mechanisms for allocating public services like higher education, and

(2) income generation and financial profit criteria is appropriate for all types of organisation (Clarke & Newman, 1997). The managerialist discourse has a strong performative imperative for individual academics to emphasise their managerial identities by conversing in management-speak, a language couched in the principles of corporate image and branding, hierarchical work relations, financial profit goals, modularisation of teaching, and quality assurance (Bell & Taylor, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Deem et al., 2008).

Professional work ideology

A *professional* work ideology supports a broader view of higher education that contributes to the “economic and social welfare of all members of society” (McArthur, 2011, p. 738). Although economic, market-based beliefs and goals are not entirely discounted as important influences in higher education, they are viewed through an ideological lens that stresses normative goals and beliefs such as discipline inquiry, scholarship, truth, professional autonomy, and knowledge (Bexley et al., 2011; Coady, 2000; Nixon, 1997). Of central importance to a professional work ideology is the occupational principle academics have the requisite knowledge, training, and skills to teach and research in their chosen discipline areas without undue management interference (Churchman & King, 2009; O’Neill & Meek, 1994).

Methodology

The context for our study of academic identity conflict is a medium-sized (1,200 employees) Australian public university. As a multiple-identity organisation (Foreman & Whetten, 2002), the university like other public universities of its size faces identity problems arising from competing pressures to integrate notions of academic professionalism and commercialism into one basic entity (Kolsaker, 2008; Noordegraaf, 2007). These pressures are exemplified in the university’s current strategic vision of recognising the need for innovation and entrepreneurial activity whilst simultaneously stressing a social justice agenda of making opportunities available to the local community.

An online survey was considered the most effective means for exploring the importance of managerial and professional work ideologies to the identities of discipline-based academics across the university (Becher & Trowler, 2011; Sue & Ritter, 2007). Ethical consent for the survey was made possible by the second author who previously worked at the university as both an academic and general staff member.

The online survey included four open questions designed to provoke academics to reveal their emotional action-oriented beliefs in respect to the: (1) nature/purpose of higher education (i.e., higher education is best promoted on the basis of..?); (2) character/purpose of universities (i.e., universities are first and foremost..?); (3) primary purpose of academic work (i.e., the purpose of academic work is to..?); and (4) role obligations of academics (i.e., academics need to offer students..?). Each question was based on the work ideologies previously outlined and found to have good face validity when pre-tested with 12 academics from the first author’s university.

In order to trigger associations to identity, work ideology items were framed as binary statements reflecting the dynamic tension between managerial (utilitarian) and professional (normative) beliefs and goals in respect to how higher education is (should be) organised (Randle & Brady, 1997; Winter, 2009). Consequently, survey participants were presented with two paired comparison survey items and asked to choose one particular work ideology over the other alternative. Kerlinger (1986, p. 461) suggests the paired comparisons technique is

the “most satisfying of psychometric methods” when the focus is on forcing participants to choose among alternatives. In order for participants to justify their respective work ideology preference and/or indicate a preference for a managerial ideology *and* professional ideology (i.e., hybrid identity), an open-ended comments box was included after each survey question. Hybrid identity comments are not presented here due to paper length restrictions.

Sample

In line with our proposition that academics would voice work ideologies consistent with their positions in the university hierarchy, all full-time academics in our sample were stratified into ‘professorial’ (17 deans/associate deans; 129 professors/heads of school; 74 associate professors/deputy heads; $n = 220$) and ‘lecturing’ (173 senior lecturers; 280 lecturers; 81 associate lecturers; $n = 534$) positions. To provide another point of contrast, academics in the sample were also drawn from the university’s main discipline areas of science, arts, business/law, and education. Accordingly, a sample of 754 academics stratified by position and discipline area were contacted by e-mail and invited to complete an online survey in accordance with an approved university ethical consent protocol.

The online survey yielded 186 responses, an overall response rate of 25%. Respondents categorised as lecturing ($n = 139$, 75%) and professorial ($n = 47$, 25%) positions were broadly in proportion to the sample (71% and 29% respectively). Proportionally, more professorial respondents (21%) provided open-ended comments to all four survey items compared to lecturing respondents (16%). Respondents were grouped in the following discipline areas: science, engineering and technology (34%), health science (31%), arts (19%), business/law (9%) and education (7%). Most respondents were female (60%), in teaching and research roles (70%) and employed on an ongoing academic contract (69%). The average age of respondents was 46 years.

Data analysis

Analysis and coding of data explicitly took account of the vocabulary and anecdotes used by respondents to convey their emotional action-oriented beliefs about the nature and purpose of higher education and academic work (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Code labels and related theoretical categories grounded in the words of respondents represented key techniques for ensuring participants’ implicit meanings and beliefs were captured in the coding itself (Charmaz, 2006). In order to bring the data together and establish the nature of respondents’ ideological beliefs, tables were constructed. Tables provided important insights into the identities of respondents by showing how work ideologies are based on powerful emotional beliefs and principles of moral order (Blasi, 1984; Sproull, 1981). All data was coded by the first author and discussed with the second author in order to sharpen theoretical sensitivity between ideological categories (Saldaña, 2009).

Findings

Importance of a professional work ideology

Table 1 shows professorial and lecturing groups both expressed a strong response to statements indicative of a professional work ideology. A majority of professorial (98%) and lecturing (91%) respondents indicated a preference for higher education to be promoted on the basis of ‘educational need and academic standards principles’. Similarly, over 90% of respondents in both groups professed a strong belief in universities being ‘first and foremost learning institutions focused on intellectual rigour and scholarship’ and that the ‘primary purpose of academic work

is to encourage scholarship and student learning'. In respect to student as consumer ideals (Furedi, 2011), a minority of professorial respondents (19%) and lecturing respondents (9%) indicated a preference for academics offering students 'greater product choice as consumers'. Overall, academic frequency responses to the four work ideology statements indicated both professorial and lecturing groups expressed a strong preference for professional beliefs and goals in higher education over managerial beliefs and goals.

Table 1: Professorial and lecturing frequency responses to work ideology statements

Work ideology statements	Professorial frequencies	Lecturing frequencies
1. Higher education is best promoted on the basis of..?		
A. Market-demand and user-pays principles (M)	1	10
B. Educational need and academic standards principles (P)	46	127
Missing data	0	2
2. Universities are first and foremost..?		
A. Learning institutions focused on intellectual rigour and scholarship (P)	44	130
B. Business institutions focused on income generation and cost minimisation (M)	3	7
Missing data	0	2
3. The primary purpose of academic work is to..?		
A. Encourage scholarship and student learning (P)	43	132
B. Generate income via external research grants and industry linkages (M)	1	6
Missing data	3	1
4. Academics need to offer students..?		
A. Greater product choice as consumers (M)	9	13
B. Structured learning focused programs (P)	38	123
Missing data	0	3
Totals	47	139

Notes: professorial positions (1 dean, 6 heads of school, 17 professors, 19 associate professors, 4 program heads); lecturing positions (35 senior lecturers, 84 lecturers, 20 associate lecturers). M = managerial work ideology, P = professional work ideology.

Anti-market, anti-business and anti-consumerism beliefs

Respondents in the lecturing and professorial groups indicating a preference for professional beliefs in higher education also provided 'anti-market', 'anti-business' and 'anti-consumerism' comments to substantiate their professional identities. Table 2 presents examples of two of these professional work ideology statements and the comments on which they are based. Both statements reveal some cognitive separation from economic rationalist principles and practices that "distort the higher education process towards short-term profits" and "prevent the real university goals of education, research and community service from being achieved" (Professorial/Science).

Table 2: Overview of professional work ideology data structure

Professional work ideology statements	Emotional beliefs	Code labels
Education is a vital public-social good that the market does not value very well	<p>Education isn't a product that can be bought like iPods or cars. (Prof/Science)</p> <p>Education that's based solely on market demand tends to be narrow, and develops individuals with a limited range of experiences and values. (Prof/Education)</p> <p>The market is not good at managing public good items, education is one of these; e.g. we know that education breaks the poverty cycle and so improves health, reduces crime and violence, improves families etc but the market is not interested in these... (Senior Lec/Science)</p> <p>The public good of higher education (HE) is even greater than the personal good. Also, a market-user pays approach would distort the HE process towards short-term profits which would prevent the real university goals of education, research and community service from being achieved. (Prof/Science)</p>	<p>Education/anti-market</p> <p>Education/outcomes/anti-market</p> <p>Education/outcomes/public good/anti-market</p> <p>Education/public good/outcomes/anti-market</p>
Education and universities are about more than economic factors	<p>Education is about more than economic factors; it is the basis of a civilised society and is a means for people to improve themselves and for the transmission and generation of knowledge. (Lec/Science)</p> <p>I don't believe that education should be viewed as an item for economic transactions. I believe that the primary objective of tertiary education is to serve humanity and the fostering of human qualities. (Assoc Prof/Science)</p> <p>Commodification of education devalues the two-way process of learning. Higher education should foster higher-order thinking, innovation and an ability to critique. (Lec/Business)</p> <p>There are a number of Australian universities who have moved away from educational values to business, economic values. It is important that universities and governments remember what universities are for – the development and dissemination of education and knowledge... (Lec/Arts)</p>	<p>Education/civilised/society/knowledge/anti-market</p> <p>Education/humanity/anti-market</p> <p>Commodification/critical thinking/innovation/anti-market</p> <p>Education/knowledge/anti-business</p>

Respondents tended to share the view that education is a vital public-social good and that a “good university is a centre for critical engagement with ideas” (Lecturing/Business), “focused foremost on intellectual rigour and scholarship” (Lecturing/Science) and “dedicated to helping people get educated” (Lecturing/Business).

Emotional belief statements also revealed a deep-seated antipathy to education being “viewed as an item for economic transactions” (Professorial/Science) that “can be bought like Ipods or cars” (Professorial/Science). In challenging the precepts of economic rationalism, one respondent conceived education “as an investment that will yield returns over the long-term and not directly to the institution but to society” (Lecturing/Science). Specific anti-market comments by respondents from the science discipline questioned the integrity of a narrow user-pays approach to higher education that neglects broader social values such as breaking “the poverty cycle” (Lecturing/Science) and addressing “the needs of the ageing population who mostly have advancing chronic diseases” (Lecturing/Science). Other respondents agreed with a broader conception of higher education reiterating that the “public good of higher education is even greater than the personal good” (Professorial/Science) given it represents the principal “means for people to improve themselves” (Lecturing/Science).

Several respondents also made strident comments that market forces and business interests should not be allowed to “determine what knowledge needs to be kept or transferred, or what is intellectually valued” in higher education (Lecturing/Science). Others expressed concern that critical thinking and the open exploration of ideas in universities might be impeded by “monied interests” (Professorial/Education) or “business interests” as suggested by a head of school (Professorial/Science). One respondent affirmed the view that market forces were “devaluing the two-way process of learning” and “contributing to an attitude from students that they are ‘purchasing’ a degree rather than ‘investing’ in an opportunity to learn” (Lecturing/Law).

A few respondents ridiculed the managerial idea that students were customers or consumers of higher education (Furedi, 2011; Sharrock, 2000). An anti-customer discourse was justified in terms of “students do not always know what they need to know” (Lecturing/Arts), “are poorly equipped to make judgements on what they need for their chosen interest or career” (Lecturing/Science), and prefer not to be “marketed at!” according to one head of school (Professorial / Science). Reflecting educational beliefs and goals that affirm the centrality of learning and student skill development (Nixon, 1997), one respondent strongly rejected the idea that the “national need for high-level skills (and the research expertise this supports) can be satisfied by student preferences alone” (Professorial/Science). Another respondent (head of school) went further in showing his contempt for consumerism suggesting it is a “disease destroying this planet” and if the university was to “happily sell consumers degrees” then he would “rather weed gardens than work here” (Professorial/Arts).

Discussion

Reflections on the work ideologies perspective

Understanding academic identity in terms of competing ideologies is an under-researched area of research in higher education, although there are some notable exceptions (Barnett, 2003; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Winter, 2009). Exactly how academic identity conflicts may form over time in a university environment combining an entrenched community service ethos and strong commercial element is still not fully known. This study has attempted to provide some insights into academic identity conflicts in such environments by focusing on the dynamic tension between managerial and professional work ideologies in respect to how higher education and academic work is (should be) organised (Randle & Brady, 1997; Winter, 2009).

Although the on-line survey response is somewhat limited in overall size and scope, the work ideology statements do indicate some identity conflict among academics in respect to higher

education being reduced in purpose to a narrow, market-oriented function (Hussey & Smith, 2010; McArthur, 2011). Identity conflicts are particularly acute among academics in the science discipline, perhaps due to the fact commercialisation “has taken hold most firmly” in this part of the institution (Bok, 2003, p. 5). In stressing their professional identities (Nixon 1996, 1997), survey respondents called into question the ethical basis of a higher education system which privileges short-term economic factors and neglects the long-term community service role of educating students, its contribution to a greater social justice, and generating knowledge for society more broadly (McArthur, 2011; Scott, 2004). Although these calls may be dismissed by critics as “just a rant against the inevitable difficulties of expanding the provision of higher education” (Hussey & Smith, 2010, p. vii), they still should alert us to the important role traditional beliefs play in connecting academics to their roles, profession, universities, and the broader society.

This study presents evidence that work ideologies, by underpinning these individual-social connections, do play an important role in highlighting the cultural, intellectual and pedagogical consequences of conceiving higher education in narrow economic terms (Barnett, 2003, 2011; Hussey & Smith, 2010). Our study findings indicate the conception of higher education as a “business” signifies for many academics the dilution of the primary role of educating students and a means of stifling critical thinking and the open exploration of ideas (Brookfield, 2005). Indeed, evidence of anti-market, anti-business, and anti-consumer sentiments expressed by academics in this study align with comments expressed by academics in earlier studies of Australian public universities (Churchman, 2006; Churchman & King, 2009; Winter & Sarros, 2002). Academics it seems continue to emphasise their professional identities by voicing moral discourses of “making a difference” in terms of teaching and student learning (Churchman, 2006, p. 10) and experiencing identity conflict when they see learning and knowledge creation being subordinated to economic principles and narrow efficiency criteria (Winter & Sarros, 2002). A key leadership challenge facing public universities is finding ways to articulate broader conceptions of higher education in an environment that overpowers rather than embraces moral-ethical beliefs and ideals (McArthur, 2011; Scott, 2004). Furedi (2011) states bluntly this is perhaps too difficult a task in the current commercialised environment given it is likely sections of higher education leadership have internalised the “ideology of marketisation to the point where they find it difficult to distinguish between an academic relationship and a commercial transaction” (p. 3).

Evidence presented here in the form of anti-consumerism statements suggests that academic identity conflict is “underpinned by an agenda that seeks to discipline academic life through consumer pressures on higher education” (Furedi, 2011, p. 3). Pressured to view students as consumers or clients, many academics despair that learning and scholarship, key values underpinning the academic profession (Bexley et al., 2011), will be compromised. Whether learning and scholarship is impaired as a direct result of a “student as customer” relationship is difficult to ascertain given the wide range of other factors (e.g., employers decisions to give staff paid time to study, individual motivations of students and staff etc.) that may affect the outcome. As Barnett (2011) makes clear, “there is no reason to believe that the presence of a market dimension [in] the pedagogical relationship will have a significance that overrides all those other factors” (p. 42). With this caveat in mind, we suggest that while a market ethos may govern modes of thought, the actual ramifications such thinking has for pedagogy and the quality of learning may not be altogether clear. A possible fruitful area of future research is investigations of how seemingly contradictory managerial (private-consumer) and professional (public-social) work ideologies can coalesce in higher education institutions and influence the quality of learning and scholarship.

Interestingly, we found little evidence of academics aligning themselves to a managerial ideology across the sample. A number of reasons may be advanced to explain such findings. First, in respect to response rates an imbalance in favour of respondents from the lecturing group limited possible insights into whether ideologies differed substantially by level of academic position. Second, the self-reporting nature of the data collection process may have encouraged academics to voice a professional ideology that fits some desirable social identity (i.e., what other academics expect to hear) rather than voice a managerial identity, or one premised on what the individual actually stands for and represents in a moral sense. It stands to reason work ideologies (emotional action-oriented beliefs) may take on many guises and those presented by study respondents may not be entirely morally significant or truthful. Further investigation of how work ideologies influence actual academic behaviour in the context of the public university would provide a basis for more conclusive statements about identity conflict and its formation.

Conclusion

Our study findings show how identity conflicts represent a distinct ideological response by academics to the changed reality of the public university having to prioritise the economic needs of the higher education market (Furedi, 2011; Hussey & Smith, 2010). Identity conflict is conveyed in statements about the broader social purposes of a university and the potential harm a market ethos can do to the academic-student pedagogical relationship (Barnett, 2011). Positioning identity conflict as an ideological response to a changed environment reminds us that identities are “continually in the process of being constructed, continually subject to change as the relations, practices and discourses which surround individuals change” (Halford & Leonard, 1999, p. 109). In order for academics to “take on” and “live out” new identities that embody commercial ideas and practices, attention must be given by leaders in higher education to integrating the guiding principles and beliefs of academics across the disciplines (Clark, 1998; Winter & Sarros, 2002). A discourse voiced by academics in this study could help connect and guide the managerial (business) and professional (academic) arms of the university: educational principles should stand above market principles and business interests should not be allowed to determine primarily what knowledge needs to be kept, transferred or intellectually valued in higher education.

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