Universities Scotland

Institutional governance and university autonomy in Scottish universities

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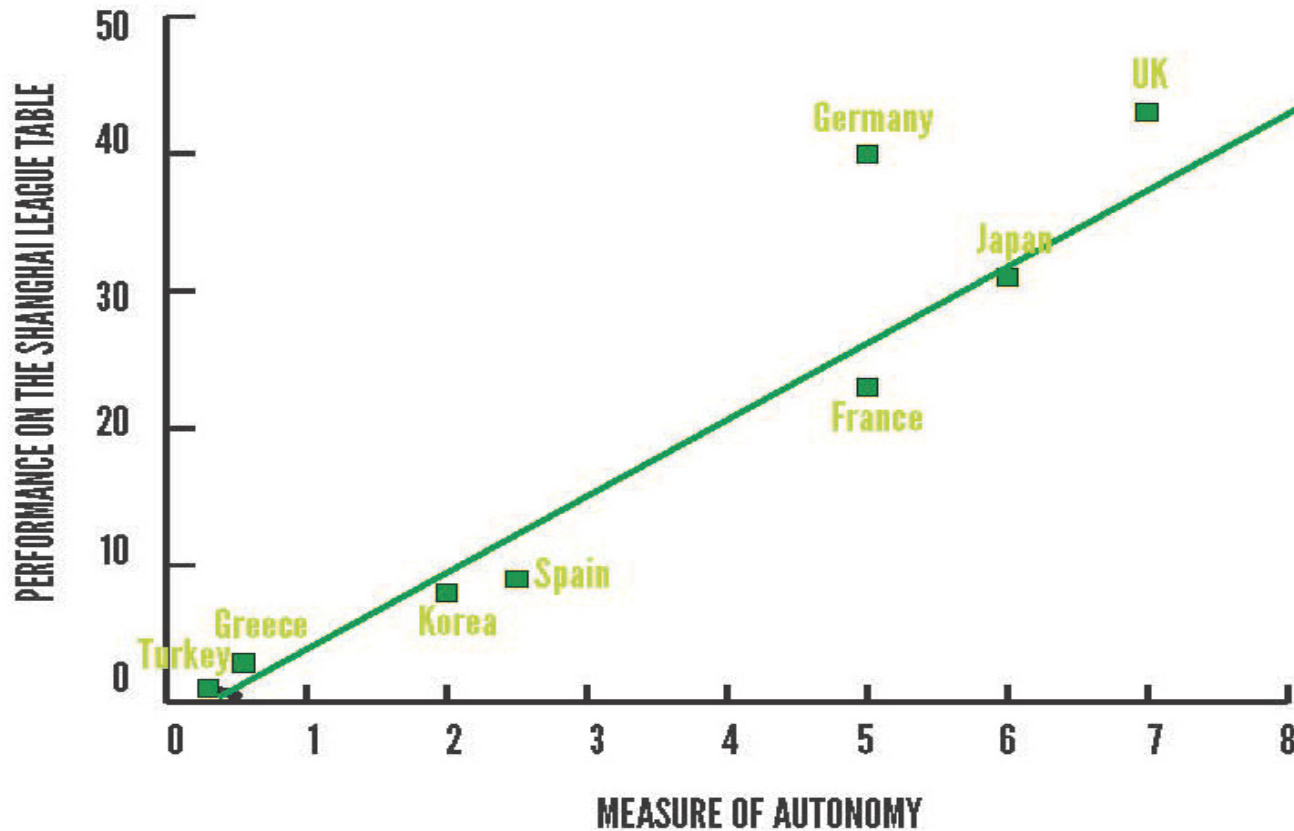**Twitter: @uni_scot**

Overview

- Autonomy and Success

- Responsible autonomy

- Governance framework

- New Scottish Governance Code

Autonomy and Success

CORRELATION BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND PLACEMENT IN THE SHANGHAI WORLD LEAGUE TABLES

Source: TEPAV

Autonomy and Success

'…institutions that have complete autonomy are also more flexible because they are not bound by cumbersome bureaucracies and externally imposed standards, even in light of the legitimate accountability mechanisms that do bind them. As a result, they can manage their resources with agility and quickly respond to the demands of a rapidly changing global market.'

The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities (Salmi, 2009)

Autonomy and Success

'The basic principle behind institutional autonomy is that institutions operate better if they are in control of their own destiny. They have an incentive to change if they can directly benefit from their actions; they can be entrepreneurial and reap the rewards... If a group of institutions in a university system is given autonomy to respond to national policy goals as they think fit, there is a reasonable chance that they will choose different ways of reaching the same goal... Had they been centrally directed, this variety would have been unlikely.

Global trends in University Governance (Fielden, 2008)

Autonomy and Success

'Universities should have the freedom and the responsibility to set their own missions, priorities and programmes in research, education and innovation; to decide on their own organisation and on the bodies necessary for their internal management and their representation of society's interests; to manage their own physical, financial and intellectual assets for research and education, their budgets (including fundraising) and their partnerships with academia and industry; to recruit and set the compensation rules for their permanent and temporary staff and to target their collective efforts towards institutional priorities in research, teaching and services. In doing so, universities need to accept that they are fully accountable to society at large for their results, including the cost-efficiency with which these are achieved.' [EC Memo 06/190]

Responsible autonomy

- £1.1bn public funding p.a.

- 43% of universities' income (35% for Aberdeen)

- Proportionate responsibility and accountability

- Outcome Agreements

Governance Framework

Responsibilities of the governing body include:-

- Setting the mission and strategic direction of the university, and the performance framework for achieving this.

- Appointing the executive head of the institution and monitoring their performance.

- Ensuring adequate systems of control and accountability are in place.

- Monitoring institutional performance

Governance Framework

Membership of governing bodies is not uniform, but has certain common features:

- A chair of the governing body, appointed by the governing body itself (except where there is an elected rector)

- Elected representation for students and staff, typically comprising around 40% of the governing body

- Members from outside the university, often constituting the majority, drawn from a wide variety of professional backgrounds

- A secretary of court, who is a professional officer of the university but who has distinct responsibilities to the governing body

New Scottish governance code

- Active involvement of staff and student members of governing bodies in selection of the chair and external members

- Equality and diversity considerations as a key part of building the membership of governing bodies

- Open advertisement of vacancies on governing bodies

- Measures to support participation by people with caring responsibilities

New Scottish governance code

- Student and staff members of governing bodies to contribute to the appraisal of the Principal

- Enhanced openness about the criteria and policies for senior remuneration decisions

- Enhanced openness of governing body proceedings

- Enhanced responsibility for governing bodies to maintain policies to protect academic freedom

- Creation of a new vice-chair responsibility for appraising the Chair's performance

Conclusion

- Tradition of autonomy and good governance

- At the heart of our success

- Let's see the code implemented successfully

Thank you

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