

**Academic Leadership**  
**An honour or a tall order?**

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# Academic Leadership

## An honour or a tall order?

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## Preface

The question "What makes an academic manager effective?" cannot be easily answered. Universities are multiform and multicoloured and its professionals are highly-educated, often headstrong and usually extremely autonomous. In addition, the responsibilities of managers have increased over the past years. They have the integral management responsibility for education and research within their unit and are supported in this by operational managers. This means that these 'academic leaders' can no longer limit themselves to carrying out their own profession and substantial coaching, but also bear responsibility for the organization, personnel and finances.

In my work as a trainer in professionalization programmes for academic managers we discuss issues like leadership, development of vision, implementation of changes, etc. These programmes are regarded as extremely valuable by the participants. Discussing one's own cases, exchanging personal experiences and exploring alternative ways of dealing with issues in consultation and through practising with actors are particularly popular elements. Evaluations tend to be less positive when we present management models, theories about 'effective leadership styles', etc. Time and again, this leads to discussions about nuances which prove that everyday practice is too complex to be caught in one model, or in advice that is relevant to every faculty, and every employee.

In spite of all these complicating circumstances, faculties, departments, and institutes have always been managed and I get the impression that this is done in an increasingly professional way. The cynical classic image of the scientist who regards managerial tasks as a chore and a manager as someone who is past his scientific prime now seems to be out of date. And rightly so: the tasks are far too complex and the professional far too critical and demanding when it comes to the organization and its management.

My fascination with academic leadership and the question of what makes managers effective have been stimulated by the considerations described above: an apparently impossible task (managing) in a multicoloured and inspirational environment (the academy) with highly educated, headstrong professionals. Personal meetings with academic managers further increased my fascination. Would it not be possible to make at least some statements about what is effective in the role of academic leader? Would it not be possible, in spite of the complex context and special people, to describe some qualities and skills that provide more general insight and are relevant to academic managers?

To get a good picture of managerial knowledge and expertise as well as personal leadership qualities, I started with issues that academic leaders encounter in practice, which is in line with the method I use in my consultancy work. I have learned a great deal about that practice from the participants in my courses, the commissioners of projects I have supervised, the people I have coached, and my colleagues with whom I have given the training programmes.

I have further explored these issues through in depth interviews with some of the people mentioned. I have linked their experiences and examples to my own experience as a consultant, trainer and manager of a professional organization (a consultancy firm). In the text below, you will find descriptions and references to points of view presented in the management literature. These have helped me to systematize these examples and put them into perspective.

This paper is not meant to provide an overview of theory from literature on management, leadership and organizational change. Many other authors have already done this, and the reader is referred to them for overviews. In our training programmes for managers, we make use of the writings of Birnbaum (1988), Quinn (2003), Gratton (2000) and De Caluwé and Vermaak (2006).

The core of this paper is composed of the examples and stories from actual practice. What have we learned about academic leadership so far?

This paper could not have been written without the help from and inspirational dialogues with scientists and colleagues. I am grateful to my clients and participants in the managerial development course given at Leiden University. Seven scientists agreed to extensive interviews with me in preparation for this paper: Professor Dr. Peter van Beukelen (Utrecht University), Professor Dr. Theo de Roos (Tilburg University), Professor Dr. Carel ten Cate, Professor Dr. Tineke Cleiren, Dr. Nadia Garnefski, Professor Dr. Wilfred van Soldt, and Professor Dr. Thony Visser (all Leiden University). I have drawn on their examples in writing this paper. At various points in the writing process, Ed Grubben provided feedback on the text. Finally, I would like to extend a special thank you to my dear colleagues Liesbeth van Welie and Huub Beckers. To present these training programmes together with them has been both an exciting and inspirational experience. We often pressed each other hard and had great fun in the process.

## Introduction

Mathieu Weggeman (2007) recently published his book *Leidinggeven aan professionals? Niet Doen!* (Managing Professionals? Don't!). According to him professionals are, in principle, intrinsically motivated. You should try to trouble them as little as possible with planning and control, and attempts by managers to guide others on content are usually to no avail. Managers are often not acknowledged as experts. What an organization and its managers should aim for is to establish collective ambition, to create a stimulating environment and facilitate the personal development of the professional.

These remarks may be all the more true in an academic environment. Academic freedom, far-reaching specialization and pioneering - and usually extremely independent - staff members make steering and control very difficult. Moreover, the staff members are often fairly inaccessible with regard to the development of collective ambitions and shared values due to the insular culture which typically results in people having more contact with their fellow scientists working at other universities than with their colleagues down the hall.

Not every manager finds this easy to swallow. It leaves one with very few managerial opportunities and was that not the whole point of the job? To provide direction, motivate and then check if the work has been done correctly? Unfortunately, it is all too clear by now that this top-down approach does not work. So what can one do in the role of academic leader? This brings me to the central question of this paper: what marks the effective leader at a university?

### ***The three tasks of the academic leader***

The main tasks of an academic leader can be clustered in three groups: management, administration and scientific research.

The first task, 'management', involves the recruitment, guiding, coaching and evaluation of employees, and the running of one's own unit (department, section, etc) by means of the correct deployment of people and resources. Academic leaders passionately speak of the tasks that have to do with content: stimulating PhD students, Post-docs, lecturers and associate professors in their research and personal development. However, it often proves difficult to find the time for this. In the short term, this does not create a real problem because most scientific staff members are very independent. In the long term however, the leader runs the risk of losing contact and thus his<sup>1</sup> influence on the group. The managerial tasks

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<sup>1</sup> To make reading easier I use 'he' and 'his' in this paper. The reader is invited to read 'she' and 'her' instead.

(organization, finances, and personnel issues) tend to cause more worries. The academic leader is usually supported in these tasks by an operational manager, a secretariat and various other staff departments. Nevertheless, in practice, the managerial tasks take a great deal of time, mainly because today's manager is an integral manager and he thus bears the final responsibility for operational management.

The second task, 'administration', includes the activities aimed at giving direction to and designing the organization within the context of the entire university. Such activities may be initiated by one's own unit, but as a rule they are tasks that are imposed by the faculty, the university executive board or the ministry. How can we provide a sound Master programme, and where do we place it in the organization? We are in trouble financially. Should we cut budgets or find other solutions? A visitation is scheduled for next year. How do we organize it and how do we ensure a top score? Managers have many contacts beyond the boundaries of their own unit, with the executive board, the other departments, etc. Managers tend to be active in (international) associations and supra-university institutes such as the NWO (Netherlands Organization for scientific research), the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands), etc. Even though such activities are at a slightly greater distance from the everyday practice of scientists and support staff, the impact on the organization is often considerable. The tasks usually involve change processes including related organizational and personal consequences.

The third task of the academic leader is his scientific work: conduct research, publish, teach, give lectures and, last but not least, get funding for new projects and research programmes. This is where the scientist's heart is; it is the very reason why he works at the university, and there's the rub. The management and administration tasks often take so much time that the research work suffers badly. I have often heard someone sigh in desperation: "I do my research at night". Especially for those who manage at departmental or faculty level, everyday practice leaves little time for carrying out one's actual profession.

The three tasks, management, administration and scientific work, require very different things from the academic leader. In this paper, I will provide handles for the execution of the first and second task. Even though these tasks are complex, there certainly are well-tried ways, skills and methods to successfully lead a university organization. Further, I will discuss personal effectiveness with the aim to provide tools that will help you work on all three tasks in a relaxed and satisfactory way.

## ***Reader's guide***

In chapter 1, you will find a description of the academic world. Based on the perspectives of motives of managers, cultural differences, characteristics of professionals and the tasks of managers, you will be given an impression of the multiformity of the university.

In chapter 2, I will discuss the way of managing scientists. Managing in this context means the personal style of coaching, motivating, and steering both of individual employees and of groups (teams, committees, etc.).

I will discuss in detail two questions that surfaced in many discussions:

- > What style of leadership suits them?
- > How can you exert influence effectively?

In chapter 3, administration takes a central place. In this context, administration is seen as including activities geared towards providing direction to and developing the organization. The focus is methodical. I discuss the following two themes:

- > How do you arrive at a vision that is supported, provides a foothold and stimulates people to take action?
- > How can you initiate and implement changes?

Personal effectiveness is discussed in chapter 4. The administration and managing of professionals often proves detrimental to one's energy level and work satisfaction. Managers have a great deal on their plate and not all of it is interesting or offers new challenges. Time-consuming procedures and hassles are everyday occurrences. Is it possible to do the job with pleasure and find a balance? This chapter seeks to find an answer to the following questions:

- > How do I keep the right between distance and commitment?
- > How do I deal with the constant lack of time?

For each question an introduction is provided. Next you will find several experiences and examples from managers. The third step is a description of action strategies that have proven effective in management practice.

## 1 The university as a multicoloured organization

*The university does not exist.* This much has become clear to me from my work at various universities and research institutes in the Netherlands. Abroad, the differences seem larger still, both in the nature and size of the institutes, and in reputation, wealth and scientific status. That status differs considerably per discipline too. A university can be of great importance in the field of the Life Sciences, yet be a modest player in the field of Law and non-existent in the Humanities. Other universities show a completely different picture. And even within one university, large differences exist in the way people work and cooperate.

In this chapter, I will discuss the university from three angles. In paragraph 1.1 I will go into the motives of academic leaders: why do scientists let themselves be talked into accepting managerial roles while they are most in their element as lecturer and researcher? In paragraph 1.2 you will find a portrait of university culture in four very different representations. In 1.3 I will discuss in some detail the university's inhabitants: professionals and their idiosyncrasies.

### 1.1 *Why do scientists want to manage?*

As stated before, the managerial role is never the primary reason for a scientist to work at a university. When starting out as a young scientist, you are mainly occupied with your own research and some teaching tasks. After a while, you will be asked to become a member of exam committees, working groups that are setting up a new programme, the board of the institute or unit, etc. Gradually the number of managerial tasks increases and by the time you hold a permanent appointment as a lecturer or an associate professor, you will have a substantial package of managerial tasks that costs a great deal of time. Because of the fact that the teaching tasks are a planned part of the job, the time spent on managerial tasks is time taken away from research. All in all, this is a state of affairs you do not really want and one that will result in some scientists showing avoidance behaviour: how can I limit my managerial work as much as possible? One of the people interviewed gave a more serious variation on this theme: "People who always drop plates, are never asked to dry the dishes!"

Still, scientists fulfil most of the required managerial roles at the various departments of the university in a serious and committed way. What drives them and what do they get out of it?

The motive heard most often is a sense of responsibility. It is part of your task as a professor to provide direction and to coach people. That feeling is closely linked to a leadership drive that many possess: the need to be a pioneer, to take the initiative and to lead the way.



An additional aspect is that as a manager you can exert influence on issues that are relevant to you, such as the direction of education and research, appointments, distribution of resources, etc. Another motive often given is the joy of working with people, creating a good atmosphere and helping employees to grow.

The profits are many-sided. Managerial tasks result in a large network as well as a feeling of active involvement in the academic community of your own university.

People feel at home there. Managerial work gives you a great deal of knowledge about the processes taking place at the university. With that knowledge and your managerial tact you can achieve results: innovative programmes, a financially healthy faculty, a new building, etc. When you see your department growing and raising more and more external funds after years of stagnation, it is a result to be proud of.

These are usually not effects created in the short term. One of the managers compared it to the Echternach spring procession: two steps forward, one step backward. Results can only be seen when you look back five or maybe even ten years down the road. He suggested that managerial jobs should therefore not be rotated too quickly: it takes time to build experience. One has to get used to the leadership role and grow with the team. The job is much more fun if you can form a great team with your operational manager.

Even though you will not receive praise on a daily basis, managerial work still gives you appreciation from colleagues and the feeling that you have made a contribution to the organization and all the people who work in it. And that is a vital contribution to one of the most fundamental needs we have as human beings, the need for appreciation and acknowledgement.

## 1.2 *What are the university's cultural images?*

Robert Birnbaum (1988) has given us an extremely interesting sketch of the cultures within universities. He arrives at four perspectives on the university as an organizational and cultural entity. The exceptional thing is that each perspective has its own explanatory value and helps you to better understand the university. The perspectives are all very different and together they provide a good picture of the multiformity of universities.

According to Birnbaum, universities can be pictured as:

1. a collegial institution
2. a bureaucratic institution
3. a political institution
4. an anarchical institution

Each of these perspectives is discussed in some detail below.

*The collegial institution*

From this perspective, the university is seen as a collection of colleagues showing considerable personal mutual commitment, a shared tradition and values, direct communication and few differences in status. The people take time for each other and decisions are made after extensive consultation of their colleagues. Influence is obtained based on personal merit and not based on one's position.

*The bureaucratic institution*

In this perspective, the structure, roles, hierarchy and procedures take precedence over the person. Operational management dominates with attention being paid to control and reports. The structure determines 'closeness' and makes certain relationships easier. Policy (high up in the structure) and execution (low down in the structure) are usually separated. Decision-making is of a rational objectivating nature (the numbers tell the tale) and linked to formal consultation procedures. One's influence is primarily based on one's formal position.

*The political institution*

In the political institution we see a collection of 'parties' with different interests and preferences; parties that like to take an independent position yet are also dependent on each other. There is insecurity, there are conflicts and there is 'we-they' thinking. In a culture of every man for himself, they meet for issues such as budget negotiations, with mutual commitment mainly depending on the issue at hand (whom can I team up with for this?). Decisions are made by means of negotiations in which mutual acceptance seems more important than the objectively best decision. Influence is created by developing one's sources of power, by entering into coalitions, the right timing and persuasion by diplomacy.

*The anarchical institution*

The anarchical institution is marked by a chaotic collection of goals, ideas and activities. People seem to do what they want, are always on the move, and show little mutual commitment. Still, they seem to understand 'how things work', new things are established and they meet each other to discuss problems and find solutions. Influence is obtained by taking time and paying attention, by hanging in there, involving the right people or avoiding them, and setting up projects step by step so that no one can have any objections.

The interesting thing about this list is that each of these perspectives can be recognized. They all seem 'true' while they also appear to be mutually exclusive. Apparently, the university is a many-headed creature for which there is no single best way of organizing, cooperating, communicating and managing.

*What marks professionals at universities?*

In this day and age, we refer to most of the employees working at a university as 'professionals'. De Caluwé and Vermaak (2006) describe a professional as follows:

- > Is very learned/has learned a great deal;
- > Knows best how to carry out his profession;
- > Determines how he deals with his 'clients'
- > Identifies with his profession and colleagues more so than with the organization he is part of;
- > Learns by doing and directs his own learning process.

It is not difficult to recognize most of the scientific staff of the university in this description. They are highly autonomous people, both with regard to their profession and their own development, and their interactions with their environment. It is no wonder that in publications about managing professionals (see Wanrooy, 2001, and Weggeman, 2007) the authors are often quite sceptical about the degree to which professionals can be steered and are willing to change. This is not a problem if you work with successful top performers who generate their own work, get subsidies, coach junior staff and cooperate in a pleasant way. We all know however that many an employee (from PhD student to professor) is not all that ideal. Do you recognize the images of the loner, the slightly bashful soloist, the unyielding pusher? Or that of the brilliant professor who is a disaster to work with? Or that of the PhD student who gets stuck in his research, the excellent teacher who after twenty-five years still has not finished his PhD dissertation?

I do not want to come across as too negative about the qualities of these professionals. These people are usually exceptionally talented professionals who have a wealth of knowledge, excel in their field, break new ground in their research and inspire hundreds of students with their lectures and projects. In fact, they have often been selected because of their stubbornness and appointed because of their unique contribution to the field. And is it not true that you have to be slightly monomaniac to be able to excel in a certain specialty? In short, if you hire the best, you require a special leadership method and steering of those professionals.

In the following chapters, I will discuss common obstacles that university managers encounter in their daily practice and explore how best to deal with them. What makes an academic leader effective?

## 2 Managing scientists

Even though many scientists conduct their own research and carry out their own teaching tasks quite well and independently, an academic leader can mean surprisingly much to his people and can certainly exert influence on cooperation, professional exchange and even the output. In this chapter, I will focus on the personal style of the leader in steering and supporting his team. In paragraph 2.1, you will find tools to help managers create a productive and supportive work environment, coach individual colleagues and hold them accountable when needed. In paragraph 2.2, I will focus on a specific aspect of managing: exerting influence. It will be clear to the reader by now that enforcement hardly ever works. What style of influence allows you to reach your employees, teams and committees, and helps you to get things done?

### 2.1 Leadership styles

*“Leadership is directed at others, not at yourself”*

Liesbeth van Welie

It has become clear from the abundant literature on management as well as from my own experience, that the single best leadership style does not exist. With their model of Situational Leadership Hersey and Blanchard (1977) show us that you should align your style of leadership with the developmental level of your employee and various situational characteristics. Quinn (2003) argues in his Competing Values model that a leader has to fulfil many roles each of which requires specific competences. What are the most important leadership aspects for academic leaders in their specific context?

#### *Some examples*

It is a widely accepted perception that professionals are hard to manage. “Managing professionals is like herding cats” is one way to describe it. This is all the more true for scientists: they are specialists par excellence in their own field who often cherish their academic freedom and feel that any interfering from above can only have a negative effect on their output. This is understandable because the very reason these people were selected originally is their stubbornness and creative ideas. Many a manager would rather not get burnt by the futile steering of his staff.

There is another side too. It often happens that employees, including doctoral students and post-docs, do not thrive or even waste away. The distance between them and their manager is too large, there is no time for coaching, they often work alone and if there are problems, they are not discussed until it is too late.

The remarkable element is that the managers are on the one hand strongly focused on letting young staff flourish in their field and on stimulating them towards great achievements. On the other hand, it proves difficult to act adequately if things do not go well. Coaching, promoting cooperation, holding people accountable in time and intervening when necessary, are competences that not many managers have mastered.

Secretariats supporting the scientists comprise a special group of employees. This group is often regarded as a source of concern. It seems that many of the supporting staff have adopted the same professional attitude the scientists have, including the autonomy that come with this attitude (“I will work at home this afternoon”, “that is not my job”). However, this autonomy does not fit the work processes of the secretariat. Apparently, this requires a different style of leadership.

### ***What management style best suits the scientist?***

There are four aspects that determine the successful management of scientists, so it appeared from many of the discussions: personal attention, investing in cooperation and atmosphere, clarity, and a focus on employees instead of one’s own fame.

#### *Personal attention*

Independently working, headstrong professionals deserve personal attention maybe even more so than anybody else. As a rule, they work on their own, with their own research and courses. Their contacts are mostly with colleagues outside the institute and there is a chance that you as their manager will lose sight of their professional and personal well-being. Their independence may make you forget that it remains essential to listen attentively, have stimulating conversations with them, let them know that you understand their problems, and express your appreciation of them and their work. Many an academic leader has to step outside his own comfort zone to do this. That comfort zone usually corresponds with the area of specialization, and it often proves easy to be an enthusing leader within that scope. It is much more difficult to coach professionals at times when they are less successful: personal problems, professional barriers, problems with teaching, and conflicts with colleagues, etc. Such situations require a very different coaching style, one in which attention paid to the ‘person behind the researcher/lecturer’ is crucial. Of course, it takes time to work with people but the “investment pays off”, as one of the managers put it. It results in enthusiastic professionals who are willing to commit to your institute for a longer period of time, professionals who overcome a breakdown and are all the stronger for surviving it, the willingness to help each other out when there are bottlenecks in the planning of courses, etc.

### *Investing in cooperation and atmosphere*

Cooperating is not always easy. The strong focus on one's own subject area often makes it difficult for people to set aside personal interests and to get results in cooperation. A researcher has to work on his own subject of course, but that does not mean that results can only be achieved by working by himself in his own room. Task-oriented meetings in project teams, seminars, and similar get-togethers advance cooperation. Further, more attention should be paid to getting together at informal times, in a physically appealing environment with the chance of unexpected encounters. A relaxed atmosphere thus produced contributes to the social well-being of staff, and creates space for cross-fertilization and critical debates about content.

### *Clarity*

As clear and sharp as the criticism is in the scientific debate, as conciliatory and covered-up are the conversations about personal performance, cooperation, and making strategic choices. Add to this the often political, cautious way of acting in the various consultative bodies and we are left with a hazy picture, unexpressed thoughts and hidden agendas.

Creating clarity is a learning point for every academic leader. In management, this relates to issues such as a frank conversation about objectives, transparent negotiations, no hidden agendas and the open justification of decisions. The leader needs to be clear about his expectations with regard to the contribution to education, research and the organization. The Planning and Review talks are an important instrument in this process. Openness should be striven for both in good times and bad. Employees deserve to receive compliments and a fitting reward for successful performance. They have a right to criticism, coaching and timely intervention, or even dismissal if things do not go well.

This also means that you are clear to your support staff. First and foremost by making it clear to them when and how you want to be supported. Give them orders but remain open to their suggestions. They have tasks that are different from those of scientists and this different process requires different rules with regard to hours, presence and freedom in the choice of tasks. With them, you should probably adopt a more leading role than with scientists who are judged and held accountable based on completely different criteria such as research output and course evaluations.

### *Leadership is directed at others, not at yourself*

Much of the literature on leadership deals with the vision of the leader, his unique qualities and competences and the results he achieves. This is in sharp contrast to the actual challenge of that same leader: to enable others to work, develop, and be successful. It is no different for the academic leader. If you really want your research team to flourish, your staff to come to full bloom, and the collective to reach great heights, you need an inspirational and supportive style. Inspirational as to content: the critical debater, the astute analyst, the passionate generator of ideas. Supportive where the person of the researcher and lecturer is concerned, and this is where the coaching style described above becomes extremely important.

Large egos that stress their own success may receive admiration from a broader circle but it hardly ever contributes to inspiring their staff to achieve top performances. In my experience, leaders with a more modest ego are often better equipped to play the role of inspirator and coach. In current management literature, we refer to this as Level 5 leadership, a concept described by Jim Collins (2001). In his terminology, Level 1 and Level 2 leadership refer to performing well as a staff member and a team member. The Level 3 leader is able to manage a research project or department well. The Level 4 leader is result-oriented and achieves great improvements in the work processes and output of his institute. The Level 5 executive takes it one step further. He builds a top organization by means of a paradoxical mix of personal modesty and great professional ambition that is geared at the entire organization, not at himself. His inspiration and vision have been adopted by many of the people involved who work with similar energy and commitment to the good cause. Or in the words of Lao Tse: "When the great leader's job is done, his people will say: we did it ourselves."

## 2.2

### *Exerting influence*

"A personal approach works better than pulling rank"

Tineke Cleiren

Managers use different styles to get things done. On the one hand this has to do with personal preferences in style and on the other with context variables. Let me start with personally preferred style. It appears from research into group dynamics and decision-making that group members have different basic orientations relating to their role and style of influence in groups (Schein, 2004).

We can distinguish three:

- > Target-orientation: aimed at results by means of clear goals, tasks and expectations;
- > Power-orientation: aimed at results by means of clear roles, balance of power and influence;
- > Person-orientation: aimed at results by means of mutual acceptance and good relationships.

These three basic orientations can be seen as distinctive influence styles and will evoke very different reactions from fellow-managers and staff members.

Context variables have to do with issues such as organizational culture and the nature of the need for change. Businesses are more often associated with result-oriented top-down cultures than universities, yet there are considerable differences in culture between universities and/or faculties as well. In some universities participation in decision-making is the norm, while in others the management takes the lead.

Different change issues require a variation in approach. Change issues involving the direction to be taken can hardly be dealt with without the participation of the leading scientists. After all, they are largely responsible for the content and implementation in practice. A reorganization involving budget cuts usually requires well thought-out top-down interventions, and it is impossible to give everyone a say in this. To illustrate: you don't talk to the turkey about Christmas dinner.

The question as to which is the best style of influence for a manager in the organization cannot be answered unequivocally. It differs from person to person, and depends on the situation. This is not a very satisfactory answer. From my conversations with scientists, some examples come to the fore that can shed light on more effective influence styles within the university.

### ***Examples***

Within universities, at all kinds of levels, conflicting goals and interests play a role: money, appointments, positioning, etc. In many ways, it is a political organization in which decisions are made based on power relations, changing coalitions, etc. A manager, who tries to tackle problems from a goal-orientation, is bound to fail. Focussing on a goal with a somewhat inflexible tenacity and little attention for relationships is extremely difficult in an environment with conflicting interests. And that's the style that seemed to work so well in the research project!



“I find it hard to work towards goals that seem so far removed from me” is an understandable lament which makes life difficult in an environment that often requires compromises.

As in any organization, power games are played within units, departments, and faculties. Hidden agenda's, scheming before or after meetings, forming coalitions based on emotional considerations and fighting for personal interests instead of joint interests. Different styles prove to work well: “I just bring it out in the open at meetings. I seek confrontation and make things a subject for discussion.” “I invest in relations, go for the joint interest and always stay friendly. People have no stick to beat me with. My weapons are my arguments and my openness.”

In the following section, the effective styles are clustered under four headings.

### ***What are effective influence styles?***

Four ways to effectively exert influence are: varying in style of communication, developing personal relationships, using an open style of negotiation and standing above the parties.

#### *Varying in communication style*

In our leadership programmes we discuss influence styles in terms of communication techniques. In what way can you achieve your goals with people without using a formal position of power? In addition to the usual argumentation, such styles involve attunement (showing interest in the other), ‘confrontation’ (positioning yourself) and motivation (generating energy together). By varying your style, you can usually get more done than if you limit yourself to an intellectual debate in which both parties bombard each other with arguments. The latter style often results in entrenched positions rather than associations and joint problem solving.

#### *Personal relationships as the basis*

A recurrent theme in conversations with managers is that investing in good mutual relationships, respect for individual qualities, and an understanding of each other's positions can all contribute tremendously to achieving results. A person-directed basic orientation helps. People who feel they are seen and heard are more willing to think along with you and make concessions. By creating a friendly and personal atmosphere, it becomes possible to stay away from the war of positions. “It's more effective to cuddle people to death than to enforce issues. The latter doesn't work in this organization.”

### *Open negotiation style*

You should not neglect conflicts for the sake of 'keeping a happy atmosphere'. The alternative of 'entering into battle' however is also hardly ever effective. People tend to defend their own position with all their might, without an eye for the interests of the other person. This often leads to the entrenchment of positions.

The open style of negotiation (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 1981/1992) is aimed at exploring the underlying interests. What is essential to me and why? What is essential to the other party and why? Where is our common ground? How can we get to a mutually acceptable solution that does justice to everyone's needs? And, in line with the remarks made about personal relationships, effective negotiators separate person and issue. This is sometimes described as 'hard on the problem, soft on the person!' An effective negotiator who feels he is manipulated by false arguments or an emotional appeal (victim behaviour) will strongly defend himself and stick to his substantial arguments. An open style of negotiation does not mean giving in to opponents who use false weapons.

### *Standing above the parties*

"I do not feel I am in a position of power, but I do feel I am in a position of authority". "Avoid a position in which your own interest prevails". Looking beyond the boundaries of your own interest is a message that comes to the surface in every discussion about effective management. You are in the position of *primus interparis* with responsibility for the management of the entire group, department, or faculty. In that role, you have been given the authority to make decisions, but those decisions will ultimately have to be acceptable to a broad group, even if people do not (fully) agree with them. This too, is easier said than done because the 'losers' in the debate will no doubt feel tempted to blame you for putting your own interests or the interest of your research team/programme first. How do you prevent this? Here are three suggestions:

1. Use your influence for content and not for personal positions and interests.
2. Ensure transparency of the objectives, interests and steps in the change process that are important to all concerned.
3. Employ extensive and regular communication to create the willingness to change and the acceptance of the decisions that you as the management team have made.

These suggestions prepare the ground for the next chapter in which managerial guidance, developing a vision and change management take a central position.

### 3 Managerial guidance

In this chapter, I will discuss in some detail the process of managerial guidance. The term refers to the activities and methods the manager deploys and the decisions he makes in order to steer and develop his organization towards a desired future. In the discussion I will focus specifically on two questions that proved to be a leading theme in the conversations:

- > How do you arrive at a vision that is supported, provides a foothold and stimulates people to take action?
- > How can you initiate and implement changes?

These two questions take a central place in the following paragraphs.

#### 3.1 *A vision that stimulates people to take action*

*“Grand visions often serve a sectarian interest”*  
Wilfred van Soldt

The development of a vision for the route to be followed by (part of) the university evokes mixed feelings in many scientists. After all, why should we all go for one single route if there are such large differences between faculties, departments and even individual people within one group? If you feel more connected to a fellow-scientist in Chicago than to a colleague down the hall, it is understandable that you will not be very enthusiastic about developing a vision for the organization. However, managers know that the improvement of the quality of education and research will not be achieved by simply letting all members of staff do their own thing. Cooperation centred on main research themes, working in a planned way, a coherent educational programme, etc., are preconditions for successful visitations, fund raising and groundbreaking research. To accomplish this, you as a team, need to develop a vision of the future and your organization as part of that future.

What then is a good way to develop a vision within a university?

#### ***Some sceptical examples***

Considerable scepticism exists about broad slogans and grand visions: “They are dangerous”. They are usually too vague, too abstract and offer no foothold for the design of policy at operational level. Moreover, it often happens that people propagate such visions primarily to endorse their own sectarian interest. Take for example a professor who strongly focuses on the incompatibility of different views in his field, yet as his manager you get the feeling that his main aim is to build a wall

around his own unit so that he can do his own thing and does not have to think about new forms of cooperation.

The second concern relates to the imposed vision. A small group (the board) develops a strategic vision and imposes it on the unit (often accompanied by a new organizational structure to support that vision). Great uproar will ensue, often resulting in the process coming to a grinding halt because the board is not capable of enforcing the vision.

“Enforcement does not work. A vision is developed jointly.” This in itself is a good idea, but many a manager will say that such strategic consultations are often endless, do not result in any decisions, and are more like a ritual dance around the policy cycle than an inspiring dialogue about the future.

***How do you arrive at a vision that is supported, provides a foothold and stimulates people to take action?***

From the conversations with managers, four aspects come to the fore that may help in the development of a vision which actually stimulates people to take action: listening attentively and then daring to make decisions, concrete goals, good timing and a proactive personnel policy.

*Listen, look, listen and then decide*

The scientists in a certain department are decisive factors in both the input on the vision (what do we stand for) and its implementation (do we go for it?). The basic skill a manager needs is that of *Listening*. The manager collects his information in bilateral talks, work progress discussions, and conferences, and then develops ideas together with others. He is genuinely interested and respects the individuals' ideas and interests.

One should of course also look beyond the boundaries of the unit: what is in store for us; what developments are taking place in our environment? A manager has more access to this information than others and can anticipate such developments.

Next, the manager dares take a standpoint and make a decision. He is transparent in his argumentation and proves that he lets joint interests take preference over individual sub-interests. Finally, the manager also realizes that this is only the first step. After all, by the time the decision-making document is ready, nothing will have changed in the organization yet. More about this in the next paragraph.

### *Concrete goals*

Instead of grand future images, the manager works with concrete goals such as the design of a new educational programme, an improved visitation, the set-up of a new research programme, etc. The manager spends a great deal of time on these issues, together with the scientists involved. At this concrete level, this is an inspiring process which is by no means without obligations. By being committed, he increases the chance of success in the realization of agreements.

### *Timely involvement*

Many decisions that are perceived as imposed were usually on the agenda for discussion at an earlier stage. At the time, most people probably did not realize the importance of that discussion. Inexperienced managers tend to lose sight of the main issues because of the piles of paper they have to deal with. Staff members will only start to pay attention if their own position is directly affected. By the time people object to the decision, it is too late: non-reversible steps were taken at a much earlier stage.

Many managers realize that you have to get involved early. Make sure you think along with the others at the initial formation of ideas, actively check out the developments in the environment and make sure you gauge the feelings in your team in time. This requires an alert attitude from staff members at an early stage. As one of the managers put it: "You have no right to complain if you are simply too late."

### *Proactive personnel policy*

In many cases, as part of your role as a manager, you will have to react to requests from the executive board of the university, and respond to guidelines from the ministry. These are important issues that have to be dealt with carefully. They are not always the most interesting tasks however.

It is much more inspiring to take the initiative, and be proactive. It often works well within your own research domain, which is why most scientists are very enthusiastic about this part. It can also work at managerial level. The times when you can truly exert fundamental influence often involve decisions on whom to get on board, and whom to choose as new colleagues. These decisions determine your work environment for many years to come. Make sure you are involved at an early stage in discussions about succession and appointments to new chairs. Check to see where you yourself can actively recruit lecturers and associate professors that match the route to be taken. Invest time and resources in promising youngsters. An active and good personnel policy is an essential pillar in scientific success.

These issues provide a foothold in the development of a vision. As mentioned, this is only the first step in a process that leads to changes in the organization. A well-organized process with a sharp eye for the people involved is crucial. That is the topic of the next paragraph.

### 3.2 *Implementing changes*

*“First listen attentively, then decide and implement firmly”*

Theo de Roos

As has become clear in the last paragraph, change does not occur automatically. When managers think up plans and then communicate them, i.e. the top-down approach, it rarely leads to success. Scientists expect to exert influence on the route to be taken, many feel they ‘own’ their domain and they are not convinced that every change is an improvement. Indeed, we often hear them say: “Could we please stop changing for a while and just do our work?!” To which managers all too easily respond by saying: “A typical case of resistance to change” which is associated with rigidity and conservatism.

The starting points of joint vision development, concrete goals, and timely involvement, as formulated in the previous paragraph, form the basis of effective change management. Yet as has been said, it is only the first step. How do you really get things going?

#### ***Examples***

“I was thrown at the wolves as an inexperienced manager. Budget cuts had to be made and if we did not act, things would get much worse.” A cry from the heart of a manager who - not impeded by knowledge and experience - is being confronted with a serious change task. No wonder the process turns into a turbulent and chaotic one.

“I cannot stand all the wheeling and dealing.” All too often, changes are decided upon in the isolated offices of managers, it seems. The rest of the faculty does not feel they are taken seriously. Professors unite, dig in their heels and can thus bring the process to a halt. Another much-tried tactic is to raise your shoulders, duck and continue with what you were doing.

Time pressure often seems to be the main problem. A lot has to be done in too little time, at the expense of thoroughness and, especially, communication with the organization. More often than not, this will lead to the entire process coming to a grinding halt somewhere down the line.

### ***How can you initiate and implement changes?***

During the phase of participatory vision development a sound basis has been built for the implementation. If things are done right, the need for change is clear and felt by all and a large number of those involved have a good picture of the perspective, and the goals. Some guiding principles can help to bring the process to a successful close.

#### *A well-organized process*

Change processes often generate a great deal of insecurity and confusion. Not least of all because the route to be followed and even the final destination are not always very clear. For example, a new semester schedule with fitting timetables may seem like a clear goal involving a route for implementation that can easily be mapped out. Experience shows us however that this is a road full of obstacles. Changes that have a more open ending encounter even more obstacles. A search for a new route and the right research domains, discussions about the new organizational structure, etc., create even more confusion and potential hassles.

One of the most important contributions a manager can make is the clear and transparent organization and steering of this process. Clarity about the steps to be taken, transparency about what aspects will require decisions and when, extensive communication about the state of affairs and exhaustive talks with those involved are elements that are vital for the realization of the process. By making visible that you are steering the process, by paying attention and providing the resources needed and by taking people seriously, you create a foothold and security in what are usually difficult times.

These are not by definition processes that always take a linear course or can always be fully planned. They often take an erratic course (two steps forward, one step backward; going too slowly or too fast). That is exactly why steering and communication are so important. There are many models and methods available that can provide support. In her 'Living strategy' method, Gratton (2000) describes how you can take six steps to arrive at a living strategy that is broadly supported and involves concrete actions. Kotter (1996) gives an eight-stage model of change management with a strong emphasis on communication with the organization at various points in the process.

### *A strong team*

Who will be part of the team? Are they people who will want to do this together? From the conversations it became clear time and again that a team that is well attuned (management, project team) is crucial for successful change. Careful selection is required in which proportional representation is less important than the complementing competences and personalities who like to work with each other.

This means a small and strong management team that works with a leading coalition composed of people from the various parts of the organization. Key players (managers, opinion leaders, but also young promising staff members) who actively contribute to the design and realization of the process.

### *A quick success helps*

Successful change is very dependent on the personal qualities of the manager responsible and the support he gets from fellow-professors and fellow-staff members. When managers are new to the job, these colleagues will have questions such as What can he do for me? Can I tell him my story? Where does he want to go and can I conform to that?

It is important that you pay attention to this right from the very start of your appointment as manager. A pragmatic approach appears to work well. When starting out, every new manager is confronted by a number of long drawn-out and tough cases.

Putting energy into quick solutions to a number of those nagging issues that have bothered colleagues for far too long, will give you a great deal of goodwill. A next step is to make the rounds of various key players and consultative bodies and to listen attentively. Knowing what is going on is an important basis for forming your own opinion and making sound decisions. You show that you are interested and you will limit the distance between the staff and the management.

### *Resistance is okay!*

People who protest are committed. The initiatives mean something to them and they take the trouble of ventilating opinions. That is why you as a manager should count yourself lucky with such reactions. It is much worse when there are no reactions. It means you do not know what is going on and the chance is considerable that nothing will change. The initiative is ignored and will fade out.



Change is no fun. “The only person who likes change is a wet baby” Roy Blitzer (1994) writes jokingly. Change usually means losing what you know, the familiar, and taking a risky plunge. In that sense, the analogy with a mourning process can be drawn: it includes such phases as saying goodbye to the past, and living through your anger and pain before you can be open to new opportunities.

One of the change manager’s tasks is to give people time for this and to coach them on the way to the new situation. This is not just a matter of ‘blowing off steam’ but also of listening attentively and taking bottlenecks seriously. Colleagues often have very valid objections and arguments.

Dealing with this in a respectful and solution-oriented way is a precondition for success and it will give you the support of the main part of your organization. There will always be some who keep complaining, but those you can confront with the ‘take it or leave it’ choice.

## 4 Personal effectiveness

In this chapter, personal effectiveness takes a central role. The term refers to the way a manager personally deals with managerial dilemmas, conflicts of interest, work pressure, etc. How do these affect your personal well-being and work pleasure? What strategies can you use to keep working with energy and enthusiasm, and find a balance between work and your private life?

In the interviews, the following questions proved the most prominent:

- > How do I keep the right balance between distance and commitment?
- > How do I deal with the constant lack of time?

These two questions are discussed in the paragraphs below.

### 4.1 *The balance between distance and commitment*

*“Here comes the Kremlin!”*  
Peter van Beukelen

Few scientists experience the role of manager as a welcome break from their teaching and research activities. On the contrary, for most of them, their main passion lies in research and their students. They often work long days showing considerable enthusiasm and personal commitment, working on their own and with their team for the advancement of their field, to educate students and PhD students and to satisfy their own curiosity. The line between work and private life, between business-like and friendly relationships, between professional and personal is often a delicate one. They would sell their soul for their passion.

In contrast, they accept the role of manager from a sense of responsibility for the fate of the group, the department, or the faculty. Or from a sense of duty, a belief that good management contributes to the higher quality of education and research of their organization. This commitment to management is fundamentally different. Personal passion and relationships are no longer the central issues. The focus is on the organization, business agreements, dealing with conflicts of interests between groups. Where education and research are sometimes referred to as ‘my main hobby’, managing is seen as ‘work’.

It is not surprising therefore that scientists often have a hard time with the change of role from personal source of inspiration, coach and research project leader to the more distant, impersonal role of manager.

### ***Examples***

“You are using Nazi methods.” “Here comes the Kremlin!” “Short-sighted and manipulative.” This is only a selection from the abuse thrown at the managers interviewed as they tried to implement plans for educational innovation, imposed budget cuts, restructuring, etc.

Without wanting to deny that such processes can be far-reaching for a faculty, it is obvious that such qualifications are extremely hurtful and upsetting for the managers involved.

“I have managed energetically for seven years. Now I am tired and I really want others to start arranging things for me instead.” My family sent signals that I was distant and dejected. I was running the risk of a burn-out.” “My term as a manager was a bruising battle. They were exhausting years.” The role of manager is a heavy one, especially at times of reorganizations, budget cuts and conflicts. In the many conversations I had, it became clear that the role of manager is an ‘energy-exhausting’ one. The tasks are complex and hardly ever ‘good news’. Personal commitment and the sense of responsibility result in many a manager carrying an extra heavy load.

It is difficult to end the role of manager. “When I indicated I wanted to stop, people were very understanding, but then put a lot of pressure on me to continue. I did not get any support in finding a successor.” “After my term as manager, I wanted to get back to my research. It proved impossible to let go. I was continuously and unwillingly involved in managerial problems, for instance by colleagues who came to me to complain about the new management.” In spite of their criticism, colleagues are grateful to you for taking the lead so that they do not have to. Taking up the gauntlet and accepting a role of manager is not a popular option.

### ***How do managers guard their own boundaries?***

To fulfil the role of manager well, the academic leader evidently has to guard his boundaries. These are limits with regard to the tasks you accept, the length of your term, but also personal boundaries that prevent you from falling flat on your face in the middle of confrontations that inevitably take place in difficult times. Below, I outline three methods that can support the manager: guarding the balance, finding support and knowing when to quit.

### *Balance between distance and commitment*

Commitment to the organization and the people is a prerequisite for good management. However, keeping a certain distance is also important. To approach issues in a business-like manner and not to feel attacked as a person, to harden yourself, to learn to put things into perspective and keep smiling, are invaluable qualities that help you prevent being carried away on the stream of problems you will be confronted with. It is easier said than done, of course. Some will succeed in this by means of meditation or sports, others will look for personal contacts outside work, and others still are lucky enough to work in a close management team which gives them an outlet: "We laughed a lot in those hard days." It is clear that keeping your distance does not occur by itself and that you will have to find your own way to do it.

Keeping your distance also has to do with sharing responsibility and not taking everything upon your shoulders. "Colleagues used to come to me to complain about certain injustices and issues they encountered in the organization. My reaction usually was: what are you going to do about it?" The higher you go in the managerial tree, the more important it is to put tasks and responsibilities in the right place, to leave them to others. That is not always easy because to many, the manager is pre-eminently the person to dump problems on. The more caring you are, the easier it is for colleagues to come to you with all their worries and irritations.

### *Finding support*

Managing can be a lonely job. You are no longer one of the group of colleagues but you now stand on the other side. You represent the organization and cannot please every single person. You will often get the blame for all kinds of things. You are usually the object of the projection of the fears and worries of employees who feel cornered. This is part of your task, and it has a function in the organization. People have to have somewhere to go with their frustrations and the boss is the most logical place. That does not mean it is easy to bear the burden alone.

Support from others, outside your direct work environment, proves to be an important pillar for managers to lean on. Participation in the 'managerial development training programme' together with managers from other faculties was experienced by many as a comforting contact with 'fellow-sufferers'. Participation in a peer consultation group renders many ideas and a great deal of support. Appealing to a coach is no longer regarded as something for the weak and can at times be extremely helpful in dealing with tricky dilemmas. Many manage to find the support at home and from friends which helps to bear the loneliness and find the strength to firmly fulfil the role of manager.

### *Allowing yourself to quit in time*

Even though the appeal from the environment to accept yet another managerial role or term is considerable, those scientists who have dared to choose for themselves and 'returned to their profession' are very positive in their comments about this choice. It proves a relief with the feeling of being burnt out disappearing after a while to be replaced by the passion and energy that was part and parcel of their pre-management days. There are of course also managers who find the managerial role an inspiration and a gratifying option. They accept new and more challenging jobs with pleasure. The point is that you have to be in tune with your own ambitions and pitfalls and dare to make the choices that fit you, whatever the reaction of your environment is.

4.2

### *Making the most of your time*

*"Time plays too large a role"*

Thony Visser

There are few people who do not complain about work pressure and lack of time. This does not only apply to professionals, it is a widespread problem. However, I find that the work pressure of managers at universities is of a different order than that of most professionals inside and outside the university. On the one hand, it has to do with the greater need of scientists to want to keep doing their research in addition to what is often a full-time managerial task. It is a result of their passion for their subject, but also of the conviction that ultimately as a manager at a university you will be evaluated on your scientific output and not on your managerial efforts. On the other hand, managers are constantly faced with visitations, initiatives for renewal, setting of tasks, and new legislation which is largely imposed, all of which take a great deal of time and are difficult to avoid or influence. What do the managers say about this?

### ***Examples***

"When things get to be too much, I allow myself one day off on the weekend." "Eighty hours a day is the rule rather than the exception." It sounds a little like the macho language that business managers tend to use. However, the managers I spoke with do not seem to be proud of their long days. Still, there is something odd about the way they spend their time. Management, meetings, and exerting influence take place during the day and take up a lot of energy. In the evening, once the meetings are over, papers have been read and the children have been tucked in, time for one's own research suddenly becomes available. And this usually proves so inspiring that the managers work into the early hours. The lack of energy seems to have disappeared.

Everyday life at the faculty is often made up of an extremely high number of short-term, ad-hoc tasks. People come into the office, the controller drops by with a worrying message, an urgent question from the faculty board comes in and needs an answer by tomorrow, a research application for an important European subsidy has to be ready two weeks from now, etc. According to Mintzberg's classic study (1973), the average manager only spends about ten minutes in a row on the same task and this seems to be the case at the university also. The reactive character is typical of most of these activities: you have to react to the managerial agenda and schedule of meetings; you have to solve problems, keep the staff happy and hardly ever get around to long-term initiatives. Beside the short-term character of the work, reactive actions prove to be a lot less satisfactory than proactive actions in which you as a manager take the lead.

The most difficult issue for managers may well be the constant appeal that staff members, fellow-scientists, colleagues overseas and external institutes make on your professionalism: can you write a review; could you give a presentation at a conference next year; will you be the opponent at someone's defence of the doctoral thesis; you as our top researcher are the authority par excellence to prepare the visitation. The tricky part is that these invitations are often very flattering; they give you the feeling that it is part of your role, and people often ask for you personally. Now try saying no!

### ***Time management lessons from practice***

Many readable books have been written about personal time management. Stephen Covey (1989) for instance introduced the concept of reactive and proactive responses and states that you can only manage others if you manage yourself well first. Others, such as Ron Witjas (1998), emphasize the role of your energy curve (at what time of day am I fittest and what should I be doing then). The next insights came to the fore in the interviews as being fundamental and helpful.

#### ***Understanding before action***

Most managers do not have a good idea of the enormous number of jobs and tasks they take on. A simple assignment to write down for two weeks what you spend your time on leads to reactions such as "I spend twenty hours a week on external obligations and activities that are not even part of my official job", "when I am in my office, I spend 80% of my time on questions and interruptions from staff members", "I did not realize that all these meetings take up so many hours". A good understanding of what you spend your time on and where your time goes is often the first step towards adjustment.

### *From final goal to daily work*

People's natural tendency is to look forward and plan: what should be done today, this week? Making a list is a good idea, but experience teaches us that the list is usually longer at the end of the day than it was in the morning and that most of the important activities are still on the list. "When it is busy, all the things that I find important (i.e. research) go down the drain." And because it is always busy, you never get round to that which is most important to you. Your life is determined by the agenda of other's.

The only solution is to set priorities. You need to get a clear picture of what it is you want to achieve in the year to come. Painful choices no doubt have to be made to arrive at two or three real priorities that should always be foremost in your mind. This gives structure to the planning of your day, week and month. In combination with a realistic idea of your current expenditure of time it gives you more control over your own schedule and the feeling that, in spite of all the other activities, there some of the issues that you find important which will actually be completed.

### *Saying no*

It is obvious that you will have to say no to the enormous number of requests you receive every day. We also know how incredibly difficult it is to say no to requests made in person, and to appeals from above. It is not until people truly realize that their own well-being is under serious pressure, that they find it possible to offer resistance to the inclination to say yes to each and every request. A factor that should not be underestimated in this is the emotions that are evoked in others as well as in you. People will be disappointed, angry or indignant. You will experience fear of this type of reaction and a sense of guilt that you choose for yourself rather than the other person or the general interest.

### *The Eisenhower matrix*

Eisenhower is said to have thought up the following planning method. To decide what should be done and what should not be done, he categorized issues along two dimensions: urgent/not urgent and important to do yourself/not important, may be done by someone else. This resulted in the following matrix of alternatives for action:

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	Do it	Plan it
Not important	Delegate	Trash it

It may be a simplistic approach of planning issues, but it still is a nice and even somewhat rebellious addition to methods such as formulating objectives, setting priorities and saying no. Neglecting requests and brushing off neglects may, on occasion, also help you to function well.

*Positive energy is what matters in the end*

In conclusion, I would like to offer some comments about time and work pressure that may put things into perspective. The special aspect of work pressure is that it seems to be only partly connected to the actual number of hours worked. Someone who works 32 hours a week may complain about work pressure and stress while someone who works 70 hours has no problem at all. I recently spoke to a consultant who had a burn-out and spent a year sitting at home. She used that time to write her PhD thesis; the best way to come to her senses. One of the management adages of former KLM president Orlandini is: "If you want to have a job done, ask busy people".

To me, the main measure is: which activities take up energy and which ones give me energy. I try to limit the first as much as possible to those that really need to be done. I can never spend enough time on the second type and in my planning I try to steer on these (usually) proactive activities.



## In conclusion

The title of this paper is: Academic leadership. An honour or a tall order? So what is the answer to this question? Looking back on the many conversations I had with academic leaders, I have to conclude that both are true. It is honourable to be nominated for a managerial appointment by your colleagues, to be made responsible for the management of the organization and have related authorities for a certain period of time. People apparently have confidence in your qualities, well thought-out judgements and ability to successfully complete managerial tasks. It is also a tall order. Firstly, because it usually involves a great deal of extra work in addition to your teaching and research. Secondly, it requires competences that are very different from the ones most scientists needed at the time of their original appointment, or have been trained for. Fulfilling such a role means learning a new trade, often with a very limited training period and in the worst case with very little support from colleagues. They are all only too happy that you are taking the lead which gives them the opportunity to continue their research.

I believe it is a good principle to have the university run by scientists. They know what is really important for education, research and the people in the organization. They can also be inspirational leaders and pioneers. But I would like to give each of them more time, professional assistance and support from colleagues to enable them to fulfil that role in a way that is satisfactory both to them and to the university.

Finally, I would like to give my readers a glimpse of how people in the Middle Ages saw management. The poem below is from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and probably written by Jan van Boendale, alderman's clerk in Antwerp, Belgium. It offers clear handles for the managers of those days, but also for the academic leaders of today.<sup>2</sup>

### How to manage a city

- > Those who want to manage a city
- > Should choose the following starting points:
- > Be unified
- > Keep an eye on the General Interest
- > Defend the privileges granted to them
- > Bring general issues up for discussion
- > Give the management of the city to the wise men

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<sup>2</sup> I would like to thank Wim van Anrooij, Professor of Dutch Language and Culture, Leiden University for giving me this poem.

- > Manage joint property (taxes) well
- > And invest it giving the highest revenue
- > Stay friends with the neighbours
- > Apply justice equally
- > To both poor and rich
- > Defend the city's rights
- > Send trouble makers away
- > Be faithful to the sovereign
- > These are the teachings of the elders
- > When one of these points is lacking
- > The city is in dire straits

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