

Leadership Summit: Brave Leadership – Daring to Lead

5 June 2019, Birmingham

The Advance HE Leadership Summit has become a key event for leaders in Higher Education and this year as we prepare for further turbulent times within the sector the focus of the Summit is ***Brave Leadership – Daring to Lead***.

With Brexit, Auger, financial sustainability, senior pay, gender and race equality for both student and staff and shortfalls in some student outcomes just to list a few, bravery and courage have never been more needed by those leading institutions for outlining clear direction and vision and decision making.

In an environment of complexity, uncertainty and growing unrest, it takes bravery to lead. Bravery of the *mind* to penetrate the strategic background noise, to look to the horizon and to be decisive in the 'here and now'. Bravery of the *heart* to engage with people and create collective commitment around both comfortable and uncomfortable issues. And bravery of *action* as the structural tensions in the UK Higher Education system begin to break through and a radical new landscape emerges.

Currently, we are experiencing powerful agendas at work within and around Higher Education. Looking at the external context, the disruptors include rapid environmental/climate change, demographic shifts, global population growth, food scarcity, societal reforms, economic turbulence, international shifts in power and regional alignments, and fourth wave technologies including AI and augmented/virtual reality. For universities the impact of these disruptors will increasingly call for a "courage culture" in which brave work, tough conversations and whole hearts become key hallmarks of leadership (Brown, 2018).

This is not to confuse brave leadership with being another way of describing (or endorsing) heroic leadership; indeed it is the opposite where daring to lead in this way may more likely require a culture of the 'fearless organisation' which can be summarised as: "*when people speak up, ask questions, debate vigorously, and commit themselves to continuous learning and improvement, good things happen*". The notion of fearlessness here refers to envisioning a psychologically safe workplace which "is present when colleagues trust and respect each other and feel able – even obliged – to be candid" (Edmondson, 2019). In a similar vein, Margaret Heffernan, the well known author and presenter of TED talks also focuses on an approach of 'dare to disagree' based on her research into corporate failures.

A combination of marketization, competition, student expectations, funding and other regulatory changes have created intense pressures within the HE system itself which look poised to challenge institutional configurations and even possibly in some cases sustainability. And the character of leadership itself and the relationship with 'followers', however they are construed, has also evolved significantly as the age of authority has given way to the age of trust and engagement. Whether quiet or loud, forceful or kind, close or remote, brave leadership will need to emerge to create a new kind of engagement in this ever more challenging 'here and now'. Brave leadership that creates fearless organisations will put the HE sector in the best position possible to face these challenges head on. We can no longer wait for change, we have to bravely create it.

This Summit will offer delegates an opportunity to:

- explore the notion of brave leadership in an environment of increasingly complex and contested agendas, particularly in regard to risk, opportunity and decision making
- consider their own approach to leadership in this context and alternatives drawing on shared insights and personal experiences
- discuss with peers the implications for future leaders in HE, how executive teams might need to evolve and if courage and bravery require different approaches to our conceptualisation of leaders in HE

Our keynote speaker will be Professor Sir David Eastwood, Vice Chancellor at the University of Birmingham. His keynote will be followed by a chaired panel session of the following:

- Nick Petford
- Eunice Simmons
- Mary Stuart
- Sally Mapstone
- Nigel Carrington

All will share their perspectives and personal insights on their view of brave leadership, how this relates to the current context, followed by a Q&A session with conference participants.

Draft Programme

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| 10.00 am | Registration and Refreshments |
| 10.30am | Welcome Alison Johns, Chief Executive, Advance HE |
| 10.35am | Keynote Speaker Professor Sir David Eastwood, Vice Chancellor, University of Birmingham |
| 11.35am | Short break |
| 11.45am | Chaired Panel Discussion: Chair: Nigel Carrington, Vice Chancellor, University of the Arts Professor Nick Petford, Vice Chancellor, University of Northampton Professor Mary Stuart, Vice Chancellor, University of Lincoln Professor Eunice Simmons, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Nottingham Trent University Professor Sally Mapstone, Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of St Andrews |
| 1.00 pm | Lunch and networking |
| 2.00 pm | Insights sessions: Brave Leadership enacted Enabling Voices – Emma Stone, Director of HR and Dr Miriam Lynn, Acting Head of Equality & Diversity, University of Cambridge Enabling Strategy – Professor Nick Petford, Vice Chancellor, University of Northampton Enabling Culture – Professor Mark Ormerod, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Keele and Dr Helen Mussell, Head of Membership, Advance HE |
| 3.00pm | Refreshments |
| 3.30pm | Brave Leadership and HE: Views from Abroad – Nick Hillman, HEPI |
| 4.30pm | Close |