Report for Table 7

Delegates: Mitch Malachowski (University of San Diego, USA) **Chair,** Caroline Gibson (University of Warwick, UK) **Reporter,** Ray Land (University of Strathclyde, UK), Sally Sandover (University of Western Australia), Julian Park (University of Reading, UK), Michael Schuder (Carroll University, USA), Scott Simpkins (North Carolina A&T State University, USA)

Among the issues discussed by the delegates at table 7 were the impact of proposed funding cuts to HE, which resonated with each delegate whatever their country of origin; assessment and the consequences of empowering undergraduates to undertake research but then taking power back thorough traditional assessment methods; an emerging critique of undergraduate research being about promoting globalised, transportable knowledge and a counterargument that an increased focus on the quality and pedagogy of teaching and learning is more prominent; and the importance and visibility of the ongoing division between research and teaching. There were three issues however which seemed to dominate:

- There was much discussion amongst the group about inclusion and the question of how many students it was possible to expose to many of the schemes / projects being discussed at the conference. The issue of elitism in such projects was debated and concluded to be somewhat inevitable and not necessarily negative, the feeling was that the more important aspect was that the intention of a project was explicit. However, many delegates around the table were also fighting to find a way to develop schemes for all students. Some were developing blueprints for all faculties to follow and many saw the benefits of mainstreaming such approaches but also acknowledged the frustrations in trying to do so. The publishing research within undergraduate journals was discussed in the context of elitism and it was concluded that, again, it was very difficult to offer the opportunity to all students and in order to produce a quality publication, which represented undergraduate students appropriately, such publishing had to be selective.

- A key question for the group was 'what is research and how is it defined?' Some felt that the terminology used in connection with UG research was fraught and difficult and could be masking the real definition of research, for instance when it included experience-based or enquiry-based learning, however, it was thought to be very important to continue to try to define what 'research' encompassed. Sally Sandover mentioned a matrix that had been produced at the University of Western Australia to attempt to define what is meant by research at the institution, which had got people talking there, but that had yet to be commended and was in the early stages of development. The matrix and the processes behind putting it together were of great interest to other delegates at the table The primary questions around the table were whether 'research' was more than just exposing undergraduates to research and what was sufficient when mainstreaming UG research.

- It was agreed that undergraduate research was fundamentally important, but that providing the necessary conditions for engagement, however that engagement looked, was also vital. Producing excitement and enjoyment amongst students was felt to be key, as was defining how and why an activity was being carried out and providing a well managed scaffolding to support student learning. Changing the identity of students and their role within the academic community, whilst ensuring that they understood and realised how and why these changes were taking place, was

seen as key. The feared impact of funding cuts on the potential of such teaching methods was highlighted, with an increase in the number of stakeholders involved in HE and an increasing demand from students and parents to understand what they were getting for their money seen as inevitable difficulties facing the sector in the near future.

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