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Towards post-managerialism in higher education: The case study of management change at the University of The Witwatersrand 1999-2004

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ABSTRACT

Managerialism and collegiality are employed in this thesis as constructs through which to make sense of the changing nature of management in a South African university. The rise and dominance of the managerialism discourse is examined with respect to organisational change and restructuring. As principally a qualitative research project, a single case study of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) is investigated using interviews, documentary analysis and focus group discussions as the main sources of data from 2001 to 2004. The study is exploratory and strives to establish how and why management has changed. It does so by investigating the underpinning changes in the organisational regime and the different levels of management; the role of the Senior Executive Team, the changing nature of the deanship and the head of school position as a consequence of the merger of departments and the creation of a school structure. Although management in higher education is recognised as having existed for as long as the establishments themselves, the thesis is concerned with the changes in power and authority of academic leaders, the struggle with their 'lived' tension between academic leadership or collegiality and managerialism and the implications of this for academic practice. The thesis illustrates that changes in management at Wits demonstrate efforts towards an era of post-managerialism, in this specific case best described as 'contrived collegial managerialism'. The concept of 'contrived collegial managerialism' refers to how the domination of managerial practices from above has altered collegial relations from below. This has resulted in the weakening of academic leadership with profound implications for academic work and practice. Only through strengthened academic leadership at the different levels of university management and primarily school and disciplinary levels, can the university survive the indignities of the increasing corporatisation of its strategies, processes and management practices which constrain the opportunities for meaningful engagement and development of intellectual projects. It is only at disciplinary level, through strengthening the position of heads of department as academic leaders, that collegial relations can be

developed and pressure towards upward accountability structures counteracted. Without this, the university risks being consumed by corporate practices at the expense of its unique quality and contribution to society, academic and intellectual advancement.

Key Words

Management/Administration

Managerialism

Collegiality

Contrived Collegial Managerialism

Academic Leadership

Deans

Heads of School

Professional Managers

Senior Executive Team

Transformation

Restructuring

Attributable Income and Expenditure Model or Basic Accounting and Revenue Attribution