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**Abstract**

A series of reviews over the past six years ? from Dearing ( ) to Lambert ( ) ? have addressed the question of whether the structure and process of 'governance' in higher education is fit for modern times. This is a proper question to ask as operating environments change and pressures on institutional resources increase. Indeed, it is not coincidental that both the recent government-sponsored reports and those of the previous decade ( ; ) were associated with significant financial changes in the sector. There are further parallels in that both the reports of the 1980s and those of the later period heralded legislative changes that produced ? or will produce ? new patterns of higher education provision in the UK ( ; ; ). The messages from the reports and White Papers ( ; ; ) published in this twenty-year period have remained broadly similar, even though the wider environment has altered significantly. 'Increase efficiency, find new sources of income and improve performance across an ever-widening range of activities and services' have been the watchwords of

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successive governments. Given the consistency of the message, it is useful to analyse the changes that universities have been making to meet these requirements and to consider what further changes may be needed in the light of new external challenges. The first part of the paper offers a historical perspective before addressing the evolution of leadership roles and management structures from the late 1980s. The second part considers some of the current drivers of internal and external change before discussing the kind of changes in internal governance that are emerging and that should be considered for the future. I conclude by arguing for a shift in focus from structure and roles to people and processes in the task of leading change in universities. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)