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### **Designing and managing Higher Education Estate: two Swiss examples**

A swift analysis of HE sites around the world will reveal numerous approaches to the same brief, namely the construction and physical alignment of buildings for learning, teaching and research purposes. Many sites were built with the aim of providing some sense of uplift towards the academic ideals of higher education and the development of the personality overall (Coulson et al., 2010; 2015). A fine example is the campus at the University of Virginia, which was designed according to the specification of amateur architect and former US president Thomas Jefferson, where “the total experience of place was harnessed as a key element in scholastic endeavor” (ibid., p. 109). Buildings and the spaces in between them impact on our wellbeing and the extent to which we thrive (De Botton, 2006/2014, Cabe, 2005). This is not only relevant to buildings erected for private use, but also for those situated within the HE sector (Marmot, in Temple (ed.) (2014). However, while buildings may originally be constructed for a particular purpose, they change and become objects of “(re)interpretation, narration and representation [...]” (Gieryn, 2002, p. 35). Behind these processes is nonetheless the implicit premise that the building (its interior and exterior) should function well, however ‘well’ is defined (Boys, 2015).

HE estate management usually brings together stakeholders from a range of different areas including architecture, planning departments, HE leadership, ministries, students and staff, and possibly public conservation, too, if estate is old and of landmark quality. A frequent and international problem is that many HE buildings are aging and proving insufficient for today’s purposes (Marmolejo, 2007), so they need adjusting or even demolishing, to make way for new buildings. Key to the creation of HE estate that will function purposefully can be the extent to which different stakeholders and experts are given opportunities to communicate their needs and expectations and this links in directly with the strategic capability of university leaders and managers, namely how well HE leaders are able to identify and employ resources and skills to create a long-term advantage for the institution. University leaders need, for example, to recognize that they may not be specialists in architecture or design (cf. Corcorran in Scott-Webber et al. 2014, foreword), and trust the judgement of others. However, if experts such as architects and designers misunderstand user needs or how materials will work in the finally constructed building, they may provide estate with which users are dissatisfied. There are numerous examples of HE buildings that have been constructed, only for users to experience various problems (e.g. dazzling / blinding effect of façade on new library building, University of Freiburg, Germany).

In this ongoing constructivist and phenomenological international research which draws on a theoretical model of strategic capability (Thoenig & Paradeise, 2016) and which uses a number of methods including archival and online institutional research and interviews with main stakeholders including university leaders, estate management staff, architects and students, two examples of HE sites from Switzerland in the canton of Vaud are presented: the University of Lausanne (UNIL) and the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). They are of academic interest as both are located in close proximity of each other, in Dorigny on the banks of Lake Geneva, and are examples of institutions built at similar times, but according to different ideas, traditions and kinds of governance.

The UNIL was originally founded as a theological academy in 1537, becoming a university in 1890 in the centre of Lausanne, with many buildings clustered around the cathedral and castle. However, growing student numbers and site demands in the last century meant that it would not be possible to maintain the university in the city (Monnier, 2013, p. 19). Following cantonal acquisition of land on the Dorigny site, the canton decided to create a campus for all of the UNIL's faculties, with the exception of medicine, which remained in the city. At UNIL one single architect, Guido Cocchi, was charged with shaping the campus layout in its entirety (buildings and grounds), and before putting pen to paper he walked the entire site, to understand it "with his feet" (Cocchi, in Maillard, 2013, p. 64, own translation). He has been of major and lasting influence on the entire site, right up until his death in 2010. The result today is a generous, open and green campus with buildings of individual note, situated within a park reminiscent of those in England. Numerous footpaths, which were only laid down post occupancy, link the buildings in a web of paths which may seem oddly shaped, but which is completely logical in terms of connectivity, flow and needs. Here then is an example of strategic capability which laid trust and confidence in the expertise and vision of one architect who deeply engaged with the whole site and who understood the needs and expectations of all end users, both in the present and in the future.

If the architect, Cocchi, was the driving force behind the physical manifestation of the UNIL, its sister institution at Dorigny, the EPFL, was influenced since the start of the new millennium, by the vision and strategic capability of its longstanding president Patrick Aebischer (2000-2016), who was key not only to the creation of new faculties which required buildings, but also the development of a bespoke learning hub, the Rolex Learning Centre (2010), the creation of onsite student accommodation (2013) and the Swiss Tech Convention Centre (2013). Unlike the UNIL, the EPFL site has grown around two main multi-layered axes along which are strung auditoria, administrative and faculty buildings, but which also connect directly with the UNIL further along, thereby helping to reduce a sense of 'them' and 'us' between the two institutions.

It is relevant to research how HE estate is managed in different national and institutional contexts. Although each institution is unique, by examining the main processes surrounding site development, which is done here, it becomes possible to theorize models of best practice, which may be useful to those involved in the development of HE estate elsewhere.

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