Excellent Education in Research-rich Universities

VSNU - EUA Conference on Recognition & Rewards
November 15 2019
Rotterdam

Prof Dilly Fung
Pro-Director for Education
London School of Economics
and Political Science
Dilly.Fung@lse.ac.uk
@DevonDilly
Higher education and powerful learning

Universities aim for ‘higher’ levels of learning for all their students... but in the context of today’s global challenges, what does ‘higher’ mean? How can students learn and apply that learning in such a way that they are empowered to make a difference? And how can we ensure that this applies to all students from all backgrounds, so that individually and collectively they step out into the world with confidence and hope?
Powerful knowledge

- Traditionally universities have focused on ‘higher learning’ in terms of difficult knowledge – rigour and stretch, narrow specialisms
- This has included a strong sense, within established disciplines, of established ‘truths’ and practices, and (often) a revered canon
There is no contradiction between the imperative of good teaching and the imperative of research which critiques, refines, discards and advances human knowledge and understanding.

(McAleese 2013,13)
Benefits to students of a distinctive, research-rich education

‘Benefits for students ... arise from the intellectual depth associated with engaging in any cutting edge investigations, and from the range of skills associated with independent and collaborative enquiry.’

(Fung, Besters-Dilger and van der Vaart, 2017)
The Connected Curriculum

A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education
UCL Press: London

Free download
http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1558776/1/A-Connected-Curriculum-for-Higher-Education.pdf
Empower students by developing their capacity to investigate in a range of ways, and deal with the unexpected.
Empower students through connecting them with researchers and research at the cutting edge of knowledge.
Empower students to build research skills and to develop a holistic learning narrative that connects with their own identity and values.
Empower students to select and combine different disciplinary approaches and thereby solve complex challenges.
Empower students to see and articulate academic-professional links and skills.
Empower students to become producers and confident communicators to diverse audiences.
Empower students to become part of an inclusive community of students, alumni, scholars and professionals.
The Scholarship Circle

(Fung 2016)
Strength-based scholarship for institutions

We should

• Draw on scholarly values and evidence to make decisions about institutional decisions and directions

• Review job roles to ensure that all expertise is fully recognised

• Reward scholars for their contribution to knowledge and practice, recognising the particular contexts of individuals and teams
Rewarding educators and education leaders

If we break down some of the structural and conceptual divides between research, practice and education, we can

- develop distinctive new forms of research-based education
- and move towards achieving ‘parity of esteem’ for educators, practitioners and researchers.

(Fung and Gordon 2016)
Looking to the future

• There are profound connections between reframing the relationship between research and education, and rewarding and promoting colleagues in our universities.

• Teachers are not second-class scholars. Research is nothing without extending knowledge, skills and practices through education. Teaching itself is scholarly.

• We must work, then, for greater equity in reward and recognition across the higher education sector.
Useful references

Fung, Dilly and Gordon, Claire (2016) *Rewarding educators and education leaders in research-intensive universities*  
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/rewarding_educators_and_education_leaders.pdf

