

## Discussion Document (Draft 3)

# Co-operative University and Business School

## Developing an institutional and educational offer

*For the co-operative movement*

### Prepared By

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#### Publication and Revision History:

Date	Version	Comments
June 2011	1.0	First draft following Co-operative Congress 2011
July 2011	1.1	Second draft for Co-operative and Social Enterprise Summer School, 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2011, Sheffield Hallam University
September 2011	1.2	Third draft containing feedback on second draft. Prepared for distribution at the UK Society for Co-operative Studies.

## 1. Who is this document for?

This document is primarily for a working group established at Co-operative Congress 2011 to take forward the idea of a co-operative business school. It is also being circulated to the wider co-operative movement so that members can feed into discussions at the formative stage. The idea of a Co-operative University is not entirely new. It was put forward a couple of years ago by Pat Juby and Chris Herries during a doctoral study. At a 'lite-bite' session at Co-operative Congress on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June organised by the UK Society of Co-operative Studies, the following question was put to Congress: "Is it time we had a Co-operative Business School in a UK University?"

The speakers at this session were:

- Linda Shaw (Vice Principal, Co-operative College)
- Rory Ridley-Duff (author of "Understanding Social Enterprise: Theory and Practice")<sup>1</sup>
- Chris Herries (The Co-operative Group, Vice Chair of Co-operatives UK)
- Britta Werner (HR Officer, Unicorn Grocery, post-graduate student)
- John Retaskis (author of "Humanizing the Economy: Co-operatives in the Age of Capital")

Further ideas on a Co-operative Business School are put forward in Robin Murray's draft report 'Co-operation in the Age of Google'. At the suggestion of Ed Mayo, further informal discussions took place in the evening. In addition to the author of this document, the following were present:

- Robin Murray (author of "Co-operation in the Age of Google")
- John Goodman (Co-operatives UK, Head of Policy and the Regions)
- Sarah Deas (Chief Executive, Co-operative Development Scotland)
- Nick Matthews (Lecturer, Chair of UK Society for Co-operative Studies)
- Andrew Gold (Chief Operating Officer, Mutual One)

Following the circulation of the second draft, a number of people responded with suggestions. The document was discussed at an Open Space session at the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Summer School (Sheffield Hallam University). Notes were collected from an event on Co-operative Education organised by the Co-operative College.

This document contains the following sections from the second draft:

- The Institutional Offer
- The Educational Offer
- Discussion

There is a new introductory section (The Aim of This Document) and a new section (Feedback and Next Steps).

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Rory Ridley-Duff is leader of the MSc Co-operative and Social Enterprise Management course at Sheffield Business School, currently the only full degree programme in the UK explicitly aimed at co-operative members and organisations. There are modules covering co-operative studies within other degree programmes in the UK.



## 2. The Aim of this Document

At the suggestion of Robin Murray, this document has been written as a discussion document to inform the writing of business plans. It aims to stimulate discussion on the institutional and educational offers that would attract support from the co-operative movement. It was argued by Linda Shaw at Co-operative Congress that initially there may be a need to prioritise the development of a research base. This can be achieved through funded research activities, PhD bursaries and delivery of M-Level education programmes. As people graduate with PhDs/Masters qualifications, undergraduate provision can be developed to compliment the work of co-operative schools. This combination of 'upward' and 'downward' development will eventually meet to shape the provision of co-operative education at the A-Level stage. As Pat Juby has commented, there are likely to be students coming out of Co-operative Trust Schools who will want to study in a Co-operative University (any subject) as well as those who will want to do Co-operative Studies.

The feedback in the new section highlights concerns and development ideas of people who have provided feedback on the second draft. Some of the feedback was provided by individuals (via e-mail), while other feedback was gathered at meetings at Sheffield Hallam University and the Co-operative College. There is further activity on this topic in Scotland where the Co-operative Education Trust is seeking to develop a book to support co-operative education, and host a workshop to discuss institutional support for co-operative business studies in higher education.

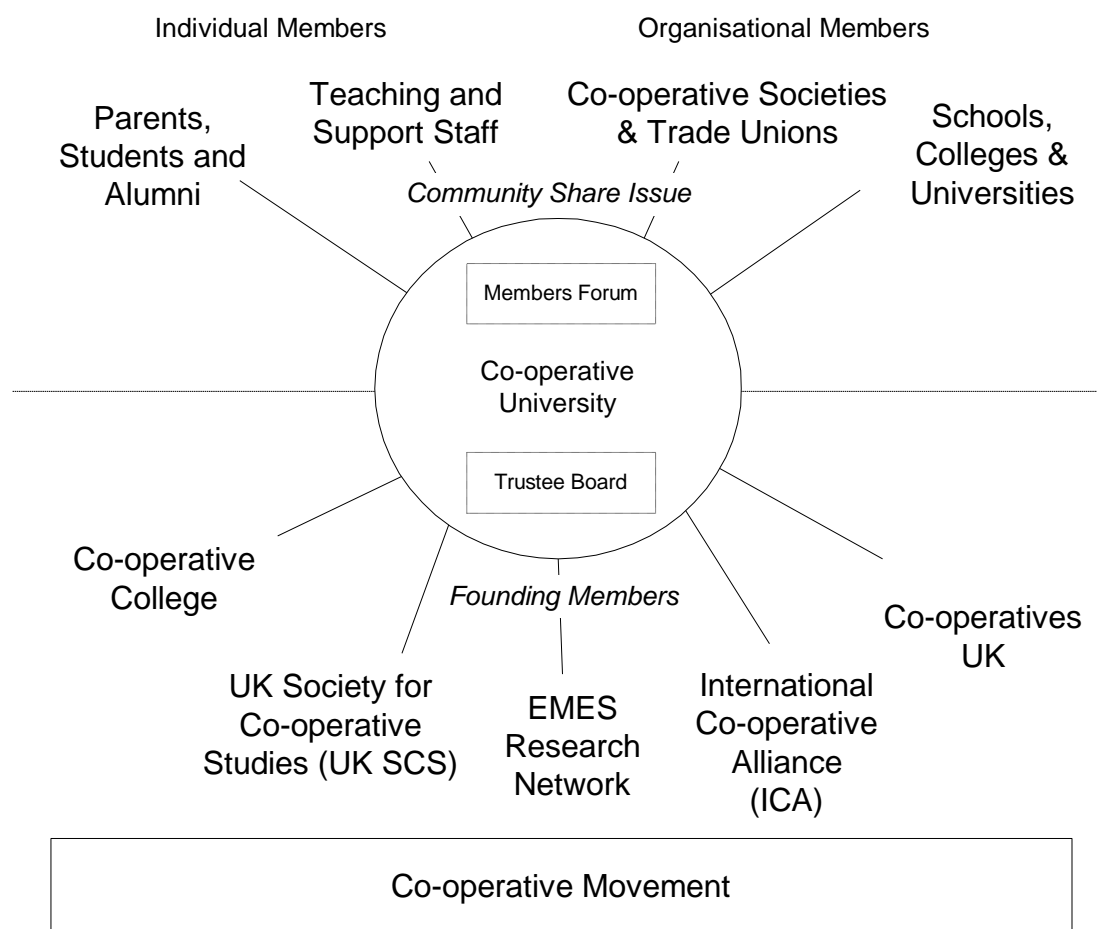
There will be one further opportunity to contribute to the development of this document – at the **Futures North** conference organised by Co-operatives Yorkshire & Humber on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. The Co-operative College have been organising a parallel set of events on co-operative education. **Futures North** will take place at the HUBS (Sheffield Hallam, Student Union) – this is conveniently located 2 minutes from Sheffield train station. To book your places at Futures North and participate in the next round of discussion (only £30 to members of a co-operative, or free to paid up members of Co-operatives Yorkshire & Humber) contact [alex.sobel@cooperatives-yh.coop](mailto:alex.sobel@cooperatives-yh.coop).

## 3. The Institutional Offer

At the 'lite-bite' meeting [of Co-operative Congress], the balance of opinion highlighted the difficulties of trying to establish co-operative courses (and co-operative curricula) in a UK university. It was put forward that the institutional arrangements should reflect the values of the movement, and not simply the educational offer. Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of ideas that surfaced in the two meetings, and distinguishes between the institutional support needed to form a co-operative university, and the membership that will be needed to sustain it.



**Figure 1 – Building a Co-operative University**



While it is desirable to have a small group of dedicated staff to drive the organisational and educational development of the university, the goal is more than to offer courses to the co-operative movement. It would also be to disseminate co-operative concepts and ideas in the higher education sector (building on the Society for Co-operative Schools model), to promote the concept of a co-operative university, and to contribute research and curriculum to higher education institutes and research networks. It was suggested that lecturers may wish to remain within their existing university institution, but want to embed new curricula in courses they deliver. This institutional offer provides for a two-way exchange between a co-operative university and the wider higher education sector by attracting lecturer and university membership.

#### 4. The Educational Offer

The priority of Co-operatives UK, based on the discussions in Robin Murray’s recent draft report, is to develop and strengthen support for co-operative development. The movement has many people who have worked locally – on the ground – in challenging circumstances. An educational programme, therefore, is not simply an opportunity to accredit what is already taking place. It is a mechanism by which those who have spent years on co-operative development activities can



contribute their knowledge in a way that informs the development of co-operatives studies in higher education.

The educational offer of a co-operative university, however, needs a long-term vision that goes beyond short-term development needs. During the informal meeting, the promotion of sector specific courses was discussed. These can be summarised as:

- Co-operative Retailing and Supply Chain Development  
(target market: co-operative retail societies and fair trade retailers)
- Mutual and Employee Ownership  
(target market: worker / producer / artisan co-operatives and employee-owned business)
- Co-operative Financial Services  
(target market: co-operative banks, mutuals, credit unions and CDFIs).
- Co-operative Agriculture and Fair Trade  
(target market: co-operative and fair trade producers and suppliers)
- Co-operative Education  
(target market: co-operative trust schools / academies, FE and HE staff).
- Co-operative Housing and Facilities Management  
(target market: housing co-ops, development trusts, football clubs and health facilities).
- Co-operative Government and Development  
(target market: co-operative councillors/politicians, local authority officers developing 'co-operative councils', people in co-operative infrastructure bodies)
- Co-operative Health and Social Care (target market, professionals establishing health and care services through mutual organisations)

We discussed two educational offers: first, one that builds the skills of people in co-operative development bodies and the wider social economy; second, one that develops sector specific knowledge for a co-operative advantage relative to private businesses. The offer must be attractive to the individuals committed to co-operative development, as well as sector specific employers.

Figure 2 is intended to stimulate thought about the development of curricula for M-Level co-operative education. As Linda Shaw (Co-operative College) has stressed, in the first instance there may be a pre-stage to develop the research capacity in specific fields. Developing the knowledge base from which to develop further courses might take 5 – 10 years before they are validated and recruiting co-operative members. It was also argued, however, that in some fields there are a sufficient number of academics to begin developing and delivering courses now.



**Figure 2 – Course Curricula for a Co-operative Business School (M-Level)**

Curriculum	Co-operative Retailing and Supply Chain Development	Mutual and Employee Ownership	Co-operative Financial Services	Co-operative Agriculture and Fair Trade	Co-operative Education	Co-operative Housing and Facilities Management	Co-operative Government and Development	Co-operative Health and Social Care
<b>Certificate Stage</b> (shared curriculum)								
Philosophies of Business and Management	Shared curriculum to promote inter-disciplinary learning between co-operators in all industry sectors Economies of scale that make it possible to support sector specific curricula at the diploma stage that will be more expensive to resource.							
Co-operative Learning and Personal Development								
Co-operative Economics and Social Accounting								
Democratic Management, Ownership and Governance								
<b>Diploma Stage</b> (sector specific curricula) – students on a co-operative development / social economy degree programme can choose a selection of ‘Intro to...’ modules (i.e. make choices tailored to the industry sectors they want to support/study). Students following a sector specific course would choose sector specific modules.								
Bespoke 1	Intro to...	Intro to...	Intro to...	Intro to...	Intro to...	Intro to...	Intro to...	Intro to...
Bespoke 2	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Bespoke 3	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Bespoke 4	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Dissertation Stage</b> (contributing to the co-operative research community)								
Research Methodology	Combination of shared lectures and one-to-one supervision so that students develop a contribution to the research community. Lecturers and researchers can develop the strongest outputs with students and submit them to academic journals, conferences and university library.							
Original Research								



## 5. Discussion

It will take time to develop each of these educational offers, and business plans will be needed not only for the university (institutional offer) but also for each course (educational offer). Based on discussions at Co-operative Congress, there appears to be a willingness to prioritise educational support for co-operative development, and then address industry specific needs. The above framework provides a roadmap within which this can be developed. It suggests that the highest priority would be the development of the shared curriculum and introductory modules for each sector specific course. These would provide for a qualification in social economy / co-operative development.

In terms of branding the degrees, the co-operative university could pioneer a new qualification that constitutes a unique selling point. Degrees can be presented as an MSE (as opposed to MBA), indicating a degree from the Co-operative University. This might stand for:

- Masters in Social Economy
- Masters in Social Enterprise
- Masters in Solidarity Economy

The justification for this is that different countries have different terms for the co-operative economy but all share the same initials. In the EU, the term **social economy** is widely used. In Latin America, people talk of the **solidarity economy**. In Anglo-American contexts, the term **social enterprise** has gained widespread acceptance (albeit now covering non-cooperative enterprises as well). Whatever the context, a student graduating with an MSE in Co-operative Development would be instantly recognisable as a graduate of the Co-operative University. Different course titles indicate different career trajectories and specialist knowledge.

The institutional offer allows for the creation of joint awards with universities. For industry specific courses, the Co-operative University might seek a partner in each country to deliver the diploma/dissertation stages (variations in degree structures in different countries will need to be fully researched). The development of a joint award would enable the Co-operative University to focus on the shared curriculum, and developing a network of specialist researchers/lecturers to deliver the diploma and dissertation elements. This would provide a viable business model in which income is shared between the Co-operative University and existing universities making university membership of the Co-operative University more attractive. It will also provide support to individual faculty members who wish to promote co-operative education at their university.

## 6. Feedback on Second Draft and Next Steps

This section has a sub-section that provides a summary feedback / suggestion from individuals, which is then followed by a sub-section of issues that surfaced in meetings at Sheffield Hallam University and Co-operative College. In this iteration, comments are offered without



interpretation, comment or thematic analysis so that they are communicated to movement members directly. In the final iteration of the discussion paper, they will be summarised, interpreted and integrated back into a revised institutional and educational offer, then passed to the working group for the next stage of development.

## 6.1 Feedback from Individuals

**Pat Judy** (who will be doing a separate presentation at the UK SCS Conference) points out:

- “There will be students hitting the higher education sector with a heightened awareness of the cooperative...A university formed using cooperative model(s) would potentially offer a progression from the School Trusts already formed – both in term of progressing the educational model and in terms of offering students with a heightened awareness of the cooperative as a different place to study”
- Europe has a substantial number of cooperative business school (23 in Finland) a cooperative university (Mondragon).
- European universities sometimes organise student accommodation using a cooperative model.
- Universities have already created consortia for purchasing. Could this approach be used for curricula development?
- “[There is] potential to re-energise disengaged students [through a] hybrid organisation that could offer someone a lifelong learning environment.”
- Is the goal to develop “co-operators”, not just “co-operatives”?

**Grant Wolstencroft** raises a number of concerns, including:

- The role of UK SCS
- The meaning of “co-operative” (pure, or extended to mutuality and social enterprise)
- Specific commitments to enfranchise co-operative members, communities and disadvantaged groups (clear target market), particularly the “traditional beneficiaries of co-operation (i.e. the working class, the marginalised)”.
- The need for a strong ‘community’ orientation – not just ‘co-operative movement’ and ‘higher education sector’, which helps the co-operative movement educate its members.
- A focus on addressing ‘real life’ issues of exclusion from education (through fee-charging) and disenfranchisement of the working class from political processes.
- Less reliance on corporate co-operatives that may not have co-operative employment or management systems.





- Sources of funding and student selection policies, and avoiding too many stakeholders during the start-up phase.
- Ensuring that the history of co-operation, including values and principles, and forerunners of co-operation are part of the curriculum.
- Ensuring the institution is sufficiently radical, with appropriate social, community and political aims.
- Do we need the concept of ‘founding members’ (sounds onerous). Would ‘contributing member’ be a better concept? Would being a founding member be too onerous for UK SCS (given entirely voluntary workforce).

**Ian Adderley** asks for ‘International Development’ to be part of the core curriculum, rather than a specialist option.

**MJ Ray** believes that trust ownership might be appropriate for the conversion of other institutions into co-operatives, but is probably inappropriate for a start-up situation. Older co-operative institutions are not necessarily the best guardians of co-operative values (remember all the demutualisation in building societies), so there is a case for newer co-operatives to be involved from the outset.

He also points out that the specialist courses might overlap. For example, many wholefood co-operative support fair trade, are retailers and organised as worker co-operatives...

**Craig Lumsdem** comments “I feel that there is quite a distinction between social enterprises and co-operatives this extends to founding principles and motivations, CSFs, KPIs and appropriate operating models. Following on from this I feel that a course should be focussed upon its target market. If it is an undergraduate course targeted at new graduates it should focus on comparisons and contrasts between different forms of economic / business models. If it is targeted at co-operative business practitioners it should concentrate specifically on the co-operative model and its fundamental differences to the investor owned model drawing out the Co-operative Advantage and appropriate strategies for capitalising upon the Co-operative Difference”

He would prefer an MCA (Masters in Co-operative Administration) to an MSE (Masters in Social Economy), as he’s not as familiar with the social economy concept.

**Paul Jones** comments that “my gut feeling, is that the Society and the Journal [of Co-operative Studies] should be associated with it. But the details and what that would involve I have no idea.”

**Sion Whellans** highlights the level of support for this initiative. “I spoke at a co-operative education seminar at UCL last week, and Nigel Todd from WEA and Mark Craig, Corporate Affairs Director of Co-op Group, were there and they are looking to have a follow up meeting with Mervyn [Wilson, Co-operative College] in Manchester on the subject.”



**Robin Murray** asks if there is an international co-operative education network already in existence that might help the development of this initiative.

**Richard Denny** (writing from outside the co-operative movement) thinks the proposal should be given 10 out of 10 for vision but that:

“The idea of a co-operative university/business school, as outlined in the document, faces three potential show-stoppers:

1. It looks as if the authors did not include VCs or other very senior managers in HEIs. Therefore, the scheme may not have top level support. HEIs are not great at working together unless a big research or other fund means it is in their interest to do so
2. I am not sure how credible a new qualification from a co-operative university will be in the market place
3. I am not sure how a co-operative university would be able to validate a new award.”

**Molly Scott-Cato** (writing on behalf of the Cardiff Institution of Co-operative Studies) comments on Robin Murray’s recommendation regarding a Co-operative Business School. The following extract provides comments on *third-level co-operative education*.

“On p. 103 Robin suggests the establishment of a Co-operative Business School delivering an MCA (Master of Co-operative Administration). We are entirely supportive of the suggestion that there should be a formal and professional qualification of this sort and that it should be part of the movement so that there is no dilution of the values and principles. We are supportive of the suggestion that the CBA should have some design features in common with the Open University and should make its teaching materials available through some form of creative commons licensing.

However, we would suggest that it might be more appropriate to establish a network model rather than a centralised model as implied by the Co-operative Business School idea. While it is true that co-operatives are a significant portion of the UK economy, researchers and academics into co-operative studies are a tiny minority of the country’s academic community and are fairly widely spread. It would make sense to use the existing expertise and commitment rather than bringing in those without a co-operative culture and intellectual grounding into a single business school.

The proposal was apparently drawn from a suggestion by Dr Ian MacPherson from British Columbia, who is well known to us at CICS and well respected globally in the world of co-operative studies. One of our members of staff at CICS joined us from Canada in 2008 and is still collaborating with co-operative researchers and practitioners in Canada. What has been significant in raising the profile of co-operatives and social enterprise as part of the larger ‘social economy’ has been the network of co-operators, voluntary and community sector organisations, community economic development activists, environmental and aboriginal and First nations community organisations, and academics across Canada. This has instigated a number of research and development initiatives in different provinces that reflect the specific needs of sector organisations and wider communities. In addition,



it has enlivened the research community and student experience with a number of master's degree students specifically focused on co-operative and social economy organisations, some of which have moved on from university to work, for example, in co-operative development organisations.

Like the UK, many of the academics and educators interested and working in/with co-operatives are either working alone or in small groups within universities, often scattered in management schools, social sciences faculties, and economics and politics departments. Few are organised in specialist research and/or teaching centres (e.g. Centre for Co-operative Studies, Saskatchewan; The Social Economy Centre, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto). Some universities offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses such as the Schulich School of Business non-profit management and leadership program and the international on-line Masters in Management of Co-operatives and Credit Unions offered by Saint Mary's University, Halifax Nova Scotia (a course attended by managers within the UK Co-op Group).

As stated above sector studies and practitioners have benefited from a dispersed and networked provision of research and education. While the University of Victoria, BC has acted as a co-ordinating hub (particularly for funding and projects to support links between researchers and practitioners), their role is not as a centralising control on activities, but as a facilitator across the regions. Activities include tele-learning sessions; collection and publication of case studies, papers and e-books; the social economy student network; scholarships; international links and networks; and presentations/lectures.

More recently, a New University Co-operative has been launched in Canada (Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia). Incorporated as a solidarity co-op, NUC will include open space learning recognising the many methods and routes to learning and development. This is an exciting development which might be a model for what we build on this side of the Atlantic.

Closer to home, Diarmuid McDonnell is already engaged in a KTP project for the Co-operative Education Trust Scotland to explore the network of co-operative research that is already available. We would suggest that this could form the basis for a novel, networked teaching model combining the best of the Open University with the existing research and teaching experience of co-operatively minded academics in the UK. This would also have the benefit of being consistent with the 'distributed co-operative education' proposed by the report for the school sector.

#### *Co-operative studies and authoritative academic research*

The report is somewhat dismissive of the Society for Co-operative Societies, referring to it as a 'research network of Co-operative Studies'. In reality it is a learned society that is a consultative body for the national Research Excellence Framework and has maintained a network of co-operative researchers and a journal to publish relevant research work since 1967. The *Journal of Co-operative Studies* is unique amongst academic journals in maintaining a strong link between the movement and its intellectuals. While such close working with 'users' is increasingly recommended by academic research managers and funders, it exists naturally in the co-operative movement and



should be valued and celebrated. While the Society has a low public profile, this is largely the result of its almost entirely voluntary status and the increasing workload of its members, who are for the most part academics with university posts.

The movement has been supportive of the Society and many local societies through sending delegates to its annual conferences. However, the low level of commissioning of high-level research via the Society and its members does suggest a low priority accorded to this work by the movement and its trade body, Co-operatives-UK. Commissioning work in-house is understandable but it can undermine the academic credibility and the objective authority of its findings.

We welcome the report's suggestion that there should be 'a significant expansion of this network of resources' and his proposal for 'an academic knowledge hub or network'. For the reasons given above, we would suggest an arm's length arrangement would be preferable to the hub being sited clearly within the movement, i.e. at Co-operative College. The UKSCS could provide a home for the network if it were suitably resourced. Projects which have been an aim of UKSCS but have been delayed due to lack of person power are: expansion and improved presentation of the UKSCS bibliography; an improved website using CMS software but maintaining the journal archive; and a portal for accessing teaching materials at HE level made available via creative commons licensing.

A brief word on co-operative innovation: we have for some time been developing ideas about 'knowledge co-operatives' as means of providing the incentives that innovation needs without controlling and limiting the spread of value from those innovations. Knowledge Co-operatives offer a way to balance the desire of people of ingenuity to benefit materially from their creations, and the need to share creativity and innovation for the benefit of other researchers and the community at large. As this is a tension between sharing value a co-operative seems the obvious solution.

#### *Higher education in flux: asking questions about ownership and control*

In many ways the report *Co-operation in the Age of Google* is an ambitious and far-sighted piece of work. However, in one important respect we would suggest that it has not been ambitious enough. In the university sector it is clear that issues of ownership and control are on the government's agenda. The removal of subsidy for the majority of courses is an implicit form of privatisation of higher education, and this is matched by a rise in private universities and, presumably, an approaching flurry of management buy-outs of especially our less research-intensive universities.

In this context, alternative ownership and governance forms become more viable for HE providers, as argued by Boden *et al.* (2011) recently in the *Times Higher Education Supplement*. While Boden<sup>1</sup> argues for a John Lewis model, which allows staff to have control of the institution, we would suggest that a truly co-operative university might be feasible if not in the age of the (corporate) Google, than at least in the age of Wikipedia (here the example of NUC, described above, becomes particularly relevant). Rather than the John Lewis model, which would give staff beneficial ownership without control, we would propose a fully co-operative model, preferably a multi-stakeholder model with staff and students sharing decision-making and ownership vested in a



vehicle owned by staff. We would suggest that one major outcome from this research and engagement process with higher education would be a feasibility study to explore the ideal structure for a Co-operative University. Such a model might be well received in Wales, where the Education Minister Leighton Andrews is a Co-operative AM and has clearly established his agenda as one of supporting teaching and learning as against management bureaucracy and inflated salaries.”

**John Halstead** commented as follows, after the Co-operative and Social Enterprise Summer School Meeting (see next sub-section).

*Two Separate Proposals: one for a Business School and another for a University?*

It seems to me that your document could be said to contain two proposals rather than one, or that it may be advantageous to proceed on the basis of two rather than one. Of course, universities do now contain business schools and the latter are not now seen as incompatible with the ‘idea of a university’, as once they were, but it would be foolish to pretend an identity between the ethos of the ‘business school’ and the ‘university’. There are differences and I am inclined to think them relevant to any forward movement on your proposal.

I would propose a two stage exercise. Propose the **Co-operative Business School** first and separately from the idea of a Co-operative University. One reason for separating the two ideas, apart from the implications of my remarks in the preceding paragraph, is that your paper makes it quite clear that there is a co-operative **business** interest in your proposal and the co-operative business is an obvious source for financial support. Co-operative business support will be more readily given, and on a relevant scale, to the business school idea than to a proposal for a university, which will necessarily have a broader curriculum. What I say here seems to fit your account, in the first section of the paper [Who is this document for] of the origin of the proposal. The second section of the paper [The institutional offer] moves well beyond the idea of a business school, but when you get into the third section [The educational offer] and list the sector specific courses previously discussed we are back into a business school-type programme rather than a university one. Your Figure 2 is about course curricula for a co-operative *business school* at M level, rather than a *university* programme [I am not familiar with all the jargon these days but I presume this means Masters level] The question then arises of whether the Co-operative Business School just operates at this level and not at Bachelor level. Perhaps this is something to clarify since we should not assume that any proposal will be pitched just to people involved in higher education?

In any case, I think it fairly obvious that the list of courses mentioned in Figure 2 is inadequate, whether undergraduate or postgraduate. If the latter, people may have come from a variety of first degrees and may not have studied the basics that one might think essential for those entering a co-operative environment. Indeed, in these days of validating experience it may be that some enter postgraduate work form co-operative employment without undergraduate study and it cannot be assumed that even such people have *studied* what may be relevant to a good co-operative education.



What strikes me about Figure 2 is that it is missing anything about **co-operative history**. Co-operative history is important, I think, in illustrating the perils faced by early co-operators and even modern ones, in terms of governance, oppositional politics, and so on. The Figure 2 reference to **philosophy** is in the narrow sense of ‘philosophies of business and management’. I see the point of the latter, but I can also see scope for a much broader approach. A critique of **economics**, in which knowledge of the basics in economic thought is imparted, as well as the criticism, is surely also required.

These topics seem appropriate to the idea of a ‘foundation year’, if we are thinking undergraduate, or as ‘core modules’, if we are thinking postgraduate. The several sector specific courses that you list seem to fit as specialist **options** following some basic set of courses.

The third section of your paper [Discussion] seems to imply that you are just concerned with postgraduate work, which seems appropriate to a Business School proposal. A university proposal would presumably have to say something about an undergraduate degree.

It is interesting that your proposed titles are for an MSE rather than MCE – in other words, playing on the **social** rather than the **co-operative**. I don’t have a problem with this as I think ‘social’ is the broader term which can *include* ‘co-operative’, while many would take the latter to *exclude* the former. I think it is important to avoid ideological disputes among those of us in the broad front against private market capitalism. I am nervous of the capacity for sectarian dispute among people and wonder if there is a possibility of trouble arising from this terminology if one is looking to co-operative business for financial support. Your ‘MSE Co-operative Development’ gets round this difficulty, but is it possible to get ‘co-operative’ into all MSE?

### **Institutional Model**

An Open University model [combination of distance learning materials, tutor support system and periodic residential schools] might be the best way to get off the ground and keep costs reasonable. I guess existing universities and perhaps the OU might be able to join in on this by negotiating a partnership agreement with the Co-operative College.

This model might be most suited to developing a Bachelor’s degree in Co-operative Studies. I think this would need another document and should be the basis of a separate Co-operative University proposal.

## **6.2 Feedback in Discussion Meetings**

### **Open Space Meeting – Co-operative and Social Enterprise Summer School, Sheffield Hallam**

The group comprised people interested in, or active in, the fields of co-operative studies and social enterprise. Below are edited highlights from the discussion.

- Delegates were divided on whether the proposal was too ambitious. Whilst there is a lot of work to do a start-up, it was pointed by that in the new educational environment there may



be potential university closures that provide opportunities for conversion to a mutual or cooperative model.

- On growth, it was pointed out that by the end of this year there will be 200 Co-operative Trust Schools (after 5 years). The governance model developed by the Co-operative College was key to adoption. The same may be true of Co-operative Universities. Growth was through word of mouth. Have successfully negotiated with the Department for Education and now have co-operative model for Academies. Universities is a logical next step.
- Linda Shaw (Vice Principle, Cooperative College) confirmed that a university could decide to change itself into a co-operative. Alternatively, the co-operative college could apply to become a university.
- A co-operative curriculum up to 16, and a GCSE in Cooperative Studies, already exists. Work on cooperative pedagogy is taking place in Plymouth.
- Some existing academics warned that existing universities will compete if there is a market for co-operative studies. There are already initiatives to embed 'responsible business' (Winchester) and 'social enterprise' (Northampton) in every university course.
- Size of global market is potentially large – 3 billion people work in or depend on co-operatives globally (UN estimate). An attractive proposition would stimulate an international market.
- Worth contacting Ruskin College - Trade Union Movement - Teacher Training College - Robert Owen Society (Lemster).
- Three things: 1) curriculum content; 2) how teaching is done; 3) institutional arrangements and management. Attractive but ambitious. Could, alternatively, take opportunities to influence curriculum content, and the way things are taught, within existing HE institutions.
- Co-operative Schools are contracted out of the (local) state and are funded (nationally).
- There was support for the development of distance learning, using a distributed model.
- The notion of asset borrowing was raised. Might buy/rent resources from a network of co-operatives and social enterprises, or approach co-operative schools to use their facilities in the summer / evenings and weekends. There is something to be learnt from the Open University approach to delivery.
- Is the natural market of adult learners?
- Can the Third Sector Research Centre be a partner to develop the research base?
- How important are links to other co-operative universities (internationally, in Canada, Malta, Italy etc.)





## Co-operative Education Meeting – Co-operative College

The group comprised people with an interested in, or active in, the field of co-operative education. This moves the discussion beyond higher education to the broader question of building a co-operative education movement. Below are edited highlights from the speakers' talks.

- Co-operative College are rethinking co-operative education, and will publish a paper in September. Salutary process to look back at the factors affecting the development of the college, as in the past the co-operative movement worked much more closely together. Still have the same main players, but looser connections. Some coop societies provide education. Much more in delivered in silos. Now looking to build more synergies.
- **Racheel Vorbery-Rugh.** A talk was provided on the women's cooperative guild. Women's Guild developed 1883, aim to spread cooperation and improve women's lives. Men encouraged to **do** everything, but women asked to **buy**. Guild aimed to get women involved in the movement through public participation. More than 70,000 members by 1920 - largest women's working class organisation at the time in which education was central. Created a cooperative mothers' meeting in which women could bring things along, read cooperative news, read other literary works. These sessions introduced cooperative games, discuss questions of cooperation. There was writing and reading on social and political questions to encourage self-expression and public-speaking. Some branches (e.g. Marlyebone) was very active, meeting 2-3 times a month. It has readings, games, essay competitions.

At national level, the guild supported women to learn accounting. By turn of century' there were training schools for officials using a train the trainer approach. At the height of WW1, over 300 people were attending schools. Wanted to change the culture to increase involvement of women, linking what happened in the store to family, extending it into community life.

The Guild challenged 'head of household' rules on family membership. In 1884, the guild co-founder got onto educational committees. 180 of 14,000 societies had women education committees - better record than other institutions of the day.

Looking at guild - key aspects. Building confidence. Understanding the economics of the balance sheet. Adapting to accommodate women's needs in the cooperative stores. Used resources of wider movement, publishing, attending conferences. Women only settings helped articulate voice.

- **Keith Vernon.** A talk was provided on the history of co-operative education.

Back in 1840s – co-operative societies (not all) set aside 2.5% of profits to build libraries. Education an important part of its foundations. It is a distinguishing feature of the cooperative movement. For children there were few elementary schools, with most run by





religion organisations. For adults - by 1840s, mechanical institutes faded. Education had become a middle class leisure activity.

Co-operative education connects to working class self-help tradition (Owen) as it had to create its own educational movement. Other institutes would not meet their needs. Education always central - but most societies did not contribute, preferring to focus on trading. By late C19, there were regrets that more had not invested. In 1890s the Cooperative Union became more proactive. In 1890s, state started to provide elementary education, then it became compulsory.

Local authorities and the state pushed for technical education. Different sense within cooperative movement – that it is education for getting on in life. Start to formulate view that there is a need for education for cooperation. Linchpin was the cooperative college, and it started to developing curriculum.

Twin strands: education for membership (basic membership, economic/ and history, its opposition to capitalist enterprise); education for enterprise - efficient education for enterprise development. An elaborate structure was put in place with educational structures all the way from office entrant to running a cooperative society. Management route, bookkeeping route, finance route, even a window dressing route.

Sought a balance between Citizenship v Business Efficiency

Key points - education always core, the education of the membership. Distinguishing feature. For the efficiency of the organisation, and for citizenship in the organisation. Always rooted in cooperative values. Education for mutual and collective improvement, and not working for private profit. Working for the good of the community instead, using open and accessible approaches. In management education, there were honours courses (at university level).

- **Sally Hartley** - doctoral student (college and open university).

In Africa - trying to explore young people's engagement with cooperatives. Increasing youth population - huge unemployment rates. Instant problem - interest in viability of cooperatives. Start 1920s - increasing interest as a model of development.

There is a revival taking place. Education is a key pillar/key role. Goal is to help members be aware of cooperative principals and philosophy, and avoid government control so the movement is grassroots. Stronger focus on commerce – re-education to challenge acquired historical perspective to help develop new voices.

Reality is quite complex and different. Need types that Keith referred to - member / technical. Skewed towards technical. Colleges can be owned by Ministry of Education - not cooperatives themselves. Problem with educational pathway and later employment.



Reality is that they do not have access to formal cooperative education. Generated on the ground. Make it for themselves, but do not recognise it as cooperative education.

For young people - coops/young people, fit well together, as it does increase income, but not much. Main benefits are personal development, consulting with people, how democracy might work. That comes from the unique cooperative structure. Impacts are broad as people develop in ways that are not well appreciated. It changes relationships.

There is a mixture of skills and learning. Coops critical in rural areas as they challenge regressive views of young people. Helps to change elders' view of young people. Space for learning. Cooperative Learning is Sally's lens, and the social processes of learning are viewed as important as a formal shell within which it works. Cooperative education literature does not recognise this. If coops are viewed as a space for learning – it affects their relationship with the community. Important for community development, and creates social capital. Impact of learning is reflected in how the cooperatives run: how to learn with each other, and the connection this has to efficiency in others senses.

- **John Schostak** gave talk on Cooperative Education and Schools. Ideas carried forward from own PhD days. How is education different from schooling? Work, democracy and education in neo-liberal times. Ethnography in school for his PhD. Serving depressed area in a new town – 2,000 students (now fallen to 800). It privileged pastoral care over academic curriculum. One evening in pub - teachers talking about parents' kids. Brown stains, no longing, heating - in 1980s. Can they do anything? No – “have to keep the lid on the dustbin.”

During first part of 80s - became optimistic after reading a book called Pupil Experience (self-elected curriculum). In school, only 20% went to FE or got jobs. What did education do for the rest of them?

Backdrop - in late 1990s - moved to other professions. Schools now developing a sizeable sector. 143 schools, with 100 more on way. Now getting excited about schools again. What constitutes public today - relates to Arab spring. What notion of 'public' is developing? An active voice. What happens beyond protest? Egypt - old actors/structures in place. What can displace that?

People now protesting about the impact of neo-liberalism. Could be a bigger crash with either sovereign debts, or US (unable to pay off the debts it has created). Big concern is how neo-liberal doctrine has taken over the meaning of freedom and democracy. Put forward by Friedman/Hayek - what is the alternative notion of a democratic practice? Current education work is reduced to contributing to employment. Western model creates mass unemployment when capital has extracted the value it wants.



French psychoanalyst - looks at impact of forms of organisation. Christoph Deseure (not translated) – discusses forms of neo-liberal organisation where performance management is used to place people under intolerable stress, up to and including suicide. It leads to work intensification, increasing insecurities. Managers who comply (and enforce the system) start tolerating the intolerable. New managerialism operates – and is driving people mad.

African example shows people turning around people's lives. There is a bigger notion of work - beyond employment. Deseure argues that we can bring back a more holistic work experience. We can arrange practices to satisfy biological needs: creating a human environment; and establish better way of arranging interests that contribute to the health of individuals, organisations and the environment.

Two kinds of public - under neo-liberalism (Lipman - the **phantom public**, a bunch of people who needed to be governed). Bernase, on other hand, wanted to mould behaviours of the public. Manufacture consent. Bernase is a source – the father of spin doctors. Manipulating the public mind. Invisible government that follows the money into the hedge funds. Called Propaganda (bible of propaganda).

An alternative is an **effective public**. Schooling v Education. Schooling - moulding and fashioning of minds and behaviours. Engineering of people for the phantom public. How many schools actually experience anything democratic? What democratic experiences do people have to draw upon for their adult lives? Education, in contrast is the building of autonomous learning, and holding of public spaces for debate.

What ideas drive policy making? What are the practices and procedures, and what resources can people draw upon? What are the procedures that are capable of producing critical thinking? What are the resources need to support it? Answer these, and you can then build the structures around them. Now greater opportunity to do it in primary school settings. Goal is to participate as peers in all major social institutions and social processes.

## 7. Next Steps

This draft will be distributed at the UK Society for Co-operative Studies Conference (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> September) and electronically via personal contact lists and networks. Readers are invited to distribute this document to colleagues and encourage further discussion and responses.

Please send to [r.ridley-duff@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.ridley-duff@shu.ac.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> October. A further meeting / workshop will take place at the **Futures North Conference** (2<sup>nd</sup> November), Student Union (HUBS) at Sheffield Hallam University. Contact [alex.sobel@cooperatives-yh.coop](mailto:alex.sobel@cooperatives-yh.coop) if you want to book a place.

In November/December, a final discussion document (much shorter, integrating comments and feedback into a new institutional and educational offer) will be prepared and passed to the working group created at Cooperative Congress.

