

# Valuing the roles of professional staff in Higher Education

*A UK/AUA and a Australian/ATEM perspective*

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# Outline of the presentation

- Setting the context
- The debate: key discussion topics
- Learning Points
- Questions
- Further reading



## Setting the scene

**John of Salisbury (died 1180)  
wrote:**

**If you are a real scholar you are thrust out in the cold. Unless you are a money-maker, I say, you will be considered a fool, a pauper. The lucrative arts, such as law and medicine, are now in vogue, and only those things are pursued which have a cash value.**



<https://hist2615.wikispaces.com/John+of+Salisbury+-+A+Medieval+Renaissance+Man>

## Setting the scene (c. 1375)



Laurentius de Voltolina



*Charles Barsotti*

*"Good news—I hear the paradigm is shifting."*

Charles Barsotti, The New Yorker

**Is the paradigm shifting though?**

# Global HE issues

- Costs of Higher Education
- New providers
- Student Expectations / Consumerism
- Employability / Graduate level roles
- Globalisation / Internationalism
- Managerialism
- Digital (r)evolution
- Regulation / accountability



# Professional identity and value of professional staff

- Are we professional and are we a profession?

Frameworks for the professionalisation of university professional staff.

Gornitzka and Larsen (2004)	Blümel (2008)
The emergence of a common cognitive basis	The development of a specialised body of practical and problem-solving knowledge that becomes systematised
An increase in requirements for formal qualifications required to hold university administrative positions	The establishment of an academic program of study, qualification and training
The growth and formalisation of networks between university administrative staff	A professional association or occupational network, which regulates entrance into the profession, provides a basis for knowledge exchange and licensing of qualifications
An increase in formal status of university administrative positions	Increased status and autonomy in decision-making

# Straw Poll - Has the role of Professional Staff and our contribution changed in recent times?

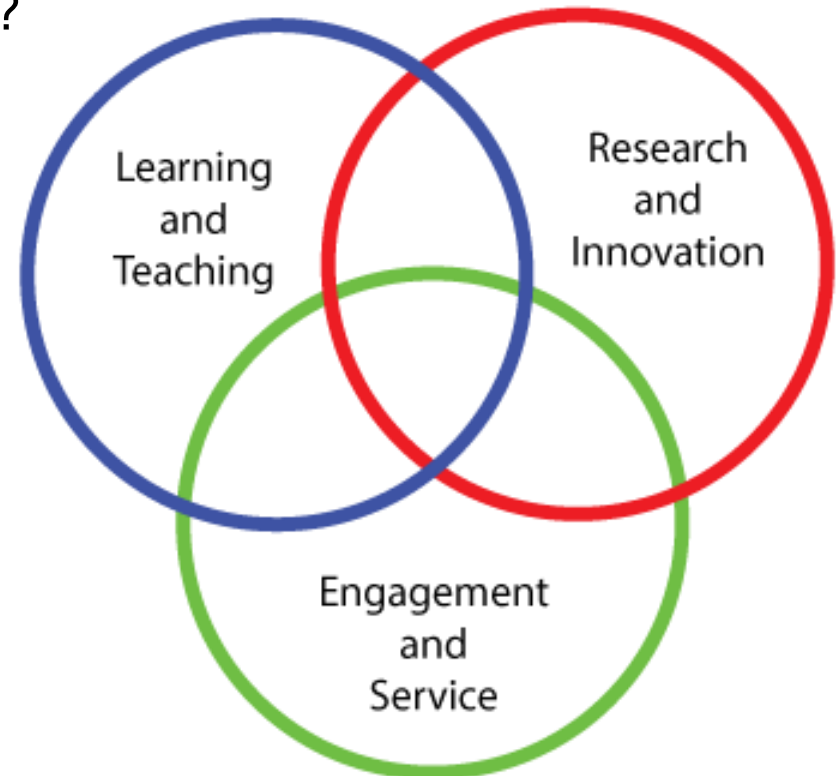
Simple show of hands\*

- Are you professional in your work?
- Are you a professional?
- Are you part of a global profession?
- Did you select this profession by choice?
- What collective term for professional staff do you identify with?
  - Professional staff?
  - General staff?
  - Support staff?
  - Admin staff?
  - Other?



# Straw Poll II

- Are you contributing to the core academic purposes of your institution in your work?
  - Student learning outcomes?
  - Research?
  - Other?



# Wider recognition of HE administration as a career?



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**Few of us ever plan to be a University administrator, so what does that mean in terms of professional identity?**

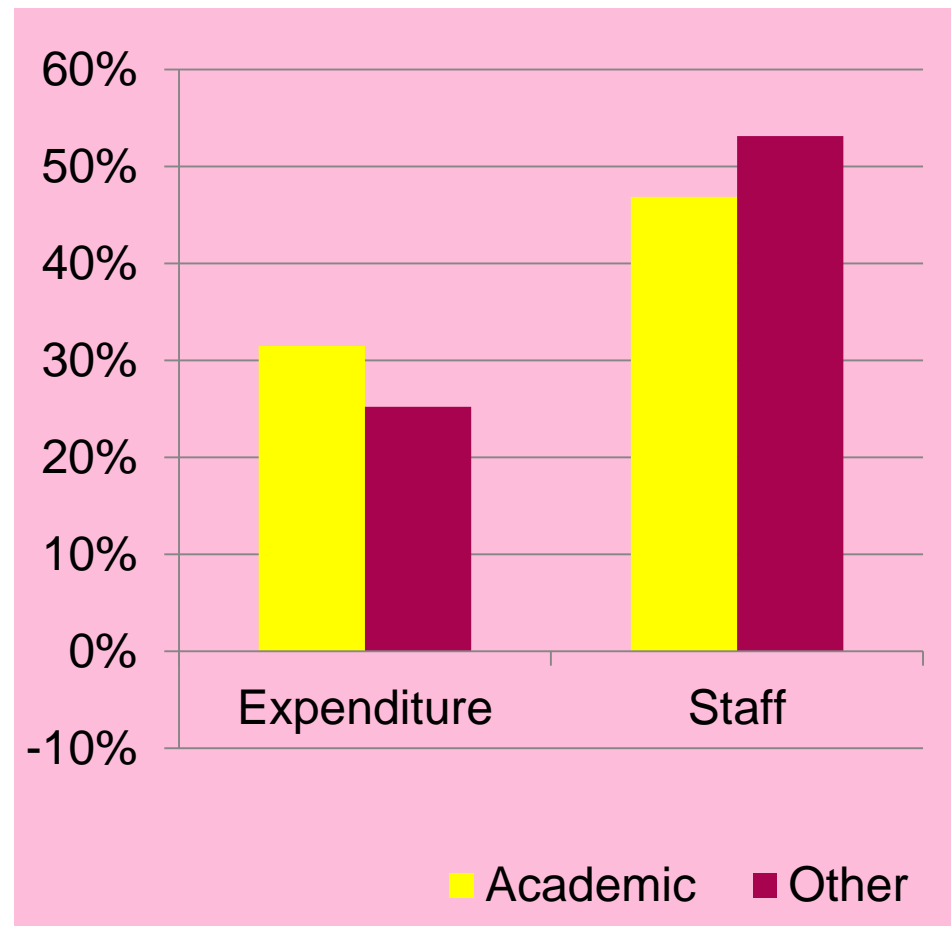
The invisible worker?

The invisible profession?

The accidental profession?

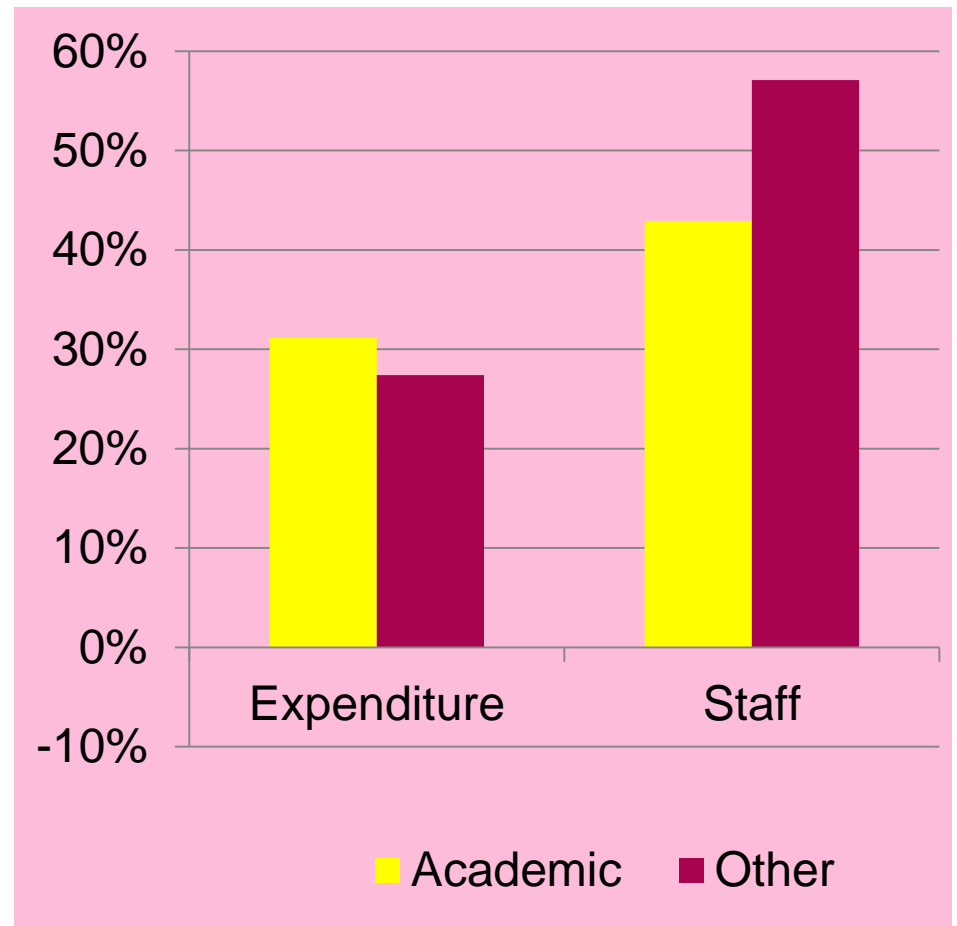
# Professional staff status and role in UK

- Development of the status of professional staff in higher education?
- “Any academics who think their university and all its elements revolve around them may have to prepare for a cosmic shift.” THE, 14 April 2011



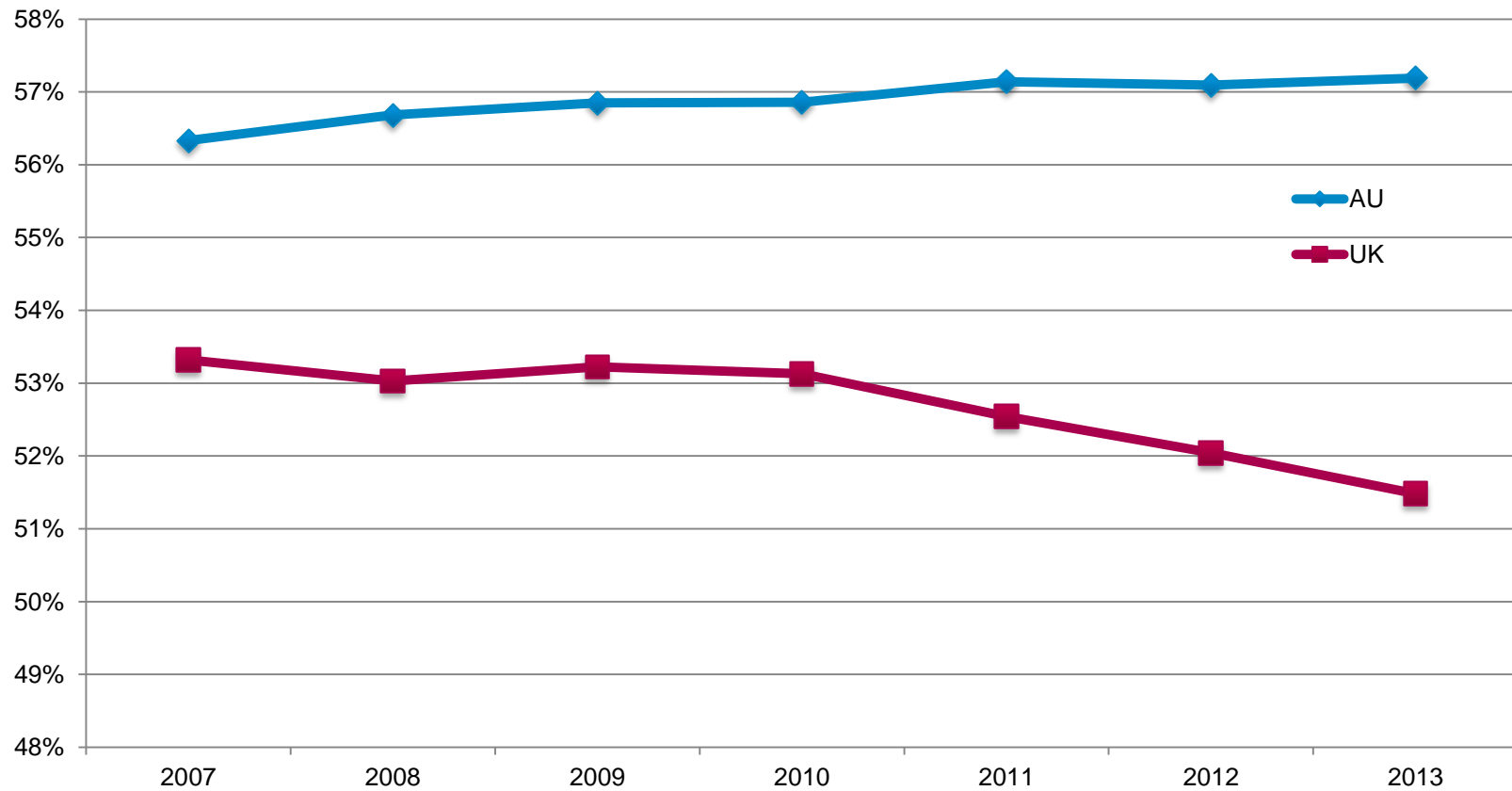
# Professional staff status and role in AU

- Similar pattern in Australia



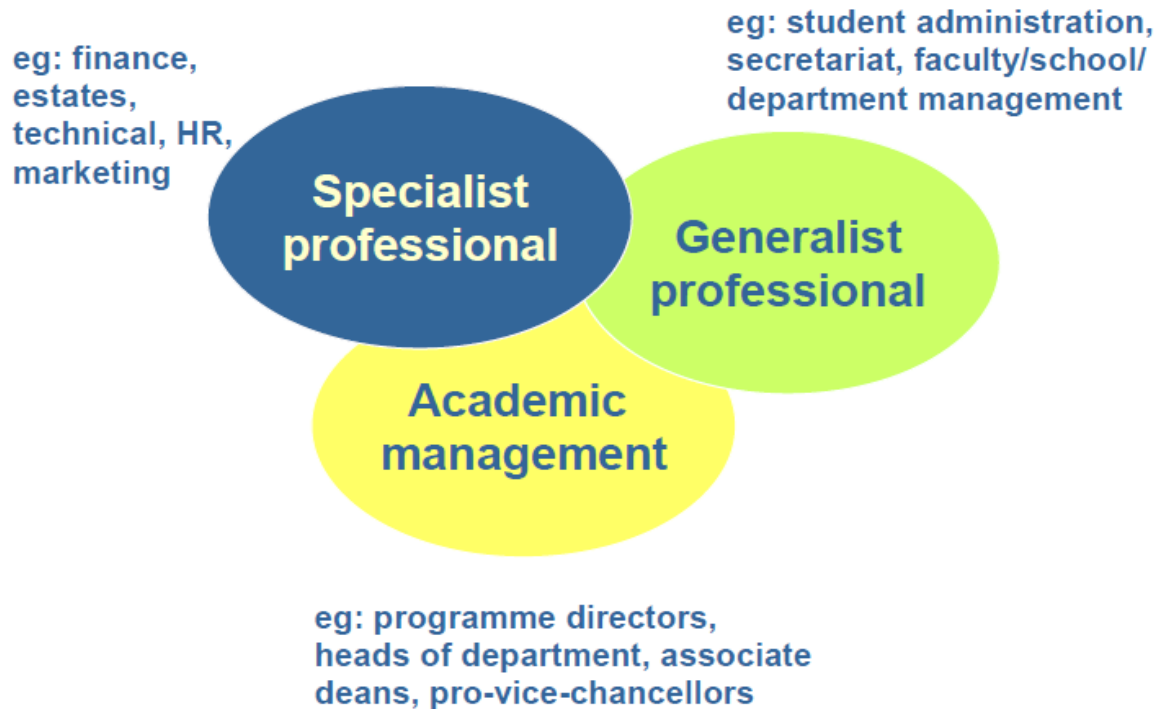
# Staff in AU and UK HE institutions

## Percentage of Professional Staff of all University Staff



# Career Pathways: UK view

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AUA CPD Framework: <http://www.aua.ac.uk/LGM/careerpathwaysfinal.pdf>

See also Whitchurch, C. (2008). *Professional Managers in UK Higher Education: Preparing for Complex Futures Final Report*. Research and Development Series. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

## Key discussion topics:

1. Is there a case for higher education as a profession?
2. Is there a need to promote higher education administration as a career of choice?
3. Should we / do we attract and retain our graduates?
4. Are there concrete career pathways and routes?
5. What are the issues around specialist roles versus generalist roles?
6. How does the interface between administration in academic units and central services work?



## **Reporting back:**

- 1. Is there a case for higher education as a profession?**

## **Reporting back:**

**2. Is there a need to promote higher education administration as a career of choice?**

**Reporting back:**

**3. Should we / do we attract and retain our graduates?**

## **Reporting back:**

**4. Are there concrete career pathways and routes?**

**Reporting back:**

**5. What are the issues around specialist roles versus generalist roles?**

**Reporting back:**

**6. How does the interface between administration in academic units and central services work?**

# Practical ways to enhance professional identity

## UK examples:

- AUA Annual Awards, THE and Guardian Awards
- Embedding the AUA CPD framework in universities
- Administration Projects
- Promoting and facilitating knowledge and qualifications (e.g. Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Management Administration, Management and Leadership)

## Austral(as)ian examples:

- ATEM / Campus Review Best Practice Awards
- Creating debate in social and traditional media
- Promoting and facilitating knowledge and qualifications (e.g. eLAMP)



## Professional staff . . .



AUA / ATEM at careers expos?

**Questions?**



# Further reading: UK

## Recent Journal Articles from Perspectives:

- <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603108.2014.882427>
- <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603108.2014.914107?src=recsys>

## Other Journals:

- <http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/3199/2/3199.pdf>

## Higher Education Blogs:

- <http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/change-academy/category/professionalism/>
- <http://registrarism.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/administrators-cannot-offer-enlightened-management/>
- <http://registrarism.wordpress.com/2012/02/01/the-imperfect-university-who-should-lead-universities/>

# Further reading: Australia

## Recent Journal Articles from Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management:

- <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.lib.uts.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/1360080X.2014.916470>
- <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.lib.uts.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/1360080X.2013.844663>

## Other Journals:

- <http://higherprofessionals.info/system/files/anothermatrixrevolution.pdf>

## Higher Education Blogs:

- <http://www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au/insights-blog/2011/06/49-managers-for-a-demand-driven-environment>
- <http://www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au/insights-blog/2014/06/181-new-technologies-and-the-blurring-of-boundaries>
- <http://www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au/insights-blog/2013/09/152-university-professional-staff-enhancing-student-outcomes>

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