

Society for Research in Higher Education

Project: Universities at War: the Impact of the First World War on UK Higher Education

Final Report

Introduction

This project began on 1 March 2014 and an interim report was submitted in September 2014. In December 2014, following discussions with Rob Gresham, the project was extended until 31 May 2014. A second report was submitted in March 2015 and this is the final report.

Progress

Progress with the project has been excellent. Work has continued with the collection of evidence from a range of universities, most notably Aberdeen, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Edinburgh, King's College London, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Oxford, and with the use of records held in the National Archives, Kew. Online sources, especially newspaper archives, have also been consulted. The documentary material is rich and is already yielding many fascinating insights into the period. The following are just some of the areas covered:

- Changes in funding arrangements for universities, especially the growing significance of government funding, with important consequences for the relationship between universities and government.
- Changes in the role of women, both as students and staff; this theme extends to include the changing role of women in particular professions, including medicine and veterinary medicine.
- New inter-relationships between universities themselves and between universities and their communities
- A new recognition for the research function within universities, both in support of the war effort, but also to understand some of the consequences of war.
- Emergence of new subject areas (such as the social sciences, business studies and modern languages) and degree structures (including "sandwich" programmes with periods of study in business and industry).
- New forms of internationalisation within universities, especially links with academic staff and students across the Empire and the emergence of the PhD to attract international students.
- New forms of institutional leadership and management, including financial controls.

- Changes in career structures for academic staff, including issues of status, salaries and pensions.

The balance of activity has now shifted from the collection of material to analysis and writing. I am now deeply immersed in writing the book; two friends and colleagues have kindly agreed to comment on draft chapters. Some further visits to archives will be made, but these will be mainly to check points or for specific purposes (eg to select photographs or illustrations for inclusion in the book).

Publications

A book contract has been signed with Palgrave Macmillan. The manuscript (100,000 words) is to be submitted in January 2016 and the book is due to appear later in 2016. Discussions with the editors at Palgrave Macmillan have stressed the importance of concentrating on the period of the First World War and the immediate aftermath, rather than the longer-term consequences. Significantly, and very encouraging, they have suggested that a second, follow-up book would be welcome, especially concerned with the Inter-War years and the longer-term outcomes of the War. A subtle, but important, change in the title for the book should also be noted. The book will now be called "Universities and War" (not "at War") and will cover "British" higher education, not "UK" higher education. This overcomes the "problem" of dealing with the Irish universities and especially their role in the Easter uprising in 1916, which is really a subject for another book. The present book outline is attached for information.

Three journal papers are also in preparation:

- (i) For *Pedagogica Historica*, on university finances in the First World War
- (ii) For *History of Education*, on the new subject areas and degree structures that emerged in the War
- (iii) For the *Journal of the Educational Administration and History*, concerning Edward Carey, Registrar of the University of Liverpool during the War

I have also been approached to write a paper looking specifically at the impact of the War on higher education in Wales.

The work has attracted considerable interest, both in the UK and overseas. I have given presentations on the project in Leeds, Liverpool and Southampton Universities, and a presentation at Glasgow University is planned; I have also been invited to make presentations in Australia and the United States.

Conclusion

I am conscious that this is a "final" report. However, the project is ongoing and the key outputs, especially the book, will appear later in 2015 or in 2016. The project has made excellent progress and will make a significant contribution to developing the study of the history of higher education. I

continue to be extremely grateful for the support and encouragement of SRHE, something that I acknowledge publicly on every opportunity.

I am very committed to raising the profile of the study of the history of higher education within the spectrum of activity supported by SRHE and more generally. For example, I believe that a new SRHE network in this area could be established.

Professor John Taylor

June 2015

Book Outline

Chapter One: Universities in the UK before the Great War

This chapter will consider the position of universities in the UK before the summer of 1914. Key themes to be pursued include:

- The number and types of universities; the “old” universities and the “new” universities (the civic and redbrick universities);
- Student numbers; programmes offered, including part-time and extension programmes;
- Teaching, including subjects, teaching practice and course structures;
- University staff;
- The role of research and scholarship;
- University finance, including fees, subscriptions and endowments; the beginnings of Government funding;
- Universities and their communities, including business and industry.
- Governance, leadership and management;
- Buildings and physical appearance.

The chapter will discuss the role of universities in late Victorian and Edwardian society, and some of the issues that were beginning to emerge (for example, in funding, in the relationship with national government and in relationships with local and regional business). Some of these trends were to be reinforced by war; others were to change beyond recognition. In many respects, the universities mirrored the contradictions apparent in wider society; on the one hand enjoying expansion in student numbers and growing influence within civic life and, on the other hand, facing uncertainties arising from international tensions, the clamour for female suffrage and social deprivation within their communities.

Primary Sources: University annual reports, committee papers, correspondence; newspapers; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 8,000 words

Chapter Two: The Shock of the War

This chapter will examine the immediate response of the universities, including:

- Students – dealing with reduced numbers, student volunteers in service, how to maintain teaching;

- Staff – problems of staff stranded overseas, staff volunteers in service, international members of staff;
- Supporting the war; opposition to the war
- Funding – serious reductions in income
- Refugees – supporting Belgian refugees

The chapter will provide an introduction to some of the key thematic chapters that follow. It will demonstrate the scale and complexity of the problems and challenges facing the universities in shaping their response to the war.

Primary Sources: University annual reports, committee papers, correspondence; newspapers; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 8,000 words

Chapter Three: Supporting the War

This chapter will consider important areas of activity where universities contributed to the war effort:

- Research, showing the diverse range of research stimulated by the war, from munitions and military equipment to food production, medicine and social studies;
- Officer training
- Services, including hospitals and languages; student volunteers;
- Use of buildings for military accommodation; munitions training; registration activities;
- Advice (eg diet and health).

Primary Sources: University annual reports, committee papers, correspondence; newspapers; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 12,000 words

Chapter Four: The Impact of the War on Teaching and Learning

This chapter will consider first of all how universities sought to minimise the impact of war and how they managed to continue teaching with relatively few course closures. Issues covered will include the use of flexible staffing arrangements and the increasing role of women.

The chapter will then consider changing patterns of student recruitment, especially increasing numbers of female students; pressures for change within professional disciplines (including medicine and veterinary science); emerging disciplines (especially in the social sciences); and new degree structures.

The chapter will include detailed analysis of student numbers, by subject, gender and mode of delivery.

Primary Sources: University annual reports, committee papers, correspondence; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 12,000 words

Chapter Five: Paying for the War: The Impact of the War on University Finances

This chapter will look at the financial consequences of the war. It will consider the strategies adopted to make financial savings and changes in patterns of income and expenditure. In particular, it will consider changes in government funding for universities. An underlying theme that will also be pursued is how universities worked together to raise their concerns about finances.

The chapter will include a detailed analysis of university financial accounts for the period.

Primary Sources: University annual reports, accounts, committee papers, correspondence; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 12,000 words

Chapter Six: Changes in Governance, Leadership and Management

This chapter will examine changes in the relationship between universities and Government caused by the war, including the impact of war on university autonomy. Within universities, the role of Vice-Chancellors and other senior university leaders will be discussed, especially the need for increasing professionalization.

Primary Sources: University annual reports, committee papers, correspondence; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 10,000 words

Chapter Seven: Looking to the Future

Well before the end of the war, universities began to consider their role in future reconstruction. These discussions included new degree structures, new methods of teaching, new forms of research and new relationships with business and industry. A wide range of discussions were undertaken among universities and between universities and Government. These discussions will be considered in detail bearing in mind their long-term significance.

Primary Sources: University annual reports, committee papers, correspondence; Government papers and committee records.

Chapter length: 10,000 words

Chapter Eight: The Impact of War: Some Final Reflections

This chapter will offer some final comments and conclusions about the impact of the war and will look to the long-term changes that can be traced back to this period. It will also contribute to a broader understanding of war on higher education, thereby adding to international literature covering, for example, the outcomes of the Franco-Prussian War on the Germanic model of higher education and the American Civil War on US higher education.

Chapter length: 8,000 words