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Orazbayeva, B.

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Education-driven university-business cooperation Engagement of academics and business

Balzhan Orazbayeva

For over a century, academic freedom at universities has been reinforced to protect their independence. However, this protected status is under threat by a world moving at breakneck speed and a need to ensure that education stays relevant. Can universities expect to survive without adapting and integrating with business?

Whilst this thesis will not attempt to answer this broad question, it ambitiously seeks to provide a unique and valuable insight into why and how academics engage with employers, specifically examining the motivations of each to do so. However, given academic autonomy and business' need to generate profits, is there any way to bring the two together to cooperate in education when the pay offs are mostly mid to long term?

This dissertation describes an intriguing and complex story of how, despite their often conflicting priorities, timelines and world-view, academics and business rise above the issues to work together in the field of education. That they do so, often at personal (time) cost, with a lack of personal incentives provided by their organisation, and seemingly for the good of students could be viewed as a great act of benevolence. However, such a conclusion would miss a vital part of the entire picture and the internal satisfaction received by both through the willingness to develop both academics' and business staff capabilities and skills, increase graduate employability as well as contribute to society in a more meaningful way.

For this reason, this dissertation provides compelling reading for university leaders or companies trying to foster cooperation in education, policymakers and facilitators either driving or supporting this process. This study offers insights into how to motivate academics and businesses to advance education as well as to build and maintain a strong talent pipeline through education-focused activities.