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Jandrić, Jakov; Delbridge, Rick; Quattrone, Paolo

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Kontakt/Contact

ZBW – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft/Leibniz Information Centre for Economics

Düsternbrooker Weg 120

24105 Kiel (Germany)

E-Mail: [rights\[at\]zbw.eu](mailto:rights[at]zbw.eu)

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SUSTAINING A COLLEGIATE ENVIRONMENT: COLLEAGUESHIP, COMMUNITY AND CHOICE AT AN ANONYMOUS BUSINESS SCHOOL

Jakov Jandrić^a, Rick Delbridge^b and Paolo Quattrone^c

^aUniversity of Edinburgh Business School, UK

^bCardiff Business School, Cardiff University, UK

^cAlliance Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, UK

ABSTRACT

The increasing push towards centralisation and bureaucratisation in higher education, further exacerbated by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, calls for a better understanding of the nature of collegiality in contemporary universities. We address this issue by looking into the necessary conditions and barriers to sustaining a collegiate environment. The empirical focus is on academics, academic leaders and professional support staff at Anonymous Business School (ABS), a department in a large civic UK university. We interviewed 32 participants across the school, ranging from early-career academics to experienced professors and members of department leadership teams. The findings suggest multiple emerging perspectives on collegiality, with features of horizontal collegiality perceived as key to successful academic responses to the crisis. The findings also indicate how sustaining a collegiate environment within the department requires both choice and effort from leadership and from staff, particularly when decision-making is primarily

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located at the centre of the university. The choice and effort made across different collegiate pockets contribute to the department becoming an 'island of collegiality' within the increasingly centralised and bureaucratised university hierarchy. In this sense, the actions of the department leadership to establish supporting mechanisms, and the actions of the staff to, in turn, embrace and build interpersonal relationships and professional identities, are key to sustaining a collegiate environment.

Keywords: Collegial pockets; collegiate environment; UK business school; islands of collegiality; choice and effort; community

INTRODUCTION

I think sometimes we overplay collegiality as a kind of magic-bullet solution to all our problems, and I don't think that will do. Whether we like it or not universities are not democracies. At some point, what you might call hierarchy-based authority must come into decision making processes. On the other hand, I think if academic collegiality is weak, institutions suffer different kinds of problems as a result. Staff become alienated, they become disaffected. They basically don't engage, they don't actually kind of get involved, and they approach their roles in a very minimalist, utilitarian kind of way. (P11, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

The suddenness and scale of the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic created a unique opportunity to explore what happens to collegiality along its vertical and horizontal dimensions¹ at the time of crisis, providing insights into the key conditions and barriers to sustaining a collegiate environment. Our empirical focus is a UK business school, labelled ABS – a department in a large civic university which, along with the vast majority of UK universities, has become increasingly hierarchical and centralised. This focus provides a somewhat specific higher education context, as business schools have been seen as both an outlier from traditional perspectives on universities and a potential model for universities of the future (Pettigrew & Starkey, 2016). Such arguments draw on a widely established perspective of business schools as institutions at the forefront of trends in corporatisation and managerial approaches to academic work, leadership and professional progression (Fleming, 2019; Ghoshal, 2005; Jandrić & Loretto, 2021; Kitchener & Delbridge, 2020; Parker, 2014, among others), coupled with their pragmatic role in generating income for universities (Parker, 2021; Pettigrew & Starkey, 2016).

In total, we interviewed 32 participants – ranging from early-career academics to professors and those in leadership positions – across academic and professional posts with the focus primarily on activity *within* the school. Our findings indicate a wide range of perspectives on collegiality along its horizontal and vertical dimensions, with a clear focus on interpersonal relationships and collegueship. Features of the vertical dimension of collegiality such as academic voice and individual roles in decision-making were only sporadically recognised as a core feature of academic work and life. The university has reduced academic participation in central organisational activities and introduced a new layer

of hierarchy over the last 10–20 years. Moreover, the participants experienced increased centralisation of decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the result that their understanding of collegiality as centred on its horizontal dimension only became more embedded. The reasons for this are two fold. First, the extent of the disruption of the pandemic on the established teaching, research and leadership practices and on personal circumstances has led to a stronger reliance on collegiate support among participants across the horizontal dimension. Indeed, the capacity to self-organise that sustained ABS and many other university departments during the early stages of the pandemic in particular owes much to the collegiality shown by individual academics. Second, the fundamental changes in the spatial arrangements of work prompted by the pandemic and its aftermath have led to an array of issues and new approaches to maintaining a collegiate environment through alternative modes of communication, some emerging informally among staff, and others initiated by line managers. The importance of interpersonal relationships for maintaining a collegiate environment has made this period particularly challenging for those who recently joined ABS and who, in our sample, were all early-career academics or professional services staff. Their accounts speak volumes on the importance of space and place in building and maintaining a collegiate community particularly as the initiation practices commonly available to newcomers (Kligyte, 2021) had broken down due to the pandemic. In this sense, the paper contributes to the current discussions on collegiality by providing an important insight into the complex and variegated nature of horizontal collegiality in the contemporary, centralised UK university.

While our findings strongly feature the accounts of positive experiences of horizontal collegiality and the role that school leaders played in sustaining collegiality at the departmental level, the pandemic has also led to increased centralisation of decision-making and increased bureaucratisation of processes by the central university, impacting the vertical dimension of collegiality. Accounts by the participants in leadership positions indicate the emergence of tensions between different levels of the institution and difficulties in translating the decisions coming from the centre into practice which was then negatively experienced ‘at the chalkface’. Here, this paper provides more nuance to the discussion on managerialism and centralisation, as it indicates the importance of agency within and in sustaining ‘collegial pockets’² (Lazega, 2020). We show how departmental senior staff actively looked for ways to ameliorate some of the actions and wording coming from the central university in order to ‘carve out’ space for horizontal collegiality at the school level. These examples and experiences all indicate the importance of choice and effort across institutions, ‘collegial pockets’, and individuals in supporting and maintaining a collegiate environment.

This paper continues with the review of relevant literature on collegiality, and the features of its horizontal and vertical dimensions are established. This is followed by a discussion of collegiality in UK business schools. We then discuss the methods used in the empirical study, including the studied institutional context and participants. Findings are presented next, followed by discussion and concluding remarks.

COLLEGIALITY: MAPPING KEY TERMS TO DIMENSIONS

Looking into the etymology of the term is revelatory of some key aspects of collegiality. ‘Collegiality’ originates from the Latin, *cum*, that is, ‘with’, and the Greek root *leg-*, which originates different words such as *legere*, that is, ‘to tie’, ‘to gather’; *lex*, that is, ‘law’, ‘legal’; and *logos*, that is, ‘word’, ‘speech’. This etymology points immediately to how ‘collegiate’ also implies a specific form of governance that serves to tie together a community of people who have a say but also have knowledge at the core of their interests. In the literature, collegiality remains an elusive term with a broad and complex remit, commonly linked to governance, professions and disciplines, and behaviour (e.g., Kligyte & Barrie, 2014). Sahlin and Eriksson-Zetterquist’s (2023, Vol. 86) multi-dimensional model offers more analytical nuance, by which collegiality is found at the intersections between its vertical and horizontal dimensions.

As a mode of university governance, collegiality is often discussed as an anti-thesis to growing managerialism and bureaucratisation within higher education institutions (Hull, 2006; Kligyte, 2021). We consider collegiate governance an element of its vertical dimension; it broadly includes the representation and inclusion of staff and students in decision-making processes across the institution (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016). This is often seen fundamentally at odds with the predominant managerialist approach to university governance, one characterised by efficiency through simplification and centralisation of decision-making (Tight, 2014). In the UK, the increase in size and complexity of higher education institutions has been accompanied by increasing managerialism and centralisation with the idea of a self-governing, autonomous university based on consensus seen as less efficient and more costly by both senior university leaders and policy makers.

In practice, managerialism and bureaucratisation have led to fundamental changes in the way academics are perceived by their institutions, and often utilise practices that are at odds with the collegiate values. Various performance management practices, as well as streamlined and prescriptive bureaucratic processes, are very much omnipresent across institutions and can be found in all aspects of academic life (Dean & Forray, 2018). In line with free market ideals, market competition – with a complex³ relationship to collegiality – is omnipresent in the UK university context, and is presented as means for increasing the quality of academic outcomes (Musselin, 2018). For the most part, the use of managerial approaches follows the same principle, and is commonly justified through the lens of efficiency and quality ‘improvement’.

Managerialism, however, also requires a fundamental shift in the approach to, and experiences of, work for individuals in the system. As the academic priorities change, the extent of bureaucratisation and changes in the scope of academic work create new pressures that all contribute to the sharp rise in mental health issues among academics, often linked to feelings of being lost, overworked and stressed (Hull, 2006). Teaching and research activities are becoming aligned either to the increasing desire for cost-efficiency or, more importantly, to commercial

aspirations of higher education institutions in their struggle for market position. In this sense, managerialism contributes to ‘organizational obliviousness’ towards existing and emerging societal challenges (Gatzweiler, Frey-Heger, & Ronzani, 2022), driving the deterioration of the impact of HEIs and their agency in shaping political and cultural landscapes (Beckmann & Cooper, 2013).

These tensions between the institutional alignment towards market-driven existence and the individual shared values across different levels of the institution indicate the extent to which collegiality is necessarily linked to profession, as an ‘agentic response by professionals [...] to transformative forces within and across organisations and work settings’ (Denis et al., 2019, p. 324). Critical perspectives on changing processes and practices have always had a prominent position in academia (Musselin, 2018), taking into account the importance of profession to academic authority and legitimacy (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Knights & Clarke, 2014). The role of profession in disrupting bureaucracy was also recognised by Max Weber, who considered it divisive (Waters, 1989). In the context of collegiality, profession is an important feature of its horizontal dimension; a shared language and a shared set of principles that not only provide opportunities for professional development for those who are its members but also a basis for initiation of early career colleagues (Kligyte, 2021). While the extent of individual alignment to profession did slow down changes brought by managerialism, changes have been numerous and impactful. For instance, the introduction of Workload Allocation Models⁴ – or WAMs – as means of explicit and supposedly precise measurement of activities and outputs by academics has become a norm across the UK university sector. However, as Hull (2006, p. 38) argues, the “introduction of WAMs is, arguably, yet another nail in the coffin of ‘academic collegiality’: the categorisation and measurement [of] our work removes another aspect of our professional autonomy and hence reduces the possibilities for collegiality”. The use of WAM also provides universities with a tool to control pressures put on academic staff by shifting the weightings allocated to each standardised activity. For example, reductions in workload for teaching and administration may be used as either carrot or stick in regard to ‘research performance’. It is also a manifestation of increasing individualisation and instrumentality in UK higher education.

To further understand the tensions between managerialism and collegiality, it is important to consider the day-to-day experiences of individual and communal academic life, or its behavioural aspect (Kligyte & Barrie, 2014). As managerialism prevails as a new form of ‘governing by numbers’ and targets (Ezzamel & Reed, 2008) in higher education, collegiality remains perhaps most visible in the interpersonal interactions. Tight (2014), however, posits that the divide between managerialism and collegiality is not necessarily as deep and as prevalent. The co-existence of collegiality and managerialism is shaped by the socio-political context, variations in institutional structures and contexts, and individual perspectives (with academics with longer tenure more resistant to change, and early career scholars more welcoming to the changing landscape). In line with Tight (2014), collegiality does not simply exist in the system; it co-exists within a complex institutional eco-system of vertical and horizontal relationships. Exploring

these relationships and identification of possible areas of convergence requires a closer examination of the specific context of UK higher education more generally and the UK business school model more specifically.

COLLEGIALITY AND MANAGERIALISM IN UK BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Since the 1980s, the UK higher education sector has been fundamentally shaped by a strong push towards choice-and-competition principles (Le Grand, 2009). The first rapid expansion of the sector was seen in early 1990s due to the increase in student numbers and the resulting transformation of polytechnics into universities (Trow, 1992), followed by the introduction of tuition fees in 1998. While the concerns about these developments were continuously raised over the past decades (e.g., Ball, 2004; Brooks et al., 2016; Peters, 1992), universities continued to attract record student numbers and increasing levels of external funding (Collini, 2017), while at the same time receiving less support from the public purse (Statista, 2023). Through these changes, the fundamental structure of most universities remained largely unchanged. UK universities are legally registered as charities. Governance of most institutions is now structured around three levels: (1) a Central university office, the highest governing body; (2) several Colleges or Faculties, structured around broad-range disciplines (e.g., Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities); and (3) individual departments or schools. While there is some autonomy on each hierarchical level, departments or schools (including business schools) cannot be considered as standalone, independent institutions. It is important to note that a small number of influential universities in the UK employ different structures of governance (e.g., Oxford). However, for the purpose of this paper, the focus remains on this dominant structure.

Business schools represent a particularly fast-growing part of the UK university landscape over the past several decades. In 2021/2022, business and management programmes at UK business schools enrolled a record 19% of all students enrolled into UK higher education (HESA, 2023) across all disciplines, and the student interest for business and management does not show signs of declining any time soon. Business schools are somewhat outliers compared to other departments or schools within UK universities, not least because international accreditations relying on quantitative measures are widespread across the sector, with a so-called 'triple crown' of accreditations from AACSB, AMBA and EQUIS a strategic aim for many UK schools. Business schools are also driven by external professional accreditations. Professional bodies such as CIPD, CFA and CIMA govern not only the professional context of academic work, but are also introduced in the curriculum through market-friendly accreditations of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Outcomes of business school teaching and learning are further assessed on the global markets through an array of external rankings and ratings, each following different approaches and producing very different results (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). With publications still very much central to academic progression, business school research outputs are closely

governed by external journal ratings, most notably CABS Journal Guide and FT 50 despite recent interest in the proclamations against using citations or journal status as a proxy for research quality contained in the DORA – Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA, 2023). Governance by metrics, then, is omnipresent in UK business schools to an extent that the wider university is still to experience (McCarthy & Dragouni, 2021), and it is surprising that there is only limited empirical work on collegiality done in this context (Bissett & Saunders, 2015; Miles et al., 2015).

Such reliance on external validation across disciplines and academic work is not without its consequences for business school members. Fleming (2019) dubs the outcome one of ‘self-alienation’ from collegial governance; ‘playing the game’ necessarily requires a departure from collegiality. Similarly, De Vita and Case (2016) identify the process of alienation of academics from business schools, and advocate for changes in the business school cultures towards more inclusive decision-making process that would allow for a more collegiate environment. The situation, however, seems to be moving in an entirely different direction. For instance, Parker’s (2014) experiences from a European business school indicate that the voice and the capacity of academics to resist change are fundamentally eroded in the institutional push towards managerialism. In contrast to this example and similar evidence of struggle elsewhere, other influential work (e.g., Vidaver-Cohen, 2007, p. 285) more or less explicitly accepts the newly established regime as an unavoidable reality, and advises business school academics to ‘trust the school to support their goals for collegiality, professional development and intellectual growth’. Nevertheless, there seems to be an overarching consensus that collegiality and autonomy are vital not only to the ever-changing idea of higher education and its societal and political role, but also to the institutional and individual perspectives and relationships.

Here, it is important to note the temporal aspect of change. The rise of managerialism has been a topic of academic discourse for decades now. Over 30 years ago, Peters (1992, p. 128) warned about the fate of higher education under managerialism, arguing that the “preoccupations with the measurement of performance have the potential to change fundamentally the nature of institutions of higher education [and] will effectively cut across entrenched values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom, collegiality...” This process has been slowly unfolding for years, with new generations of academics continuously joining the ranks (Tight, 2014) at its different stages. This suggests that, as the role of collegiality transformed under the pressures of managerialism, the individual perspectives on the role and importance of collegiality in academic life also changed, at least to an extent. Thus, both the institution of collegiality and individual understandings of this have been evolving. Considering the speed of this process, we suggest that the recent COVID-19 pandemic represents a unique opportunity to study collegiality. The pandemic caused a fundamental disruption of institutional and individual routine that was both sudden and crippling across all aspects of academic activity. Its temporal dimension, as a moment of fundamental uncertainty for people, groups and organisations that have emerged and – for the most part – passed soon after, makes the COVID-19 pandemic a unique opportunity to understand what happens with collegiality along its vertical and horizontal

dimensions in a moment of sudden crisis and the collapse of norms and practices that while evolving were for decades supported, presented and accepted as an inevitable part of academic life.

In light of these discussions, and bearing in mind the institutional context of a UK business school, we ask the following research question: *What are the key considerations upon which the development of a collegiate environment is supported or constrained at the departmental level?*

METHODS

To explore this question, we focussed on an ABS, widely acknowledged as a leading UK school and part of a research-intensive university. The business school itself holds a range of recognised business and management education accreditations. Apart from exemplifying current trends in business school education discussed so far, this business school also displays a strategic focus on research and teaching with a broad societal impact. Such a focus has been variously labelled purpose-led, social/public good or public-value-driven. These strategies are increasingly discussed and implemented in UK business schools, and represent – at least in principle – a shift away from the outcomes-focussed business school model (see [CABS, 2021](#), for examples of institutions taking this approach to teaching, research and leadership). Thus, while this is a single case study, it is reflective of both wider sectoral trends amongst business schools and more recent ‘cutting-edge’ developments.

Our study is set against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, a context distinctive due to the extent of the disruption and its impact on organisational and individual routines. In the UK, the COVID-19 pandemic led to three lockdowns. The first lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020, only several weeks before the semester was ending for most UK universities. In our study, the initial lockdown remains the one that participants discussed the most, due to its sudden and fundamentally disruptive nature. Overnight, staff were told to stay at home and work from there as far as possible. In that period, all in-person teaching and research either stopped or moved online. Being close to the end of the semester, the uncertainty and disruption for most staff were time-bound, lasting only about three months before the summer vacation gave staff more time to adapt to new ways of teaching and doing research in the upcoming academic year. This in itself, of course, disrupted summer plans already challenged by the pandemic and further impacted on work-life balance.

While recent qualitative empirical studies on collegiality have predominately focussed either on a particular group within the higher education (e.g., [McGrath et al., 2019](#)), or had a broader sample of participants from different institutions (e.g., [Kligyte, 2021](#)), we interviewed 32 participants across academic and professional services posts, all working at the same institution. In light of our interest in a wide range of perspectives on collegiality within the higher education context and the changes emerging from COVID-19 pandemic, we focussed on the one hand on participants in managerial and leadership roles, and on the

other hand, early career academics and, notably, staff members who started their posts with ABS either immediately before, or during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighteen participants in the sample held leadership or academic administration roles, from line management of academic and professional services staff to members and chairs of different boards and other governing bodies within ABS. For the most part, these participants were senior academics and had a comparatively longer tenure with ABS. Five participants were new starters or colleagues who joined ABS during the pandemic. This group includes both early career academics and professional services staff. Finally, nine participants were those early in their careers, but who had been with ABS for longer. Some of them joined the School only recently before the pandemic took place, and others had more complex career paths, sometimes within ABS.

In each interview, we invited the participants to share their views on collegiality, the state and nature of collegiality at ABS and its sources, and the implications of the pandemic on their views, practices, expectations and ambitions. Considering the complexity of the term, we chose not to define or presuppose what collegiality means for our participants; instead, we invited them to share their views and thoughts on the meaning of the term. We also collected information on their position in the institution, and we discussed their career trajectories to date. This approach allowed for an analysis of participants' accounts across the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of collegiality, and to map out different perspectives on collegiality across the institution. All interviews took place between March and October 2022. This timing allowed the participants to reflect on the time of the pandemic from a point in which a large majority of the immediate pandemic-related challenges have recently either been resolved or gone, but are still very fresh in their memory.

Throughout the data collection and the analysis, the authors reflected on and discussed their position, considering that at the time of the crisis they all worked in the UK business school sector, but in very different positions within the academic hierarchy. During the pandemic, the first author was both in a postdoctoral role and in his first lectureship position as a newcomer to a new institution, and the second and third authors were established professors who have held leadership and senior academic roles. These conversations and reflections were not only relevant for building rapport with interviewees but also provided a suitable sounding board for findings emerging from the participants.

FINDINGS

The findings are structured around three key themes emerging from the data. First, we discuss the differences in the ways participants defined and perceived collegiality. Next, the reflections on the COVID-19 pandemic on collegiality are presented and discussed, taking into account the perspectives of our participants in different organisational positions and stages in their careers. Finally, we use three examples from practice in ABS that exemplify the emergence and maintenance of a collegiate environment through choice and effort: (1) challenges

brought by the changes in spatial arrangements of academic work, (2) the resulting changes to horizontal and vertical communication, and (3) changes to managing performance evaluations.

Perspectives on Collegiality

In line with the diversity in theorisations of collegiality in the literature and empirical experiences as explored in this volume, participants offered various definitions and perspectives on collegiality and its role in day-to-day academic activities. For many, collegiality was not a term that they thought about or indeed talked about much, and around a fifth of participants admitted to googling the term before the interview. For most, collegiality was first and foremost linked to community and culture, and it was seen as the responsibility of each individual staff member to build and support it. From this perspective, key to collegiality is prioritising the community over individual interest, as Participant 13 argues:

I think a simple definition I would give of collegiality is actions and activities you perform in the workplace that are meant to help and support others, or the community, or your group rather than are just instrumental to your own goals. So, collegiality could be being part of a workshop, interacting, creating the right atmosphere, mentoring colleagues, meeting colleagues informally to give advice, supporting them when they're not feeling well or experiencing difficulties and contributing to all the community aspects of your work in a way that may not be instrumental to you but you in a way, sacrifice your time or give your time for the community. (P13, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS⁵)

In this sense, collegiality is grounded within the context of interpersonal relationships and is linked to the immediate organisational environment. Concepts such as trust, personal and professional support, teamwork, communication and connection were seen to be integral to the collegiate environment:

I think my understanding would be just having that companionship with your peers really. Just trusting and believing in them and just having that good rapport with your peers, with the people you're working with. Because your rapport can be at an individual level, but the main fabric that ties all of them together is the vision that you want to achieve. So I think it's just sort of working together as a team and just building that internal rapport. (P2, research role, new starter)

Interestingly, those who discussed collegiality along these lines did not necessarily perceive the university as a naturally collegiate space. This was particularly evident for those who joined academia from non-academic backgrounds, for whom the collegiate environment in academia shared similarities with their experiences in industry, albeit with some fundamental differences:

Having had a previous career in an industry where so much is about supporting your colleagues [...] the situation in academia is that a lot of people become very used to working independently or not necessarily working in a collegiate way with their immediate colleagues. (...) If you are an academic whose role is necessarily [to have] a portfolio [...] then your immediate collegiate thing may not be necessarily completely within your institution because your research agenda could be further afield. (P26, academic role, new starter)

These various perspectives remind us that the university is a diverse institution, populated with a heterogeneous membership for whom the notion of collegiality may mean different things or indeed be more or less meaningful.

Reflections on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Collegiality

The increased uncertainty in the UK and globally surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for universities has in the case of ABS resulted in increased centralisation of decision-making at the college and central university levels, and additional bureaucratisation of processes across teaching, research and leadership activities. The participants' accounts testify to the extent of centralisation of decision-making that took place in the first instance when the pandemic hit:

The challenge of moving to online remote teaching [...] just required a whole new set of negotiations with colleagues, different expectations. Of course, a whole lot of uncertainty and a level of uncertainty that was never really resolved. I don't think it's resolved now either [...] So, people were looking for a simplification of what to expect. At no time did I feel that we really got to it, because we were responding to UK Government guidelines and the university guidelines. (P4, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

An important factor to take into consideration at the time of such disruption is the extent of the pressures felt by those in leadership positions. For participants who were in line management positions, the main focus was predominantly on supporting their colleagues, while at the same time negotiating a new set of expectations with them. At the departmental level, those in leadership positions have also found themselves between a rock and a hard place, with regular day-to-day activities completely and fundamentally disrupted and replaced by constantly changing pressures from above and below.

It was almost like you're suddenly part of this online emergency committee trying to kind of respond to this stuff. Because often, you know, senior management meetings are quite routine, you go through the same things each year. Now it's promotions, now it's performance reviews, now it's recruitment time. There's a nice rhythm to it. And then suddenly we're thrown into something where we're having to make plans with tremendous uncertainty, you know these apocalyptic noises coming from the university centre [regarding the financial uncertainties and their implications]. (P12, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

The centralisation of decision-making to the central university led to exasperation for those working in leadership positions within ABS. The extreme uncertainty surrounding the pandemic particularly in the early days required a rapid response across all aspects of university activities, and the school sought to contribute extensively to the central decision-making process. The final decisions from the centre, however, were not only made with little to no clarity, but they also clearly indicated the school's lack of influence:

Business school's voice was in the minority. So, I wasn't clear how decisions were being made. I was only aware [that] we were asked to feed in very quickly and then quite often [it] went in a different way anyway. You know, we're in the middle of a pandemic. The decisions were being made and we just had to roll with them, because we had so much to do in such a short period of time, in such weird and uncertain circumstances. Then, I think as it's moved on, I think College is retaining a lot of that decision-making power, and the Centre as well. (P15, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

ABS is a good example of the trend experienced by UK business schools over the past few decades with regard to increases in student numbers and the

expectations they have from their business and management education experience. ABS was clearly focussed on supporting students through the pandemic and providing them with quality education and care. However, this focus exposed some systemic challenges business school academics face, particularly in relation to workloads.

The intensity of work changed and the length of work changed. For most people it was a real struggle and was really quite hard. That happened in a context where we had seen rising numbers of students anyway within the school. So, in some ways you have a bit of a perfect storm, because you have increasing workload anyway. A workload allocation model that showed most people had a hundred percent before we even got to Covid-19. [...] teaching became even more transactional [...] more discussions about, well, how many hours allocated for that, and how many hours allocated for that. (P4, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

Considering it led to increased bureaucratisation, the pandemic has also sparked some interest in alternative perspectives on institutional systematisation of work processes and the common understanding of what is appropriate across the wider institution. Some participants who experienced the increase in bureaucratisation began to question the appropriateness of such processes and the resulting effect on the entire community and a shared perspective on the institutional mission.

So we do have to have bureaucracy and paperwork to run ourselves as an organisation, but generally speaking we try to keep that as an absolute minimum for everybody's sake within a school. You know, we don't want to have unnecessary paperwork. Personally I think, and the pandemic has not helped with this, our central professional services teams are further from the schools than they have ever been; organisationally, mentally, and emotionally. [...] If we have to fill in paperwork, that's okay, it's not a problem. if we have to go through processes and we all agree it's appropriate let's do that. [...] But the purpose of the institution is not to produce and fill in paperwork and I think that's something that we need to think about, how do we reconnect all the bits to the university so we feel like one team all supporting the academic mission rather than one team saying, 'You have to do this it's good governance' and we are saying, 'Well it might well be good governance but it's effectively stopping us doing this stuff and this stuff is what we do'. So we need to have a conversation about how we do the stuff and wrap good governance around it. (P9, leadership role, professional services, over 10 years at ABS)

A group that was particularly affected by the pandemic is those who began their posts with ABS either immediately prior, or during the pandemic as, for most, a new post also meant a new personal and professional environment. Those in line management positions were very much aware of these challenges and made efforts to include new starters in the community. While these efforts were appreciated, many of our participants who were new starters with ABS still felt disconnected from its community.

I think that sense of an overall, whole tribe with a sense of cohesion has been definitely weakened. We had four people who joined us just before the pandemic struck and so literally it was like, 'Okay, here's your office, go home for two years'. You know, they were new to the city, didn't know anybody, so it was very tough for them. (P1, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

I do [feel a part of ABS], but not fully. I certainly feel part of my team. I certainly feel like I can do my job. I still feel on the fringe of the school. I know what's going on, I know who people are, but I haven't- I've joined in on activities to immerse myself within the school, but because of the restrictions with the pandemic, I still feel like it will take another year or so before I feel I fully fit within the school. (P10, professional services, new starter).

The contributions from various members of the school demonstrate both the significance of the impact of the pandemic but also variously reveal certain tensions within the wider organisational arrangements of ABS and how individuals both experienced and responded to these.

Building and Maintaining a Collegiate Environment

So far, the findings show how the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the institutional and individual priorities and processes on multiple institutional levels, and how these changes affect the formation of a collegiate environment. In the last part of the findings, we further elaborate on how collegial environment is dependent on the choices and efforts made by both individual academics and academic leaders within ‘collegiate pockets’ (Lazega, 2020) who combine to sustain a departmental ‘island of collegiality’ within the wider university structure. We focus on three distinctive examples in which structural obstacles to a collegiate environment brought by the pandemic have been recognised and proactively dealt with. First, we show the extent to which the loss of physical space for interpersonal communication has been challenging for maintaining a collegiate environment. Following this, we discuss the ways in which both the horizontal and vertical communication shifted to accommodate the lost opportunity to share the same physical space. Finally, we use the example of changes made to yearly performance reviews as a managerial response to increased career pressures felt by academic staff, prioritising empathy and care in an effort to sustain a collegiate environment at the time of crisis.

Importance of Space for Sustaining a Collegial Environment

The limits on using office spaces and lecture theatres during the pandemic came up repeatedly as one of the key factors influencing the participants’ perception of collegiality. In contrast to professional services staff who exclusively worked from office spaces prior to the pandemic, working remotely was not necessarily novel for those in academic posts:

I think lockdown proved that everybody could work from home. In the past, our professional services were told, ‘You cannot do your job at home’. Now we’ve done that for two years, so everybody knows it can be done. (P14, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

For ABS management, spatial arrangements of work have become a matter of strategic importance:

The building itself suddenly becomes a player in the whole pandemic game, especially as you’re moving towards teaching, so how the facilities are managed becomes important. [Space] was seen as nowhere near strategic until we started having to do the risk assessments for the buildings, get all the one-way systems in, work out how many people we could get in a particular teaching space, work out which teaching spaces had good enough ventilation to be used for classes. And often doing this as the rules from the government are shifting as you’re going along. (P1, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

Arguably, the most immediate shift occurred in the context of moving teaching and learning from physical to virtual environments. The extent and the urgency of

this move resulted in stronger collegiate support between colleagues who shared their experiences with others and self-organised to help each other and ‘keep the show on the road’. Other activities, such as formal meetings and boards, all shifted to online communication channels as well. As the uncertainties and concerns regarding the pandemic eased, a sense remained that some of these activities should stay online going forward, either because they seem more efficient, or to alleviate unease for those who still have reservations towards in-person meetings. That said, there was a strong sense that online environments provide much less opportunities for building community and collegiate environment.

I think that basically what we’re going to move to is some sort of hybridised model, which is a mix of digital and in-person. I don’t see us going back to the kind of pre-pandemic model in all its manifestation. I just don’t see that happening. I think we will end up with, as I say, a mixed model. I hope that that will allow for more in-person kind of contact, and more in-person kind of interaction. I genuinely miss, as I know lots of people do, the kind of cut-and-thrust of being in a seminar room together, and kind of debating the toss about whatever we’re looking at. And I think it’s, I think we’ve got used to [digital means of communication], but I wouldn’t want to see them replace in-person. (P11, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

In light of the nature and scope of restrictions dictated by the UK government, new rules for using spaces for teaching and research were established centrally, with no input from ABS. As in many other university spaces, access to building was restricted and only allowed at certain times to collect belongings from offices. The restrictions in use of the building were particularly challenging for early career colleagues and those who started with ABS immediately before or during the pandemic.

We hired a few new colleagues during the pandemic or just before and I haven’t spoken to them for a year or two or more. I’ve seen them in meetings, there was an interaction at research seminars but I didn’t have a conversation, which I would have 100% in the building. I’d knock at the door. I’m lucky because I sit in an office where there’s always people coming and going, and that’s my chance to meet them. And I felt bad. I was asking myself, ‘Should I get in touch?’ They didn’t, and I didn’t. (P13, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

As previously mentioned, participants shared the view that community and collegiate environment is built on interpersonal communication and interaction since those moments, such as an informal chat or an impromptu conversation over coffee, were not replicable in the virtual environment. Not being able to communicate with colleagues in person was a big obstacle for the inclusion of newcomers in the culture at ABS, as well as for the development of collegiate environment.

Horizontal Communication in Support of Collegiate Environment

With buildings closed and most activities moved online, the way staff communicated also underwent a significant change. As with spatial arrangements, many academic staff had previously been exposed to online communication due to international research collaborations and other activities. Still, the sudden shift of all academic activities online was stressful for most, and particularly for those early in their careers and new starters:

It’s been a bit of a baptism by fire. I’m module leader on two third year modules that I’ve come in to cover. So, I’ve been trying to work out what I think, what this means, what are the

processes and practises. But it just means I'm sending out a lot of emails where I'd have loved to just get to know the people behind the email. Hopefully they wouldn't think I'm such a pain – oh, it's me again, I need to know this now. So it just makes it really stressful – instead of building bridges you feel you're burning them. (P5, academic role, new starter)

Along the formal communication channels such as Zoom and Teams, people also communicated informally, with WhatsApp the favourite channel used. Early on in the lockdown, colleagues connected to discuss the rapidly changing context of the pandemic, changes in institutional response to the pandemic and its effect on students, and also to support each other at the time where not everyone had the luxury of being supported outside of the workplace. However, as the new processes and expectations settled, the need for such support seems to have predominately disappeared.

We had a WhatsApp group, and we'd have virtual coffee mornings every week. And to start with, you'd get about 25, 30 people showing up with their kids, and the WhatsApp group was really active. And then once everyone just got into the new way of working, we got rid of the WhatsApp group now. The coffee mornings, we don't bother holding them because you might get two people turning up. I think people needed it because they were initially a little bit shaken. [...] That was at a time when you were not really even allowed to leave the house for long. And I think that people just felt that need to kind of connect. (P17, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

Vertical Communication in Support of Collegiate Environment

A key source of information about new ways of working and the institutional response to the pandemic was the weekly email circulated by ABS leadership. The importance of the content and the positive and reassuring tone of these emails is overwhelmingly shared among participants, by those in leadership positions who were contributing to these emails as well as those who received them as staff members, early career colleagues, and new starters. At the same time, regular email updates were also shared by college and university management directly to staff.

The Dean does have these weekly update emails. I've always felt them to be relatively informal and relatively supportive. I've never really had a problem with what the Dean is saying or the tone of them, I find it difficult to characterize what the tone is. Let's just say that, it's fine. I don't feel that there's too much dictatorship going on or something. The other communication we get is directly from the vice-chancellor. That's a different kettle of fish entirely. [Those emails are] formal and very proper and avoiding anything remotely controversial. Mostly, I don't read them anymore. (P28, academic role, more than 5 years at ABS)

The way key messages were shaped by the ABS management was overwhelmingly considered a vital element for building cohesion across the school. With constantly changing rules and regulations coming from the centre, it was seen as important by the Dean and senior management to prioritise the message of well-being and care, as opposed to merely instruct and command.

At a school level, we have what I think is an amazing line of communication. The Dean sends out a weekly roundup. I know that they put an awful lot of thought into the wording of those weekly messages so that people didn't get anxious or didn't feel, 'Got to do this, got to do that'. (P14, leadership role, more than 10 years at ABS)

When discussing the nature and extent of communication between individual staff members and central university, those who attended webinars and discussion

panels witnessed an interesting trend. These meetings were used to convey key messages outlined in formal email correspondence and, in principle, allowed staff members to voice their concerns and ask questions. However, as participant 14 experienced, these sessions rarely allowed answers.

Sometimes the sessions were so boring, you actually forgot what you were listening to. I logged into every single one of them, and it was just these scripted instructions [being] read, and we're doing this and we're doing that. Very detailed and, as I said, very dry. There would be chat down the side with people's names on, and people would ask direct questions that just weren't answered. They were just skirted over. They obviously had somebody who was monitoring the chat, and then asking the speaker questions but ignoring the really pertinent questions that people were asking. I was quite surprised that people put their names to some of those questions. It was very public, there were hundreds and hundreds of people on these calls and they weren't shy to put their names on some of the questions, which I found quite interesting. Sometimes the tones of the questions were very critical [...] and sometimes I thought, 'Whoa, that's so brave of you to ask the question. I'd like to ask that question but I wouldn't dare put my name in this chat'. I'm a coward [laughter]. (P14, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

Those, however, who engaged in the conversation within ABS had a startlingly different experience. As previously discussed, many decisions were made centrally and with input by ABS, but with little insights into the decision-making process, even for those in management roles. With this in mind and the message of care and community coming directly from the Dean and the school management, there was a sense of community present at ABS. People felt empowered to voice their views and concerns without feeling either alienated or dismissed, while for the most part fully aware that it might not have an effect at all on the decision-making outcome.

Yes. I do think that we had a voice. If we wanted to raise something we could. I do think that there were people there that would listen. As to how much they could actually do is a very different matter but, that being said, I still feel like if I wanted to raise something in a school meeting there was a platform for me to do that and it would be heard. It wouldn't be shut down or dismissed. I think that's especially important because I'm a member of professional services staff and there is still a feeling that there's a difference between academic and professional services staff. (P10, professional services, new starter)

The communication strategy adopted by ABS leadership in an effort to promote a collegiate environment, then, required them to reveal their own limited influence on decision-making processes along the vertical dimension of collegiality. This revelation, however, also created moments of ambiguity for those in line management roles, especially when coupled with a dark and ominous tone of communication coming from the central university level about the impact of the pandemic on the institution:

Then, suddenly, we were all at home and connecting via Zoom. And what I found was, because I had very good intentions at the beginning, I thought, well, I'll make sure I give everybody a kind of Zoom catch-up every little while. But the first couple of people I did, I got to the end of the conversation, I said, 'Okay, well, better be going now' And they sort of went, 'Oh, is that it, then?' And I said, 'Yes'. They said, 'Phew, I thought there was something you had to talk to me about. I've been sitting here on tenterhooks waiting for you to get to the bad news'. So, I kind of gave up doing that because I found, even when I told people, 'Don't panic, it's just a chat', they still kept waiting for the thing they had to be talked to about. Which is not even my management style anyway but somehow that just seemed to be the sense, once you are making a formal

arrangement to have a conversation, as opposed to just bumping into them in the kitchen, it was something to worry about! So, it actually kind of discouraged me a bit. (P1, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

This gives us an important insight into the challenging, emotionally demanding and complex work needed from academic leaders seeking to construct and maintain horizontal collegiality in a wider context where vertical collegiality beyond the school has broken down and, in this instance, where the centre is warning of major implications from financial losses due to the pandemic.

Yearly Performance Reviews

Along with threats to employment security, the pandemic was also perceived as having a significant negative impact on what were considered as key factors influencing a 'successful' career trajectory, and was a source of worry particularly for those earlier in their academic careers. With research activities and data collection processes effectively stopped, the evaluation of performance through research outputs such as journal articles has become a significant challenge:

All of these opportunities that have been missed, we cannot account what the impact to our careers is going to be. We might have missed journal reviews, we might have missed collaboration opportunities. We definitely have missed networking [...] I think that we are not going to have the same career development [...] It's like when there was economic crisis, there was a lot of research on how people who started in a lower position, it took them a longer time to climb to the same status level. I think that for us or in any other profession, they would probably have had the same experience hitting the pandemic at different levels. (P31, academic role, new starter)

Like most UK business schools, ABS conducted yearly reviews of individual performance, structured around a one-to-one conversation with the line manager about the activities conducted in the previous year, and discussing plans for next year and future career development. The pressures brought by the pandemic were recognised by ABS management, and a decision was made at the school level to make the process optional during the pandemic with staff members choosing whether they wished to discuss their performance and personal development. The structure of the conversation also changed, from key discussion points focussed on research, teaching and leadership activities, to a dominant theme of wellbeing, care and organisational support:

We offered three levels [of yearly reviews]. You could have the full blown one with the usual questions and forms, you could have just a bit of a cut down version where it's a discussion around a list of stuff you've done, or you could literally just have a chat over a virtual coffee. Or you could have nothing. So, there was effectively four levels people could choose from, and different people did choose different things. I mean some of the people thinking about promotion wanted the full bells and whistles [process] because they felt that would help them prepare strategically for that. Other people, you know, it's much more like, 'I'm ticking over as best as I can, so we'll just have a quick chat and carry on'. And the forms were deliberately changed as well. So, whereas the usual [process] forms ask you for progress against objectives, that was completely cut this time, it was just literally, 'What have you done in the last year?' And whether or not it was what you planned to do or not. So, yes, there was a very deliberate policy, from the school level, that we followed down through the sections. (P1, leadership role, over 10 years at ABS)

This particular example of how ABS leaders sought to ameliorate both the impact of the pandemic and the lack of sensitivity on the part of the centre is noteworthy in that it is manifest through subversion of the formal bureaucratic processes of management. At the same time, it casts some light on the agency that local leaders may be able to exercise in sustaining a collegiate environment within their own school.

DISCUSSION

Our aim in this paper was to explore key factors of influence that sustain or hinder a collegiate environment in the context of UK universities. Our focus is placed on a business school, an institution within the higher education system in which managerialist approaches are deeply embedded in academic activities and academic life (Ghoshal, 2005; Parker, 2014). Our case is a well-established, large UK business school which makes a major financial contribution to its university and has a strong reputation supported by external accreditations, but which is also characterised by a strategic focus on teaching and research activities with a wide societal impact; a focus that is becoming increasingly visible across UK business schools (CABS, 2021). This makes our case an interesting one, as it provides us an insight into the interplay between a managerialist focus on cost efficiency and delivery of financial and other measurable outcomes, alongside more salient values linked to wider social issues. When considering the current literature on collegiality, we show the extent to which the tensions between the increase in managerialism and bureaucracy in the UK higher education sector – and in business schools in particular – have been extensively discussed (De Vita & Case, 2016; Fleming, 2019; Parker, 2014). While we are seeing fundamental changes in governance of higher education institutions as a result of increased managerialism in decision-making and bureaucratisation of processes, those changes have been gradual. As a result, it is important to recognise the extent to which the concept of collegiality changes its meaning across different generations of academics and others working in the higher education context. Tight (2014) offered a similar argument when suggesting that we should reconsider thinking about managerialism and collegiality as concepts necessarily in tension. Here, the recent COVID-19 pandemic provides a unique opportunity to explore collegiality in a moment; in a moment of distress, disruption, and a breakdown of some of the fundamental managerialist principles upon which higher education is increasingly governed, at least in the UK. The pandemic has had an effect on every single aspect of academic work and institutional governance, making it an excellent empirical setting for getting a deeper insight into what collegiality means to both staff and leadership. As a result, our sample is quite diverse in terms of career position, role within ABS, and tenure. This allowed us to explore collegiality on multiple levels within the school and gain a deeper understanding of collegiality and its perceived role in academic life ‘at the chalk face’ or the computer screen as it became during the pandemic.

Our findings show the extent to which collegiality is both elusive and key to academic life. For many, collegiality is very much understood along its horizontal

dimension: collegiality is equated to interpersonal relationships, trust and support (Kligyte & Barrie, 2014). This is particularly relevant in core academic activities such as teaching, where the extent and speed of change that was required during the pandemic were both remarkable and extremely challenging. From this perspective, ABS was almost unanimously considered a collegiate place due to the positive experiences people had with receiving support from their peers, both in professional and personal matters. It is important, however, to recognise that such collegial behaviour, intrinsically linked to the shared institutional and professional context (Denis et al., 2019; Hatfield, 2006), does not represent collegiality in its wider sense as a system of governance nor as institutional *modus operandi*. Even if the focus is kept on the horizontal aspects of collegiality alone, there were significant tensions and challenges emerging in our participants' accounts. This was particularly the case with those who joined ABS recently before or during the pandemic and who, while feeling supported by their new colleagues, still struggled to truly become a part of the community. It is precisely here where the horizontal dimension of collegiality can be seen in its complexity; collegial behaviour is only part of what makes for a collegial environment. Another benefit of our focus on the pandemic is the fundamental shift in space and place of academic work. Being together in the same physical space has come up in the data as an important condition for building and maintaining a collegiate environment. As the hybrid modes of work became more established in the aftermath of the pandemic, there is a clear sense that virtual environments are viewed as suitable or even desirable for conducting formal, bureaucratic processes. Such environments, however, could not support a collegiate environment. With both colleagues and line managers working hard to explore options such as informal WhatsApp groups informal coffee breaks, these were all limited in emulating an in-person, informal community and communication.

Another important feature of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on higher education in the UK was a strong shift towards increased bureaucratisation of teaching and research practices, and centralisation of decision-making on the university level. This is not surprising, considering the extent of the crisis and the impact it had on the entire institution and indeed sector. This, however, also created a number of challenges and has further emphasised some of the key contentions with managerialist approaches to governance within higher education. The pandemic provided an opportunity for managers to further draw the decision-making power into the centre, leading to a further reduction of the capabilities of academics and other staff members to have a say in matters of governance and operations. The extent to which decision-making was opaque becomes clear in the accounts of those in leadership positions, who were frustrated by a process in which they were invited to feed in perspectives from the school, and then required to execute commands with no understanding of whether their voices were heard or had an impact at all. While the narrative of a crisis was supportive of a more centralised approach – particularly in areas such as the use of physical space, which was governed by central government – there is a sense of concern that the pandemic-induced centralisation is here to stay beyond the crisis.

This raises a question of resistance. The vertical dimension of collegiality, that is, collegiate decision-making, or a meaningful voice of staff and students in governing the institution, have been only sporadically recognised by our participants as a feature of academic life. In line with Tight's (2014) argument, senior academics in our study seem to have been more interested and aware of the vertical dimension of collegiality than their early career colleagues. It is, however, not helpful to draw a straight line between seniority and collegiality; senior colleagues tend to hold leadership positions that require them to reflect on collegiality and collegiate environment. At the same time, there were many junior colleagues who have shown a strong interest in collegiality and were frustrated with its erosion during and particularly after the pandemic. For instance, the experiences of those who engaged with the opportunities to make their voices heard, which were provided by the central university, have largely been disheartened by the lack of inclusion, and have for the most part experienced 'information dump', as opposed to a two-way conversation. With questions not only unanswered, but also ignored and dismissed, any sense of inclusion in the decision-making was eroded.

Our focus on the department level also allows us to unpack some of the complexities in the roles of academic leaders in regard to collegiality, highlighting the choice and effort made to ameliorate aspects of the lack of vertical governance at the central university level and its negative consequences. For example, ABS and its management took a different approach in the nature of communication and in terms of staff inclusion. The information received or, in some cases, negotiated with the centre was carefully crafted to emphasise the messages of community and care. The Dean of ABS was particularly praised for their focus on employees and their wellbeing during the pandemic. These contrasting experiences show the extent to which collegial environment is defined by not only the content, but also the *tone* of top-down communication. In essence, the information provided by the central university and the school was very similar. However, in the case of ABS, a constructive and participatory tone of the communication from academic leaders across the school sustained the sense of community, while a tone of caring and genuine care for individual well-being – not necessarily a feature of the communication from the centre – sustained a sense of togetherness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS – COLLEGIALITY AS AN OUTCOME OF CHOICE AND EFFORT

Throughout this paper, we have argued for the importance of perception on collegiality both as a form of governance and as a function of interpersonal relationships and professional norms and conventions. For most in the sample group, collegiality was not necessarily considered an individual choice, particularly along its vertical dimension. Perhaps due to the extent of disruption caused by COVID-19, there was little sense in the data of genuine passion towards collegiate modes of governance and decision-making. We, however, suggest that choice and

effort are key to collegiality; an institutional choice and effort to develop and project and/or protect values and principles that support the emergence of collegiality, and the individual choice to, in turn, embrace and put effort into building interpersonal relationships and professional identities. The importance and need for individual scholars and academic leaders to work together on building and sustaining a collegiate environment is only further emphasised by the lack of recognition of collegiality as an intrinsic and inevitable part of the UK university environment.

With the case of ABS, we show the extent to which a collegial environment relies on actions within collegiate pockets (Lazega, 2020) which, while discussed and shaped by those working at the management level, are not grounded in managerialist norms; ABS leadership *chose* a different approach, one based on the emphasis of care for individuals and the community. Moreover, ABS leadership put substantial *effort* in sustaining a collegiate environment across a range of managerial roles and collegiate pockets. While the pandemic represents a brief albeit highly disruptive moment in time, lessons learnt from it are very much applicable on a continuous basis, at times of ‘business-as-usual’. This choice and effort may not necessarily lead to significant and immediate changes towards more collegiality and inclusion of individuals in the decision-making processes across the wider institution. It does, however, provide grounds for establishment of the department as an ‘*island of collegiality*’, supporting the resistance to entrenched managerialist values within the university hierarchy.

For individuals, the choice exists in a complex network of actions and interests that form each individual academic career. Business schools only represent one of many platforms for career development, and individuals need to manage their efforts carefully. The choice towards collegiality, therefore, needs to be made not only within individual business schools and universities; it must be made within a wider ecosystem, from school, programme and course accreditations and rankings, to governance of research activities such as grants, publications and other outputs of academic work. Only then, we can anticipate current and new academics and other staff to proactively seek inclusion and be able to expect their voices to be heard.

NOTES

1. See Eriksson-Zetterquest and Sahlin’s Introduction (2023, Vol. 87).
2. See Sahlin and Eriksson-Zetterquist’s Introduction (2023, Vol. 86).
3. See Kosmützky and Krücken’s paper (2023, Vol. 86) on competition and cooperation in academia, in which they show how the two concepts are closely interconnected.
4. Hull (2006) explains Workload Allocation Models as tools for categorisation of academic activities and their measurement against a standardised unit of measure, with an aim to ensure fairness in distribution of work across academic staff. Teaching, research and administration/leadership are the most commonly used categories of academic work in UK universities.
5. In presenting the findings in this paper, we label each quote with relevant information about the participants’ positions in ABS. Each participant is labelled with a P1–P32, length of time in employment with ABS (new starter, less than 2 years; less than 5 years; over

5 years; and over 10 years) and their primary role: academic/research – those in research roles only/ professional services – support roles to academic activities/leadership – those in managerial roles.

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