

## Developing organizational vision, mission and values – can we be inclusive, diverse and consultative?

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I read with great interest the article by Pandya *et al.* entitled 'Lessons learned in development of vision and mission statements'.<sup>1</sup> The authors have attempted to be inclusive, and involved faculty members and other stakeholders in the process. Details on the various stakeholders involved, the selection of participants, and how the sample was representative of the employee population would be helpful. The different institutes might also have considered regulatory guidelines while developing individual statements. How was the vision and mission of the trust translated to individual institutes?

The development of vision and mission statements is not often addressed during faculty development and health professions education courses. Most often these already exist by the time the faculty join a university or institution. These statements are important for the documentation of the development of educational programs and modules. Accreditation, especially in a Western context, starts from the vision and mission and how this is translated into the university's daily work and educational programs.

Unfortunately, questions on the translation of these statements into practice may also be difficult to answer, as often these statements have come from 'above' and were not created through group effort and involvement. When I was a faculty member in Nepal, vision and mission did not receive much attention. In the Caribbean, the accrediting agencies emphasize these, and I had to navigate a steep learning curve as I was the Chair of the Curriculum Committee. The authors have emphasized the difference between vision and mission, and this can be confusing for those involved in the process for the

first time. A paper by Horwath and Drucker clearly defines vision, mission and values that the authors refer to.<sup>2</sup> These are often created by senior management and a large percentage of employees are unaware of them.<sup>3</sup> The authors suggest that these statements should be periodically examined, and modified where necessary, and used to guide daily operations.

These vision and mission statements are often created at the birth of an institution, or when the ownership and management changes. Many universities are now required to create a profit and, at least, be self-sustaining. International students and self-financing students are key sources of revenue. Vision and mission statements and international excellence (often reflected through ranking in different surveys) are used to market the university to potential students.<sup>4</sup> The influence of the pursuit of profit and marketability on vision and mission statements is a topic worthy of research. Another thing I have noted is that those involved in creating the vision and mission content may often not be representative of the employee population—many groups may have minimal involvement, and the least senior group of employees usually tend to be excluded from this process. Should these statements be translated into different languages so that they are understood more widely? How can employees and consumers access these statements? In most universities, this may be through the institutional website.

The method described by the authors will be helpful for institutions, though the process may need to be contextualized to individual settings. Further discussions and exchange of ideas may be required.

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