

# **The barriers to academic engagement with enterprise: a social scientist's perspective.**

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# Introduction: knowledge transfer and the changing university

- multi-task organisations
- transformed small, elite institutions Delanty, G. (2001)
- institutionalisation of university-industry linkage Berman, J. (2008)
- deliver social and economic impact; Department of business, industry and society, (2009)

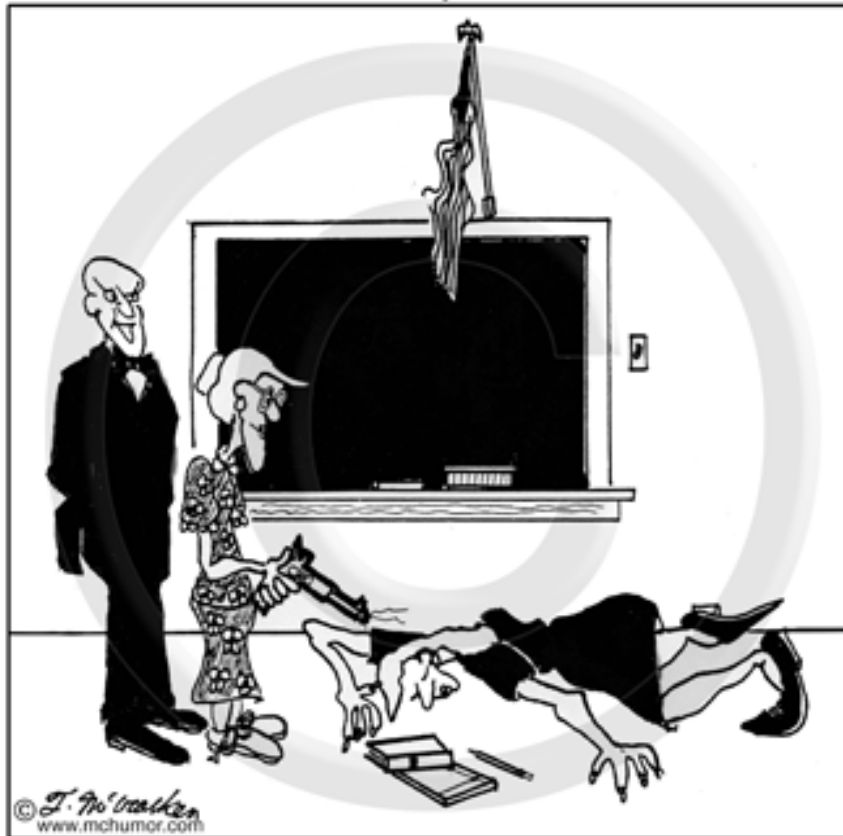


Wilhelm von Humboldt,  
founder of  
Berlin  
University

# Changing role for academics?

- **A threat to academic autonomy?** Francis-Smythe, J. (2008).
  - more than teaching and research
  - a revised identity
  - the academic in collaborative partnerships with not only commercial but social enterprises including non-governmental organisations, charities and other not-for-profit organisations
  - a clear and acceptable definition of academic enterprise; what exactly it constitutes ..

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# Knowledge transfer and the Social Sciences

- commercialisation of research and profit-led investment
- the “profit-making” academic overrides the value of the academic as scholar and intellectual.
- community and social benefit objectives

# KTPs for Social Enterprises

- Knowledge transfer partnerships
- Technology Strategy Board
- selects projects on the basis of potential financial and business-relevant impact for the company
- efficiency savings
- social and cultural benefits in the locality and region.

# Barriers to academic engagement

- language of knowledge transfer not only acts as a potential deterrent to social organisations but also to non-business academics who find the business context and language equally off-putting.
- both the language and framework of the KTP are clearly targeted at firms from a profit-oriented perspective, requiring detailed management and year-end accounts from the company partner, and making it difficult for not-for-profit organisations to fit the model

# potential barriers to do with identity

- If one's identity as an academic includes a strong philosophical and ethical affinity with social organisations, charities, social movements, or indeed any non-profit-making field of expertise, then one is unlikely to seek networking opportunities or collaboration with business executives, with whom one shares little in common.
- Indeed, some colleagues in my own academic and largely social sciences department strongly resist what they consider “going over to the dark side” such is their identification with an anti-business perspective (albeit an imaginary one).

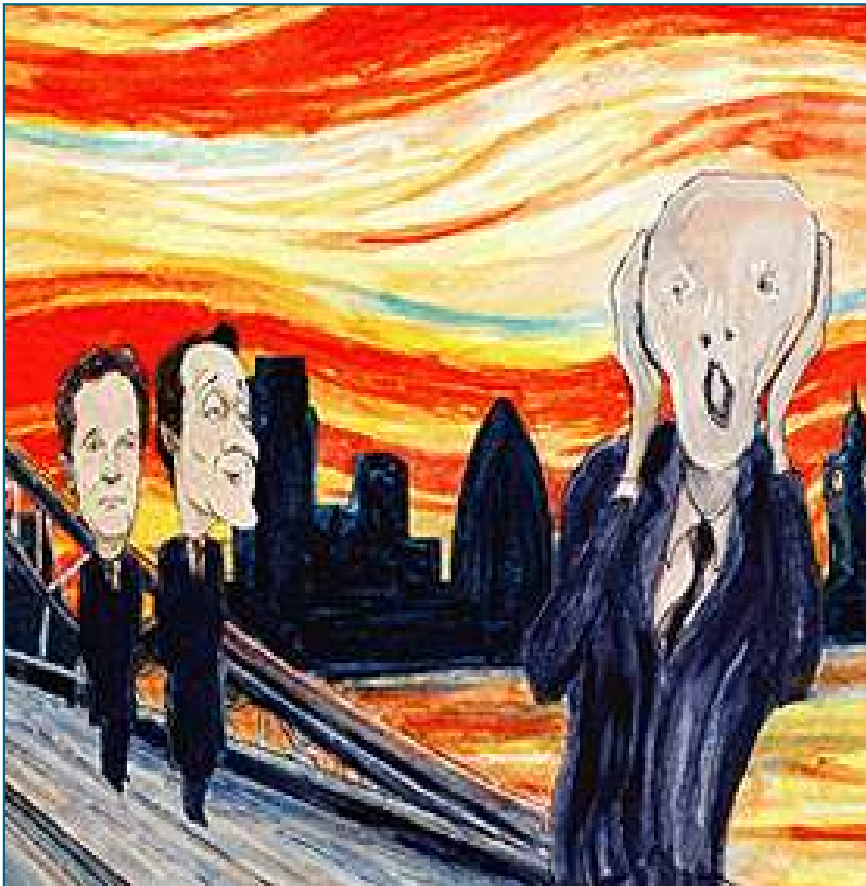


# Sustaining collaborative partnerships

- Literature on industry-university relationships
- knowledge transfer office as a bridge
- separate culture and practice
- regulation and bureaucracy
- already a relationship between the two partners ?
- dedication of knowledge transfer professionals that sustains relationships at times of stress.

# RECIPE FOR SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

?



## REMOVE ACADEMIC BARRIERS

- REWARD STRUCTURE
- REDUCE BUREAUCRACY
- REPUTATION
- AUTONOMY
- EMPHASISE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
- REVISE ROLES

# Conclusions

- WHAT ARE UNIVERSITIES FOR?
- Convincing academics
- “applied” research .....and the REF
- Support from research councils eg ESRC
- Knowledge transfer for teachers
- Reputations – academics and ivory towers

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