

**Including Values in leadership training for staff and students**

Martina Darmannin, Member of the MCO Governing Council &  
John Davies, MCO Ambassador

**Introductory note****Context**

The Magna Charta Universitatum and MCU 2020 set out fundamental values and principles for higher education. Approaching 1000 universities have now signified their support for them and their intention to operate in accordance with them. The Magna Charta Observatory (MCO) has worked in various ways since 2000 to promote and protect these values. In 2018 it launched the Living Values project which was designed to enable universities to review their values, assess the extent to which they were 'owned' and being implemented and take action where there were differences between espousal and action. In 2023 the MCO launched a research project 'the responsive and responsible university' to understand and share with others how universities were putting the MCU values into practices, the challenges that they were facing and opportunities which were provided.

The MCO works primarily with university leaders and global or regional student organisations who play a role in providing leadership training. The subject of this world café table is to explore what might be done to ensure that an understanding of these values and how they operate in practice might be incorporated into, or play a larger part in, the development of university and student union leaders.

**Students**

The Global Student Forum (GSF) organises academic leadership training on a weekly basis as part of a certified programme supported by the University of Austin.

The European Students' Union offers a range of training and capacity building opportunities including specific training in quality assurance. Its constituent unions run their own programmes for newly elected student leaders. Both are supported by their alumni network.

**University leaders**

Training is provided by different bodies for leaders at or aspiring to reach certain specific levels, ultimately the level of rector. Provision ranges from certified postgraduate programmes to more specific and shorter executive training provided either by external bodies or universities internally. This can be relatively general or related to specific programmes of change for which the university is building capacity. Some of these are action-oriented.

**Values to the fore**

The MCO, although it has a large global following, has a small central staff (2FTE) and works with volunteer members of its Council and ambassadors to fulfil its responsibilities. Signatory universities and its global partners also provide opportunities and support in various ways. The MCO therefore needs to be very strategic about how its resources are deployed.

The thinking is that if the MCO could have an influence on the development of university and student leaders, they could become 'agents' for putting the fundamental values of the MCU into practice and enabling universities to live by them.

The question is how might this best be done in a way that is both effective and cost effective?

### **Some thoughts**

The MCO has resources ranging from the MCU itself to the materials produced for and through the Living Values project. It has case studies from the Living Values project. It is expecting case studies to be produced from the action research under the responsive and responsible research project.

It currently uses these materials in conferences and workshops by invitation from various bodies.

What would be necessary to prepare these resources in a form that could be included in materials for existing programme?

To what extent might the MCO become involved in the delivery of pilot programmes that contain an emphasis on values?

Is there a role for the MCO in training trainers who might equip more local specialists who deliver training?

### **Some challenges**

The sheer number and variety of programmes.

Identifying where and how to have impact.

What cascade arrangements might be available and effective?

Embedding the training and implementation into universities.

Supporting other mechanisms, such as a codes of values, behaviour, ethics etc which look at desired behaviours to implement the values.

How might students and staff be encouraged to work together on refining and developing the impact of values in universities?

Which modes of studies, in person or on-line, might be most helpful?

How do we evaluate what impact the initiative is having?

How to fund this work.

### **First steps**

Is there a current programme or initiative that might become a pilot for the MCO?

### **Some questions**

What would student leaders find helpful?

What would potential rectors and senior leaders find helpful?

What would universities find helpful?

Where to start?

How best to take this forward?

How to fund it?

How to measure impact?