

In focus



This issue of *Global Focus* stresses two distinct but interlinked themes: the current state of business schools as businesses; and the challenges of producing a new generation of business leaders.

In typical forthright form, Kai Peters, chief executive of Ashridge Management College in Britain (page 8), argues the case that the current business model for business schools is not sustainable and could be particularly damaging to their contribution to executive education (a key area in producing business leaders).

"I think the debate that has to happen in business schools is really around how much teaching is realistic from faculty – and it surely has to be more than we are doing now because it's just not financeable," he says. "You can't run a business school without a business model but we seem to be trying."

On page 14, Fernando Fragueiro and Howard Thomas (respectively of IAE Business School in Argentina and Lee Kong Chiang School of Business in Singapore) take this issue further, specifically addressing the question of how business schools deans can lead their organisations forward in what they describe as an era of persistent and emerging challenges and global and local tensions.

One way that business schools may address these challenges in the future is through rationalisation – merging with or acquiring each other. Many academics may react with horror but Michel Kalika, Dean of EM Strasbourg Business School in France, gives a practical and pragmatic account (page 34) of how his institution emerged successfully from a complex merger.

Equally practical is the interview on page 18 with Nadine Lemaitre, who has headed GDF SUEZ University (one of the world's largest and successful corporate universities) since its inception a decade ago. It, too, has undergone many mergers and changes, though this time at the corporate rather than academic level, but has stuck to its original mission of preparing an integrated cadre of leaders for a diverse and disparate corporation.

Leadership in a diverse world is also the subject of Sharon Turnbull's article on page 38. This looks at what she calls "Worldly Leadership" – a search for meaningful approaches to sustainable leadership that draws not on traditional Western concepts but on Eastern collectivist philosophies and the wisdoms of indigenous cultures.

On page 44 Kenneth Mikkelsen outlines the kinds of challenges that business leaders are likely to face in the future, drawing on an EFMD/Mannaz-sponsored conference.

Finally, the supplement that accompanies this issue continues the theme of leadership and effective academic/company relationships. It highlights the winners of the EFMD Excellence in Practice Award 2010, a celebration of successful co-operation between business schools and the corporate world.