A Roadmap for Academic Governance.

Javaid Ahmed,
Institute of Business Management / CBM, Karachi.

Universities should not be a reflection of the societies in which they are situated, but should be transformational leaders of the society.
Past Harvard President

Traditionally, in Pakistan, teaching has rarely been considered a profession for which one needs qualifications and training. It may be hard to admit, that in most cases, teaching is taken recourse to by those who fail to make a place for themselves in some other profession.

This paper attempts to put together a roadmap for the professional academic and for academic governance. The paper invites a debate and open inquiry into current practices and what lies ahead. This paper is an invitation to confront and demystify the chronic mediocrity in academia. Its subject is how individual faculty can solve recurring problems in classroom practice ... how to think systematically about the profession of teaching, how to organize the subject matter, how to design a course, and how to pitch it from freshmen to seniors and further to postgraduates. How to grade? How do initiate research that is simple, that is doable and that is of direct relevance to the prescribed curricula and to the decision maker in industry?

The Ground Realities

Traditionally, in Pakistan, teaching has rarely been considered a profession for which one needs qualifications and training. The not often easily accepted reality, by far and large is, that a person who cannot find a market based engagement, 'fills in the blanks' by 'teaching'.

This must change if Pakistan has to have a place in the comity of nations today. Academia needs to be recognized as a profession that requires skills and commitment just like the professions.

Prof. David Garvin of the Harvard Business School says that becoming a distinguished scholar in one's specialty requires deep immersion in a subject over a long period of time. What students really want to hear is what the professor knows. What the professor knows is very much a function of the quantum of time and effort that has been put to achieving that knowledge. I want to dwell on a singular aspect of a culture I have observed in my half decade association with academia. Having spent nearly three decades in the multinational industry which exposed me to different continents, I found it universal that excellence had been achieved and competitive advantage established only when there were individuals who had devoted years in mastering their specific function. 'Butterflies' do provide a pleasant respite feeding on multicolored flowers, but are never looked upon as a source of expertise in botanical sciences.

I observe a culture in higher academia that 'the more subjects a teacher can teach, the more useful that teacher is to academic governance'. Reasons for this will be touched upon later. Similarly, the 'more subjects the teacher can teach, the more knowledgeable that teacher is' amongst his or her peers. Drawing comparisons from the professions: there is no such thing today as an engineer; there is a civil engineer, a chemical engineer, an electrical engineer and so on. One cannot think of a situation where a generic engineer is sought. Similarly in law, we have a corporate lawyer, a criminal lawyer, a family lawyer and so on. The jack of all trades is usually the least sought after. Academia need to look at themselves in a similar manner. They need to be like professionals. They need to be referred to as 'the authority' on subject 'A'. This approach is more likely to open doorways for meaningful professional development leading to external credibility, research and consultancy.

A teacher who aims at establishing himself or herself and being recognized as an expert in a specific subject is considered as lazy or on 'auto pilot' by his peers and 'less cooperative and therefore less useful' by academic governance! Here in my opinion lies the root cause of poor academic standards and almost complete absence of professionalism in academics in our country.

This paper is an invitation to confront and demystify the chronic mediocrity in academia, not just in universities but in any educational institution. It is a paper on how individual faculty can solve recurring problems in classroom practice … how to think systematically about the profession of teaching, how to organize the subject matter, how to design the course, how to pitch it from freshmen to seniors to postgraduates (even when the syllabus is _erroneously_ the same for freshmen and postgraduates). How to grade. How do initiate research that is simple, that is doable and that is of direct relevance to the curricula inside the classroom and to the decision maker in industry.

The Academic Value Chain

I have borrowed the value chain model (Fig. 1) from the management sciences to develop a systematic and integrated process for delivering learning and value. I want to briefly touch upon another serious fallacy about value. Every one wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die. Everybody wants value in academia but no one is willing to pay for it. The society does not, as evidenced by a general demand that education should be low price if not free. Government doesn't want to pay as evidenced by the low, if not the lowest, priority attached to education. Here I am referring to the reality on the ground, not expressed intentions in the media or apparent fund disbursements as evidence of priority. Academic governance itself doesn't want to pay as evidenced by the lack of willingness to recognize academia as a profession as distinct from a nice pastime for housewives and retired personnel.

The value chain in delivering higher education can be split in two parts: the Primary Value delivery process i.e. the academic process itself, and the Support Value delivery process i.e. academic governance which is closely linked with the delivery of the primary academic process.

Fig 1: The Academic Value Chain

The Primary Value Chain Activities : Academia

Establish Curriculum	**Examination Design & Policy**	**Research**	**Grading Plan**	**Degree awarding policy**

Step 1: A 28 session course outline.
 	
Step 2: Upgrade to a 28 session **'Learning Outcomes'** document.
 	
Step 3: **Include pedagogies**, teaching materials, case studies, experimental exercises, video etc. i.e. **28 complete lesson plans.**
 	
Step 4: Review and upgrade every year. Create **teaching portfolios.**
	Blooms Taxonomy and its application to freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors and Postgraduates.
	    When multiple choice? When critical evaluation?
	    When case study and synthesis?
	    Exams must **measure** 'learning outcomes' defined in step 2 of curriculum design.
		Identified from one (or two) of the 28 academic modules of the academics' teaching modules.
		    Research to feedback into step 4 of curriculum design.
		    Contribution to local and international journals.
			Define A, B, C, D The normal distribution curve / Stanines scale.
			
			A: Outstanding/excellent?
			B: Good to very good?
			C: Average?
			D: Below average?
			
			Definitions related to step 2 of curriculum design.
				Who gets the degree?
				
				Does the average student get the degree? If yes, then a CGPA of 2.5 qualifies for a degree.
				
				If the average does not get a degree, there is a natural (and perhaps correct) tendency in faculty to evaluate the average as a good?

The Support Value Chain : Academic Governance

HR Policy: E.g. hire professionals (from industry or academia) with primary value chain skills. Accountability based upon delivery of primary value chain results. Evaluation based upon primary value chain skills.

IT Policy: Develop and support primary value chain activities (e.g. Classroom hardware to deliver step 3 of curriculum objectives)

Academic Resources Policy: Teaching Materials Bank. Classroom communication aids supporting step 3 of curriculum objectives. Use of technology as a norm.

Quality Assurance Policy: Formalized through the Dean and Department Heads. Accountabilities to be defined and implemented.

<u>Establishing Curricula</u>

Step 1: Full Semester Course Outline
This is the foundation stone of the value delivery process. Take a typical semester of say fourteen weeks with two ninety minute sessions per week i.e. 28 sessions. Establish a 28 sessions course outline. This can, as a starting point only, be taken from the table of contents of an internationally recognized text book on the subject. It is usually quite ease to determine this with a basic internet search skills. There are essentially two types of searches required here that can yield optimum results. First, search the top two or three academic publishers. You are very likely to discover the text/s that is most widely used in the worlds' top universities. You can also search for course outlines used by academics in the top universities of the world. In my experience, a combination of these results in a course outline that is of internationally recognized standard.

Here the researcher has to consciously resist the temptation to go to a textbook that he used when he was in university. The half cycle of knowledge today is about 7 years and decreasing. The amount of knowledge created in the last 100 years, is 10,000 times more than what was created in the preceding 10,000 years (i.e. 101 to 10,100 years ago). The 1st edition of a text book that I used in university shows only the authors' name and title of the book with the current 13th edition. Therefore a willingness to **relearn** becomes so critical. In cultures which do not recognize and reward learning *and relearning (relearning may even be mocked),* there is a natural tendency by which the 7 year half life of knowledge takes the front seat and soon we are talking of practices which have evolved beyond our own recognition and give birth to the chasm between industry and academia.

Step 2: Defining Learning Outcomes and taking responsibility
This 28 session course outline then gets enriched by including in writing the learning outcomes of each session. What is the desired outcome of the 90 minutes class? What specific thing does the student have to know or understand that he or she did not know or understand <u>90 minutes earlier</u> related to the topic of the session? You see, accountability is creeping in now. Whose accountability? The teachers' or the taught? I am afraid it's the teacher's accountability. The teacher is responsible and accountable for this learning outcome. This responsibility and accountability allocation is in the context of normal competitive corporate practice. The academic has to take on the role of being part of the solution, not being a part of the problem. This is a choice every professional has to make every day in his or her life. If a patient is not being cured, it is the doctors concern and skill that is challenged. If a building collapses, it is the engineers' design that is challenged. If the lawyer loses his clients' case, the lawyer has also lost.

Step 3: Pedagogies and complete lesson plans … Rethinking how Objectives are Met
Before you begin planning the specifics of your course, take a fresh and critical look at your objective and goals. Ask yourself: are there other ways to meet these objectives than what you have been doing in the past? You might consider how technology might affect the nature and structure of the unit or course itself? These technologies may not have been available a few years ago when the course was first planned. For example, you might move a large part of the dissemination of information out of the classroom activities to self-paced or structured study through the use of mixed media, including print and electronic. This frees up classroom time for discussions, answering questions, exams etc.

Since the whole game is about learning, <u>NOT teaching,</u> the professional teacher has to decide which of several methods available to him or her are more effective for which learning objective. But, what are learning objectives?

- Is the objective of a particular lesson to ensure an understanding (or recall) of a concept?
- Is it to ensure that the student is able to apply the concept to a specific situation?
- Is it that the student has to learn to analysis the pros and cons of the application of the concept to a particular situation?
- Is it that the student should be able to join together two or more concepts in synthesis in their application to a particular situation?
- Or is the objective to ensure that the student can evaluate the usefulness of the application of a concept to a particular situation?

Our profession demands that we reflect carefully, professionally, quantitatively and qualitatively in searching answers to these questions.

Our profession demands that we then use the appropriate teaching/learning pedagogy (methodology) which research has established as being more appropriate for the level of the learning outcome desired.

The academic has a range of methods available. The good old lecture is the easiest and the one with which all are familiar. But what does a good lecture establish? Does it establish how much or how little knowledge the teacher has or does it establish how much or how little the student has learnt? Research shows that it is a measure of the teacher's knowledge and <u>it does not carry an encouraging correlation with learning</u>. A professional must be concerned with this finding.

There are the proven quizzes, multiple choice questions, true/false answers, which are effective in testing recall, but have a limited role, if any, in analysis and synthesis.

There are videos and films for the visual appeal to the second sense of seeing in addition to hearing.

Then there are experimental exercises: i.e. making the learner get actively involved in his or her learning through doing the thing. This is much like the practical lab sessions of physics and chemistry. These lab sessions can be replicated for the social sciences as well.

There are case studies. Results of research has established that case studies are a very effective way of learning, but this method puts a high demand on the choreographer professor, who now has to learn to stop teaching and start to learn to explore learning. It is much like a game of cricket. The professor is the umpire whose job is to ensure that the rules of learning are being followed and not allow the game to become an oratory contest where the most loudly eloquent student emerges the winner. The umpire's job is to ensure that the principles of the subject are used to 'play' the game resulting in a level of analysis and synthesis. Teaching by the case method is both an art and a skill which has to be learnt and practiced.

Each 90 minute session with its clearly defined learning outcome must now be upgraded to 28 lesson plans. A lesson plan (Fig. 2) is a single sheet of paper, which includes, in addition to the outline and learning outcomes, all materials used in the lesson. These include, but are

not limited to, handouts, articles, case studies, quiz, experimental exercise, video, roll play etc. one or more of which may be used in that particular lesson.

Fig. 2 The DAILY LESSON PLAN		
DATE	LESSON NO.	UNIT
COURSE		TOPIC
INSTRUCTOR		
SUBJECT OF LESSON		
INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS, MATERIALS, OR TOOLS NEEDED		
REFERENCES		
LESSON OUTLINE		
ASSIGNMENT		
NOTES		

Step 4: The Teaching Portfolio

A teaching portfolio is a useful guide to the development of a professional teacher; it can serve as a kind of professional journal for documenting and reflecting on the techniques and assignments developed from semester to semester. A teaching portfolio is a powerful memory aid that enhances the ability to assess the teaching experience and innovate upon it. They are the repositories of student evaluations, peer reviews, self-evaluations and other supporting documents of ones' teaching history.

No two teaching portfolios are identical as each attests to the philosophies and style of its creator. What follows is a list of the type of materials that can go into a teaching portfolio:

- A statement of your teaching philosophy: typically a brief paragraph that explains your beliefs about teaching and learning, your most important goals as a teacher and the specific teaching principles that you try to put into practice.
- Syllabi of the course you have taught
- Syllabi of the courses you would like to teach
- Written assignments you have given / introduced.
- Reflective written statements to accompany assignments noting how they actually went in practice and ideas you have for improving them in the future
- Notes from lectures you have given
- Transparencies, tests and other support materials you have created
- Copies of graded student work from your courses
- Copies of student evaluations of your class
- Written statements of teacher training courses you have taken

Bloom's Taxonomy

What is Bloom's Taxonomy?
Bloom and his colleagues (1956) proposed that knowing is actually composed of six successive levels arranged in a hierarchy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. Research has generally confirmed that the first four levels are indeed a true hierarchy. However, research is mixed on the relationship of Synthesis and Evaluation; it is possible that these two are reversed or they could be two separate activities (Seddon, 1978), Fig. 3.

What is its purpose?
Bloom's Taxonomy attempts to divide cognitive objectives into subdivisions ranging from the simplest behavior to the most complex.
What are the six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy?

> **1. Knowledge** is defined as the remembering of previously learned material. It requires the bringing to mind of the appropriate information.
> <u>Example of learning objectives</u>: know common terms, know specific facts, know methods and procedures, know basic concepts, know principles.
>
> **2. Comprehension** is defined as the ability to grasp the meaning of relevant material. This may involve translating material from one form to another (words to numbers),

interpreting material (explaining or summarizing), and estimating future trends (predicting consequences or effects).

Example of learning objectives: understand facts and principles, interpret verbal material, interpret charts and graphs, translate verbal material to mathematical formulae, justify methods and procedures.

3. Application refers to the ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations. This may include the application of relevant rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories.

Example of learning objectives: apply concepts and principles to new situations, apply laws and theories to practical situations, solve mathematical problems, construct graphs and charts, and demonstrate the correct usage of a method or procedure.

4. Analysis refers to the ability to break down material into its component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. This may include the identification of parts, analysis of the relationship between different parts, and recognition of the organizational principles involved.

Example of learning objectives: recognize unstated assumptions, recognize logical fallacies in reasoning, distinguish between facts and inferences, and analyze the organizational structure of a work, such as art, music, and writing.

5. Synthesis refers to the ability to put various parts together to form a new whole. This may involve the production of a unique communication (theme or speech), a plan of operations (research proposal), or a set of abstract relations (scheme for classifying information).

Example of learning objectives: write a well organized theme, give a well organized speech, propose a plan for an experiment, and formulate a new scheme for classifying objects.

6. Evaluation refers to the ability to judge the value of material (statement, novel, poem, research report). Judgments are to be based on definite criteria, which can be internal criteria (organization) or external criteria (relevance to the purpose).

Example of learning objectives: judge the logical consistency of written material, judge the adequacy with which conclusions are supported by data, judge the value of a work.

A guide for using this model in Universities could be:
- Undergraduate level:
  - Freshmen: Comprehension and some application
  - Sophomores: Application and some analysis
  - Juniors: Analysis and some synthesis
  - Seniors: Synthesis and some evaluation
- Postgraduate Masters level:
  - Analysis and Synthesis with some evaluation
- MPhil level:
  - Largely Synthesis and evaluation and creation of new knowledge
- PhD level:
  - Synthesis and evaluation leading to creation of new knowledge

Helping to balance the power in your classes

To achieve learning-oriented teaching the instructor needs to look at the balance of power between themselves and the students. Some possible ways to do is to consider the following: Faculty can share power with students to determine how individual classes are conducted, how material is learned (not what material). What opinions are expressed, etc? Yet we cannot give up power as to how an entire course is run. Faculty power comes from the authority our university has given us as the instructor. We can share power but we can never share authority. (*The idea of the distinction between power and authority comes from D. Fink's book, Teaching with your mouth shut, 2000 Heinemann Publishers.*)

Fig. 3: Suggested Instructional Strategies
for Use with Each Level of BLOOM'S Taxonomy

					Case studies
					Projects
					Exercises
				Projects	Critiques
				Problems	Simulations
				Case studies	Appraisals
				Creative exercises	**EVALUATION**
			Problems	Develop plans	Judge
			Exercises	Constructs	Appraise
			Case studies	Simulations	Evaluate
			Critical incidents	**SYNTHESIS**	Rate
	Exercises		Discussion		
	Practice		Questions	Compose	Compare
	Demonstrations		Test	Plan	Value
Questions	Projects			Propose	Revise
Discussion	Sketches		**ANALYSIS**	Design	Score
Review	Simulations		Distinguish	Formulate	Select
Test	Role play		Analyze	Arrange	Choose
Assessment	Micro teach		Differentiate	Collect	Assess
Reports	**APPLICATION**		Appraise	Construct	Estimate
Learner	Interpret		Calculate	Create	Measure
Presentations	Apply		Experiment	Set up	
Writing	Employ		Test	Organize	
COMPREHENSION	Use		Compare	Manage	
Translate	Demonstrate		Contrast	Prepare	
Restate	Dramatize		Criticize		
Discuss	Practice		Diagram		
Describe	Illustrate		Inspect		
Recognize	Operate		Debate		
Explain	Schedule		Inventory		
Express	Shop		Question		
Identify	Sketch		Relate		

Source: PENNDOT

Examination Design and Policy

An examination is not just a grading devise, but a potent learning tool for students. The challenge is to craft examination questions that require students to use their knowledge, not in the linear sequence in which they may have learnt it, but in applied non-linear ways. The most important thing that I want them to know is how to establish a conceptual framework in a vast body of information and how to decide what's important and what's trivial.

Professor Robert Waymouth

Application of Blooms taxonomy is a powerful tool in designing examinations which are consistent with learning objectives.
- Exams for freshmen may want to focus on comprehensive and some application.
- Exams for sophomores may want to focus on application and some analysis
- Exams for Juniors may want to focus on analysis and some synthesis
- Exams for seniors may want to focus on synthesis and some evaluation

And so on.

The batteries of multiple choice questions were developed in the US in the early 20th century when mass education was a high national priority. This achieved its goals of giving the US the highest number of graduates per capita in a relatively short time. Multiple choice questions are useful when the objective of testing is recall, some comprehension and breadth of retained information. Their use is limited at the level of application of knowledge, or analysis or synthesis.

The major weakness of multiple choice tests is those teachers may develop questions that require only recognition or recall of information. Multiple-Choice questions in teachers' manuals that accompany textbooks often test only recognition and recall. Strive for questions that require application of knowledge rather than recall. For example, interpretation of data presented in charts, graphs, maps, or other formats can form the basis for higher-level multiple-choice questions.

Experimental exercises are shown to be better for learning application and analysis. So called subjective questions and Case studies are most useful at the level of analysis and synthesis and evaluation.

Appropriately worded questions may be developed for each learning objective and level of education.

Research

Research needs to be demystified in higher education in Pakistan as the first step. One way of doing this is to pick one of the 28 academic concepts out of the 28 session course outline and do a Google scholar search on that topic. It will yield enormous latest and contemporary insights into the topic for the benefit of the researcher. It takes about half a days' work to find and download two or three cutting edge papers on one item of the course outline. Can you pause here for a moment and imagine the power you will take inside the class room when this topic appears as the lesson for the day? Can you imagine how you would be able to differentiate yourself in front of say 40 bright young men and women when you share with them the new insights not fully transparent in the textbook chapter?!

Do you now have a clue of how you could design a *simple* research protocol to test the concept in your local setting? Please do not enter into research with a preconceived conclusion. For example, during a recent admission interview with a MPhil candidate, he said that he wants to show how a particular principle of Human Resource Management does not apply in Pakistan! This is not a problem and can easily be proved in my opinion. A better approach is to ask ourselves that we want to determine the correlation of a particular principle in the local environment. We then go about 'neutrally' to find out, not prove, the significance of the correlation. This would also reflect an open, unbiased mind.

Grading

Assigning grades in teaching is one of the most difficult tasks you will face. Teachers must combine a variety of disparate elements of student performance into a single course grade: verbal skills, ability to memorize, retention of factual information, ability to synthesize material, ability to make reasoned judgments about the material, etc. It is difficult to devise a grading method in which the final grade fairly reflects all aspects of a student's performance. Within certain limits, every teacher is allowed to develop his or her own grading system, and because standards are very personal and idiosyncratic, grades are not a currency that has a uniform value; an "A" from one teacher may be the equivalent to a "C" from another. Part of the problem with grading arises from the fallibility of the tests we use to measure student performance. Few teachers are confident that they can assess student achievement accurately and consistently, and the effectiveness of any grading system is highly dependent upon the accuracy of the tests on which it is based. Nonetheless, there are some guidelines that will help you devise a fair and reasonably accurate system of grading.

You should first investigate your department's policies on grading practices. Even if there is no written policy, there may be traditions and unwritten rules regarding grading, and your grading system will need to conform to these rules.

Elements of a Grading System

A good grading system must meet three criteria: (1) it should accurately reflect differences in student performance, (2) it should be clear to students so they can chart their own progress, and (3) it should be fair. Performance can be defined either in relative or absolute terms (comparing students with each other or measuring their achievement against a set scale), and each system has its defenders. Whichever grading scheme you use, students should be able to calculate (at least roughly) how they are doing in the course at any point in the semester. Some relative grading schemes make it impossible for students to estimate their final grades because the cutoff points in the final distribution are not determined until the end of the course. A complete description of the grading system should appear in the course syllabus, including the amount of credit for each assignment, how the final grades will be calculated, and the grade equivalents for the final scores. Also, students should perceive the grading system as fair and equitable, rewarding them proportionately for their achievements. From the standpoint of measurement, many different kinds of assignments, spread over the entire semester provide a fairer estimate of student learning than one or two large tests or papers.

Relative (norm-referenced) grading systems are probably the most widespread in higher education. In relative grading, students are in competition with one another for a limited number of grades in each category, and a student's grade is based on his or her relative position in the class. By contrast, absolute (criterion-referenced) systems use an unchanging standard of performance against which student performance is measured, so a student's grade is related to his or her achievement of particular levels of knowledge, skills, and

understanding. No grading system is foolproof, for the integrity of any system depends on the academics' ability to devise valid and reliable measurements of students' performance. Measurement error is the greatest hindrance to effective grading.

Absolute Grading Systems
Absolute grading is based on the idea that grades should reflect mastery of specific knowledge and skills. The teacher sets the criteria for each grade, and all students who perform at a given level receive the same grade.

Objective-Based Grading
Objective grading is perhaps the most sophisticated kind of absolute grading because the method attempts to equate grades with different kinds of performance. In all the grading systems outlined above, the teacher assumes that students who receive good final grades have learned the more important material and mastered more complex levels of thinking, but this assumption may not be valid. For example, students who do very well in objective exams and poorly on written assignments may earn a respectable final grade, but may not have mastered important intellectual skills that the teacher had in mind. The objective grading method takes into account both the amount of material students learn and the level of cognitive complexity they achieve.

To use objective grading, the teacher must first review the kinds of knowledge and skills that are *implicit* in the course and make them *explicit* as course objectives. (Refer to the section on course design for a more detailed treatment of course objectives.) You must identify two kinds of outcomes: minimal and developmental objectives. Minimal objectives are statements of essential course outcomes and basic skills; developmental objectives reflect higher-order cognitive processes such as critical thinking, decision-making, and complex problem solving. Specifically, while designing an exam, keep in mind what skills you are measuring in students: information recall, interpretation, application of principles, analysis of concepts, and synthesis of ideas or evaluation of knowledge.

Short answers help test information recall and analytical skills. Essay tests give students the opportunity to organize, evaluate and think and therefore in my opinion have the best educational value although they are the hardest to grade. Multiple choice exams primarily measure information recall and some elementary application.

A fundamental decision that the professor has to make is whether the grading is to be in relation to the achievement of the class where the achievement is broadly outlined with the 'sky as the limit', or whether the grading reflects a defined level of achievement which most can reach.
Curricula and learning outcomes have to be determined before measurements. You cannot measure without a yardstick. *A course outline is not a yardstick. A curriculum with learning out comes is.*

A+ A A-	These are excellent and outstanding students. A+ is the outstanding student who scores 96% reflecting an outstanding understanding of the subject. *Their level of understanding and synthesis is often higher than the instructors.* In my view, such an outstanding student is rare and certainly not present in the majority of classes. A and A- are excellent students. A and A- can be interpreted as two levels of excellence. Such students are very small in numbers: about 5-10% in the general population of students in higher education.	5-10%
B+ B B-	These are the good to very good, conscientious students. B+ is the <u>very</u> good student B is the good student B- is the fairly ok/good student	25-30%
C+ C	These are the average students of the class. About 50% of students are average (by definition). C+ is the good average C is the average	45-55%
D	This is the student who is below average. He/she shows some disjointed and vague understanding of the subject His/her work is <u>below average</u>, and yet not bad enough to fail.	5-10%
F	Such a students' work is unacceptable. Either he/she has not worked at all or if he/she has worked, his/her understanding of the subject is largely inadequate and unacceptable.	5-10%

Then degree criteria: Many Universities do not qualify for a degree a student with grade C+ who is the good average student according to the above model. This has a behavioral impact on instructors (and students). The instructor knows very well that his good average or average student deserves the degree, but he can only get it if the instructor inflates his grade to at least B-. So grade inflation is the result.

Designing curriculum with learning outcomes and grading plan and degree awarding policy are a part of the academic value chain and need to be integrated into a single 'authority'. At the moment these are apparently fragmented at best.

Nature has distributed many things in a bell curve. Beauty, health, wealth, height, weight and so on. Why then do we challenge natures' distribution of skill and ability? I think it has to do with some misplaced social and religious beliefs that 'all men are equal'. All men may have equal rights, but all men are not equal. Or am I playing with words? I observe 'grades inflation'. Perhaps this has to do with our need to be loved. Our need to be popular with students. A professional academic seeks 'love' and popularity through providing value inside the class room. Grade inflation can often unknowingly become the substitute for providing value.

I compared a top Pakistani Company with a median US corporation and found that in both cases their human resource profile policy was:

		Pakistan Petroleum	General Electric
A	Outstanding	5%	10%
B	Very Good	20%	15%
C	Good	60%	50%
D	Marginal	10%	15%
F	Unacceptable	5%	10%

If universities have to gain credibility, they have to be more practice oriented in the way they evaluate their outputs.

Academic Governance

Academic governance is the very potent common glue that holds together the academic value chain described above in this paper. It is the hypothesis off the paper that if the each element of the primary academic value chain activities is executed with a high level of professionalism, then graduates can potentially be of world class standard. It is not the privilege of only the (Indian) IIT or IIM graduates to command salaries that reflect the value of their education. In Pakistan we can do much better.

Nothing in the world is free. Quality education means quality resource inputs. The banking sector in Pakistan has been transformed recently using a similar value chain model approach. Resources were put into this transformation, especially human resources. Quality in higher education will mean that it will cost money. World class, yet cheap higher education, will forever remain a pipedream in Pakistan.

Human Resource Policy

The starting point of delivering the primary academic value chain is the establishment of a sound human resource policy that first understands and accepts the academic value chain as the foundation or source of quality in higher education. The first step in such a HR policy would be hiring and selection. If the academic value chain is accepted as blueprint or the job analysis of the profession, then it evolves into 'job description'. This then becomes the basis for the job specification and the skill set required for the profession. Actually there is now a major paradigm shift in the skill set required for the profession. From say a PhD/MSc with 'n' number of years of experience to a PhD/MSc <u>WITH the value chain skill set.</u> The skill set is the <u>'must have'</u> for the profession in addition to the sound knowledge base.

I have observed a widespread phenomenon in industry that text book principles do not apply in real life. Having practiced some 'real life' for nearly three decades and over two continents, I can say with full confidence that what is written in management and business texts is nothing but a systematic distillation of real practice. There is perhaps another skill set

that may be required here: the ability to 'translate' the text to real life and demonstrate that they are not in conflict.

I T Policy

Another paradigm change required here: **Use of technology** inside the class room today is neither an option nor a luxury. This is another challenge that academia face. It is generally believed that instructors who can teach unaided by anything except the whiteboard and felt pen are the most knowledgeable and hard working. Those who use multimedia, or audio-video or slides etc are perceived as being lazy and not having a command over their subject! Nothing can be farther from truth. Technology *has* to be used to supplement and elaborate and cater for the different learning styles inside the class room. Research has established beyond doubt that the traditional technology-less lecture caters for the learning needs of less than 20% of a typical class.

So once again, resources and money are required here. This is not a one time expense. Use of technology requires a partnership between the academic and the technician. With the given skill levels of IT technicians generally (the good ones cost more); maintenance costs go up and up *in addition to* disrupting class proceedings and thus subtracting value. So the higher skilled/ higher cost technician is not adding to costs, he/she is actually decreasing costs.

Academic Policy

The academic freedom policy stands on the solid foundation of the existence of professional academia. Where this foundation is still evolving, there is a need to train and indeed require the implementation of the academic value chain.

There is a need to establish teaching materials banks in universities: complete detailed 28 lesson plans and complete lecture notes with transparences, case studies directly related to at least ten out of the 28 lesson principles, experimental exercises related to at least another 10 to 15 of the 28 lesson plans, academic notes and articles directly related to the 28 lesson plans. This also requires not only financial but also knowledge resources. Low cost and therefore low price higher education can neither be competitive nor world class.

Quality Assurance Policy

Consistency of standards across instructors and courses
Students often feel that they are unfairly treated if they think that their peers had it better with another teacher or if another instructor in the same course was somewhat soft. As we have multiple sections of various courses or multiple instructors for a course, we should try for consistency among instructors within the same course or different sections of a course. Departmental meetings might be an appropriate forum to discuss the level of expectations that we want our students to achieve as well as expected content to be covered. For example, what should the pass cut off point or standard be or how much should a student have to do to pass a course? What is the expected skill level difficulty that we are striving for? Do we want most of our students to get it or only 50%?

These discussions will show how different are we now and what we can do to strive for a greater measure of consistency. This could lower the complaints of our students

Quality assurance needs to be built into the geneses of the university structure. Responsibility and accountability need to be woven into the academic hierarchy just like responsibility and accountability are so evident in successful corporations.

The definition of shareholder surplus will need to be redefined from 'revenue minus cost' to 'high value revenue minus high value costs'. According to established corporate practices and my understanding, the second definition always yields a higher surplus which is sustainable as compared to the opportunistic surplus generated through simply exploiting a market vacuum.

The ultimate objective of quality in higher education must be to achieve international standards not only for our students, but even more importantly, international standard profits for universities.

In the end, inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive. Almost all successful academics give credit to creative teachers … those mentors who defined their work so compellingly that it became for them a lifelong challenge. Without the teaching function, the continuity of knowledge will be broken and the store of human knowledge dangerously diminished. *Dr. E. Boyer, Scholarship Reconsidered.*

Acknowledgements / References:

1. *Education for Judgment, Christensen, Garvin and Sweet, Harvard Business School Press, 1991.*
2. *Teaching at Stanford, 2001, Michele Marincovich, PhD.*
3. *Center for Teaching Excellence, 2000, Tulane University.*
4. *My wife Seema, a constant companion on my endless journey of learning.*

Javaid Ahmed *is Sr. Fellow and Dept. Head of Management. He is a Certified Board Director, a Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK), Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management (UK), Member of Mensa and a UK Chartered Engineer. He has a MBA with Distinction from Lancaster (empirical research awarded 1st prize by the British Institute of Management) and a BScEng (London). He brings over 28 years of a successful top management career with the multinational health care industry including over a decade in Switzerland, Malaysia and the Philippines. He is on the Jury of the EFP Prime Ministers' Corporate Award of Excellence and is a management research reviewer of the Academy of Management, USA. He is case research active in corporate and market strategy and has supervised CBM's MPhil Marketing program. He has written two research based dissertations, published fifteen papers and articles and delivered thirteen selected professional presentations and workshops.*