

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (NWU):

A merger and
incorporation story,
2004 - 2014

PJJ PRINSLOO

Commissioned by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor of North-West University

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"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."

*— John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America**

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PROLOGUE

There's more to this merger than meets the eye

Since the North-West University (NWU) came into being on 1 January 2004, it has more than once been embroiled in controversy. The storms that broke made for sensational headlines and riveting reading, yet also served a larger purpose. Uncomfortable and often unpleasant though they were at the time, the difficulties the NWU braved were a baptism of fire that helped forge an extremely resilient, adaptable and successful university.

That side of the NWU has, however, been obscured from view at times by the more “newsworthy” events that swirled in and around it, especially on the topic of transformation.

This book does not attempt to tilt the balance in the other direction by dwelling solely on the university's strengths and triumphs while glossing over its weaknesses and failures. Nor does it seek to justify or rationalise decisions and actions that hindsight – an extraordinarily exact science – may have revealed as less than ideal.

What this book does strive to do is tell the organisational story of the NWU within the context of the changing higher education landscape and its own, unique makeup. No other merging university in South Africa had two less similar merger partners.

Drawn from original reports, notes and other documents pertinent to the merger, this book could be seen as the official book of record on the establishment of the NWU and its first 10 years of life, and is thus an authoritative academic resource in respect of the organisational dimension of the merger.

As a predominantly scholarly work, parts of this book go into intricate detail about matters such as national education policy, the merger objectives, the negotiations leading up to the merger, and the many task teams and working groups involved in merger preparations. Laborious as such detail may seem at times, it is necessary to ensure a complete, comprehensive composite of a university in the making.

There are also sections where scholarly theories are discussed at length, such as chapter 10 where the philosophy of organisational structure is explained, setting the scene for a discussion on the university's choice of operating model. This, too, is important in ensuring a full and complete record of the university's journey in its first 10 years.

In tandem with the compilation of this publication, the NWU has published a second book on the merger, titled *Forging unity: the story of the North-West University's first 10 years*. The latter, based on personal interviews with most of the key figures in the merger, has a more human, emotional character and, read in conjunction with this book of record, could be invaluable in providing further insights into the university's merger story. The two publications undoubtedly complement each other.

The story of the NWU is of course far from over. This book attempts to capture the essential building blocks of a university that is playing a growing role in educating new generations of South Africans. Time will tell how the next chapters of the NWU's life will unfold.



CHAPTER 1

An openhearted story of a new university in the making

The first decade of North-West University (NWU): A merger and incorporation story, 2004 - 2014

1. Introduction

1.1. The NWU's organisational story

This is an openhearted story by a variety of scholars, subject matter experts, university councillors, NWU staff members on many levels, external people and corporate communicators who provided written and oral perspectives of the NWU's multifaceted merger and incorporation process. This combined effort constituted the weal and woe of NWU in the period 2004 to 2014.

According to Linda Chisholm and Seán Morrow, the subject of institutional histories can be described in different ways: *“As a variant of ‘great man’ history, the history of the institution can be seen as that of its leaders; as a type of organisational history, it can be told as the unfolding creation, division, sub-division and recreation of its organisational structures; as political history, the relationship of its leading figures with and influence by political elites and ideas will predominate; as social and economic history, it will focus on the relationship with the broader society, and the influence and mediation of broader social forces; and as a history of ideas it will focus on the nature of the actual work conducted and concepts promoted and developed. Although it is possible to look at all these in an integrated fashion, one or other approach is likely to prevail.”*¹

On the topic *“What is a university?”*, Juha Himanka suggested that because of the complexity and diverse nature of a university no general creed of the university system seems possible. Rather, he explained the concept of a university as a community of selves,² which consequently opened up questions on how to write university histories.

Sylvia Paletschek believed that the formation of university histories materialised not only because of scientific self-reflection, but also as an occasion-driven practice attached to anniversaries with the aim of creating jubilee publications. The participants in this kind of seasonable celebratory undertaking could be authors who were chosen for their local availability and grasp of the specific topic rather than for their special knowledge. Participants in this NWU merger story were from the first group. The jubilee publication therefore served the purpose of positioning the institution, forming its identity and reflecting on the performance of its core functions. Paletschek said that university jubilees not only highlight the history of the universities, but also their respective overall political, societal and organisational cultural conditions.³

The aim and selection of the topics in this particular report is in alignment with Paletschek's explanation. In this publication, the different subjects form the conceptual topics of the framework for the storyline rather than a chronological record of events.⁴ This approach is preferred as it strives to present a clear understanding of events, offer relevant insights on topics and explain the lessons learned in complex situations. For these reasons, the report focuses on the core functions of the NWU, which are to provide professional academic qualifications, produce scientific knowledge and apply expertise for community engagement. The methodology used for this report was the practice of historical research.

Essentially, this report could be classified as organisational storytelling to provide an account of the NWU as a university established through a merger and incorporation. It describes the establishment of the NWU as an organisation, the strategic intention of management, the interaction with other stakeholders and the sometimes conflicting strategies (and their consequences) followed by the different role players. It describes how people acted and reacted within the organisation on the basis of these influences. In other words, it covers the development of the NWU from multiple viewpoints, attitudes and levels of analysis. This approach is an attempt to understand and interpret organisational life at the NWU and the way the institution has sought to accomplish its vision and mission. It also describes how staff members, students, the Ministry of Education, scholarly collaborators, donors and communities evaluate its performance.⁵

Sheldon Rothblatt's review of the historical writings of universities provides a comprehensive historiographical analysis of the phrasing, trends, topics and authors in this kind of historical undertaking and concludes that the history of universities is something of an institutional orphan. *“It has rarely been free-standing; its practitioners invariably have their disciplinary footing in a great many departments and programmes.”*⁶

Because of this diversity, and sometimes polarity, it is understandable that both inside and outside the NWU, there have been contradictory viewpoints about the success or otherwise of the NWU merger and incorporation. Even so, since about 2009 there have also been calls for the NWU to make the story of its merger known as the media have not always covered the positive things that happened at NWU. Advocates of this argument point out that NWU people on all levels

had worked hard to make a success of the merger and incorporation and to create a new institution where staff and students could actualise their ideals. The internal perception among management staff in 2009 was that the NWU has become a viable and quality-driven, unitary, multi-campus, divisionalised institution in the context of its vision and mission.⁷ The sentiment was that this story was one worth telling.

The Institutional Management concurred in 2010 that scholars should write the official story of the first decade of the merger and incorporation, hence this report.

This report is by no means the first effort to describe the outcome of a merger in the South African higher education environment. In 2010, Prof W Makgoba and Prof JC Mubangizi published the first book on the challenges involved in creating the University of KwaZulu-Natal, with the vision of becoming “the premier university of African scholarship”.⁸ During May 2014 Prof Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg (UJ), and Prof Roy Marcus, the chair of the UJ Council, launched the university’s publication, *UJ Perspectives*, to celebrate that university’s first decade of existence. Prof Njabulo Ndebele, the Chancellor of UJ, stated in the foreword of the publication that UJ had forged itself an identity unique among South African and international universities.⁹

1.2. North-West University: a birth by merging and incorporation¹⁰

The North-West University (NWU) was officially instituted on 1 January 2004. The NWU was created through the merger of two entities and the incorporation. The two merging institutions were the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE) with a satellite campus situated at Vanderbijlpark, and the former University of North-West (UNW), previously the University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO),¹¹ with its

Mankwe Campus.¹² The third entity involved was the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University, whose staff and students were incorporated into the new NWU.¹³ This incorporation was part of the recommendations of the Ministry for Education’s National Working Group that constituent campuses of Vista University should incorporate into “*appropriate existing higher education institutions within each region, given the decision to unbundle the university.*”¹⁴

The NWU consists currently of an Institutional Office and three campuses – Mafikeng Campus in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom Campus in the city of that name and Vaal Triangle Campus in Vanderbijlpark.

In 2008, just four years after the merger and incorporation, the NWU was already the fourth largest university in the country by head count. From a total of 47 000 students, 27 000 were contact students (7 000 at Mafikeng, 16 500 at Potchefstroom and 3 500 at the Vaal Triangle) and 20 000 were off-campus students (mainly teachers improving their qualifications).¹⁵ The NWU has since experienced even more growth, not only in student numbers but also in research output and graduation rates.

The merger was a consequence of the South African Government’s vision of a transformed national higher education system that would address past imbalances and use resources more effectively to meet the equity, quality and social imperatives of the democratic dispensation in the country.¹⁶

The basis for this government intervention was embedded in the foundations of the philosophy of the post-Apartheid political dispensation in South Africa.

For the NWU and the institutions which preceded it, the merger and incorporation story was a complex and multi-layered exercise that has ultimately enriched the higher education landscape of South Africa.



Endnotes

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CHAPTER 2

Seeing the bigger picture:

higher education in a state of flux

2. Historical background for the merger and incorporation process: the restructuring of the South African higher education sector

2.1. The role and functions of a university in society ¹

*Universities are institutions that in all societies, throughout history, have performed basic functions that are implicit in the role that is assigned to them by society through political power or economic influence. These functions, and their combination, result from the particular history of education, science, culture and ideology in each country.*² Manuel Castells mentioned four major functions whose specific weight in each era defined their predominate role:

- as ideological apparatus in the generation and transmission of ideology
- as mechanisms of selection and formation of dominant elites and their socialisation process
- as a means of generating, producing and applying new knowledge
- as teacher to educate and provide a skilled labour force of different professions.³

Mary Gallagher argued that it is at present a challenge for the higher education sector to retain its aspiration towards this kind of human elevation due to the commercialist pressure on academic principles. Her understanding of the issues at the centre of the controversy in the current debate over the subsidence of academic values and standards is that the integrity and reputation of the higher education sector is at risk: *“Instead, the entire civic fabric of human society will be profoundly affected by any systematic de-meaning within higher education of intrinsic values and standards – that is, of anything that is not an immediate proxy for economic value. Wherever it opens up, the space of real education allows a deepening of thoughtfulness. And it encourages rigorous attention to complexity and detail. Regardless of the discipline studied, higher education is about that exacting and independent engagement with precision, profundity and complexity. Even the knowledge that such a space exists is important. Why? Because it affects the way whole societies think about being human.”*⁴

During 2013, another academic, Andrew McGettigan, aligned his thoughts with Gallagher’s perspective on the current trend in higher education. Focusing on

the political economy of higher education institutions, he explained the challenges for higher education and determined that money is moving in new ways through the system. He created terms such as *‘internal privatisation’* and *‘marketisation’* to explain the risk of this strategy.⁵ He called this risk the great university gamble between money, markets and the future of higher education.⁶

Dr Theuns Eloff, Vice-Chancellor of the NWU until May 2014, presented a paper at the Association of Commonwealth Universities’ Centenary Conference at the University of London in October 2013, and said: *“The higher education market is an expanding market continuously in need to account for its fitness of purpose to optimise and maintain its relevance and responsiveness. It is a market in which the survival of only the fittest will prevail”.*⁷

These roles and functions were also tools and challenges in the decade-long restructuring of the South African higher education system. This report provides a perspective on the reasons for this restructuring process, the strategies to create the NWU as a result of government plans and the outcome of these strategies during the NWU’s first decade.

2.2. Regional collaboration between PU for CHE, UNW and Technikon North-West, 1994 – 2002

The PU for CHE took positive steps to align itself with post-1994 developments in higher education and the unfolding constitutional dispensation.⁸ The main government policy documents that informed this initiative were the Green Paper on higher education transformation (1996),⁹ the Education White Paper 3: a programme for the transformation of higher education (1997),¹⁰ and the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.¹¹ This culminated in the following PU for CHE documents:

- The Scott report on so-called *“character institutions”* and the new constitutional dispensation
- The development of a new Statute,¹² various new policies and staff, academic and student disciplinary rules for the PU for CHE, in compliance with the post-1994 constitutional, general legal and policy dispensations, especially in the context of higher education and higher education institutions generally.¹³

The PU for CHE and UNW took the initiative on 2 February 1998 to develop a voluntary consortium for higher education in the North West Province. This venture was based on a three-way agreement between the two university Councils and the Minister of Education. The consortium was to be known as the North-West Education and Training System (Nowets), according to a founding agreement between the two institutions.

In terms of their agreement, the two universities would initially continue with their own activities but would be subject to the oversight of a suitable joint standing council, a senate committee and a management committee. Over time, they would undertake more and more joint activities and the scope of this collaboration would grow organically. Separate activities would increasingly become the exception in their daily operations.

As the Nowets initiative unfolded, the Minister of Education and the Department of Education were kept constantly informed:¹⁴

- A number of organisational structures and task teams were established to ensure that both universities were properly informed and involved and could participate on an equal basis.
- More than 20 technical task teams, with joint, rotating chairpersonships, represented the two universities and tackled the detailed work required
- Formal, external, comprehensive due diligence reports on the two universities preceded and guided the scope and technical analysis of the various task teams.
- The post-1994 legal and policy frameworks for the restructuring of higher education informed all the planning facets of the two universities. A primary guiding document was the National Plan for Higher Education, released in March 2001.
- The task teams completed their work at the end of 2001. By the second half of 2002, the final agreement that would establish the envisaged consortium was ready for approval by the two university Councils, and their joint proposal was ready for acceptance by the Minister of Education.¹⁵

The consortium’s intention was to compile an organisational profile for both universities. This task was made easier when a national survey was conducted soon after Government’s policy documents on higher education were published¹⁶ In 1998, the *Sunday Times* newspaper commissioned a survey called “*The Best in Higher Education*”, using the 1996 data.¹⁷ For this, the *Sunday Times* established a panel of 13 local and

international experts and commissioned the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) to provide the secretariat.¹⁸

Based on factors such as undergraduate success rates, research output and the number of academic staff with doctorates, the PU for CHE was ranked among the top 10 universities in the country, according to the CHET report published in October 1998.¹⁹ This report provided objective perspectives on the profile of the PU for CHE on the eve of the restructuring process in higher education. The following indicators were used to rank the 10 top universities.

Undergraduate success rates in 1996²⁰

Universities	Percentage
Medunsa	85%
Stellenbosch	84%
Potchefstroom	83%
Pretoria	82%
Rhodes	82%
UCT	81%
Wits	81%
Western Cape	76%
Natal	76%
Free State	75%

Total publication subsidy units: 1996²¹

Universities	Units
Wits	791
Pretoria	743
UCT	711
Natal	591
Stellenbosch	586
UNISA	423
RAU	334
Free Stat	290
Potchefstroom	183
Western Cape	147

Percentage of permanent academic staff with doctoral degrees: 1996²²

Universities	Percentage
RAU	60
UCT	58
Potchefstroom	55
Stellenbosch	54
Port Elizabeth	51
Free State	50
Rhodes	48
Wits	47
UNISA	45
Durban-Westville	44

During 2004, CHET published a report on the state of higher education and confirmed the data on the percentage of academic staff at South African universities who had obtained doctoral degrees in 2000.^{23 24}

Among universities for which data was available in 1996, the following seven universities (in alphabetical order) appeared to be relatively more efficient in utilising total income to produce the desired output of successful students:^{25 26}

- University of Natal
- Potchefstroom University for CHE
- Pretoria University
- Rand Afrikaans University
- Rhodes University
- University of Stellenbosch
- University of the Witwatersrand

The Advisory Panel for the *Sunday Times* report identified eight initiatives that would feature as special case studies. These were chosen on the grounds of their innovative and demonstrable contribution towards the higher education policy goals at that stage. Two initiatives from the North-West Province were included:

- **University of North-West: establishment of a Faculty of Science and Technology and various centres of excellence, including the International Institute for Symmetry Analysis and Mathematical Modelling**

The establishment of this faculty, linked to industry partnerships and centres of excellence in niche hi-tech fields, was particularly important as it reversed the Apartheid-linked function of the historically black universities, which largely relegated science faculties to teacher training.

- **Potchefstroom University: quality promotion and innovation of postgraduate education and research through internal and external review**

This well-thought-out scheme was intended to promote quality within a systematic and innovative framework of planning and internal and external review. It involved identifying niche areas for strategic development and capacity building.²⁷

During its meeting on 23 November 2000, the Council of the PU for CHE noted the cooperation agreement that had been in place between the PU for CHE and UNW

since 2 February 1998. The Council also noted that both institutions were not in favour of a merger between them, as had been recommended by a government task group on the size and shape of higher education. The Council confirmed that the Management Committee of the PU for CHE should continue cooperating with the UNW. It also decided to appoint representatives to engage with members of the Council of the UNW to discuss the cooperation agreement and gauge the UNW's attitude towards cooperation.²⁸ Then, on 29 June 2001, the Council of the PU for CHE decided to send a delegation to UNW to support the process of comparing and auditing programmes in accordance with the 22 Sanso categories.²⁹

On 26 July 2001, the Management Committee of the PU for CHE met with the national task group on the size and shape of higher education. The meeting went well, according to Prof Carools Reinecke, the rector of the PU for CHE. Cooperating with UNW seemed to be the appropriate path, and it was felt that the negotiations on this with the UNW should continue.³⁰

The Council of the PU for CHE delegated the day-to-day management of the emerging dispensation to the Management Committee, which would report in full to the Council. A considerable amount of time and attention was given to the matter of cooperation with UNW during the second half of 2001.³¹

On 31 July 2001, the Management Committee took note of a discussion that had taken place on 23 July 2001 between the representatives of the PU for CHE, UNW and Technikon North-West (TNW). According to the minutes of the meeting of 23 July, the notion was discussed that, in order to carry out the Minister's National Plan for Higher Education, the tertiary institutions in the North West Province should formalise their cooperation by means of agreements.³² The minutes also show that, through the efforts of Prof Reinecke of the PU for CHE, and Dr H Brinkman, chairman of the management of the Free University of Amsterdam, a sum of 150 000 guilders (R500 000) had been donated to ensure that the institutions' cooperation and agreements were based on thorough planning; Dr Brinkman would serve as advisor and facilitator of this process.³³

The PU for CHE, UNW and TNW had already held separate talks with the National Working Group and all three were of the view that in the proposed cooperation process, each would retain its own unique ethos and identity.³⁴

During this period, the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association, known as SAUVCA, decided to take an active interest in developments around the restructuring of the higher education system. On 14 August, the Management Committee of the PU for CHE

took note of circulars 139 and 141 from SAUVCA about a proposed meeting at which Prof Reinecke would represent the PU for CHE.³⁵

The purpose of the meeting would be to enable the universities, via SAUVCA, to give the Minister and National Working Group information about their plans and progress in terms of the National Plan for Higher Education.³⁶

On 31 July 2001, representatives of the PU for CHE, UNW and TNW gathered for an important meeting. They reached consensus on collaboration among tertiary institutions in the North West Province as the best way to realise the National Plan for Higher Education. At their meeting on 31 July, the representatives considered four possible models:

- Independent institutions
- Amalgamation
- Cooperation according to a framework of agreements³⁷
- Compulsory association³⁸

Preference was given to the option of compulsory association. This would take the form of contractual academic consortia between autonomous institutions. The idea was to flesh out this option for the PU for CHE, UNW and TNW and to submit it to the National Working Group in October 2001 as the model for cooperation in the region.³⁹ In the meantime, in September 2001, the three institutions submitted a joint funding request to the Carnegie Corporation to further explore this option.

This request stemmed from a study visit that Prof CFC van der Walt, the registrar of the PU for CHE, had made to the United States, England and the Netherlands. Important insights about the functioning of academic consortia came to light during this visit.⁴⁰

The Council of the PU for CHE held an important meeting on 29 November 2001. At this meeting, extensive feedback was given on the progress of the so-called regional collaboration between the three institutions, in line with the National Plan for Higher Education.

The most important aspects raised were that:

- The model for cooperation on which the three institutions had agreed had been communicated to the National Working Group and to SAUVCA.
- On the instruction of the management committee of the PU for CHE, Prof CFS van der Walt, the registrar, had paid a successful visit to the United States, England and the Netherlands, mostly for research purposes and to attend a

conference in Washington DC on the origins, characteristics and functioning of consortia.

- The Council had expressed its approval with the discussions and negotiations with the National Working Group, with the two other institutions in the region and with the ways in which the National Plan could be realised
- Dr Theuns Eloff, who in January 2002 took over the reins as rector of the PU for CHE,⁴¹ undertook to arrange a meeting between the Council members of the PU for CHE and the UNW to discuss the developments under way in higher education and to come to a decision about regional collaboration. In Potchefstroom, interested parties engaged in intense debate about language use and institutional culture.

At his inauguration as the seventh rector of the PU for CHE on 6 February 2002, Dr Eloff said that new ways of thinking should be developed to implement the Christian character of the PU for CHE in the scientific work of the university and to create a functional language policy in a country with 11 official languages.⁴²

During April 2002, these matters were also identified as burning issues in an international report produced under the auspices of the European University Association (EUA) and commissioned by the PU for CHE itself.⁴³ The report suggested that the university should be bilingual and had to diversify its student and staff profile.⁴⁴ From January 2002 onwards, these controversial matters were hotly debated in the light of the sometimes polarised expectations around the proposed restructuring process for higher education.⁴⁵

At the next meeting of the Council of the PU for CHE on 18 April 2002, the following matters related to the restructuring of the higher education sector were tabled:

- A report of the National Working Group, together with an explanation of this report, which was made available by Dr T Eloff. The report was entitled *Background document on academic collaboration in the North-West Region*.
- The agreement for regional collaboration, which the extended management committee of the PU for CHE had discussed on 4 March 2002.
- The draft memorandum of agreement between the PU for CHE, UNW and TNW.
- A letter dated 8 April 2002, in which the TNW officially withdrew from possible collaboration

with institutions in the North West, indicating that it preferred to associate with the Gauteng region in future.⁴⁶

On 18 April 2002, the PU for CHE Council took the following decisions about regional collaboration:⁴⁷

- To support in principle the development of a regional higher education consortium between the PU for CHE and the UNW.
- To endorse the process followed to date.
- To secure the support of interested parties, such as the staff, students and councils of both institutions, and to emphasise the importance of collaboration within the higher education sector.
- Under the guidance of the university's management, to take practical steps to give effect to collaboration with the UNW.
- To take care to ensure that the matter would be managed effectively in all respects.⁴⁸

The PU for CHE Council was informed that, during discussions with Mr Saki Macozoma, convenor of the National Working Group, it had become clear that the Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal, was considering a merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW, and that he would shortly make a public announcement about this.⁴⁹

By the same token, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Nowets consortium model for collaboration between the PU for CHE and the UNW, which had already been thoroughly planned and worked out in the form of a draft contract, was not what the Minister had in mind.

During the meeting of the PU management committee on 29 April 2002, Dr T Eloff said it would be advisable for the PU for CHE to wait for Prof Asmal's recommendations to the Cabinet.⁵¹

On 30 May 2002, Prof Asmal issued a formal media release on the transformation and reconstruction of higher education from June 2002 onwards. In the light of this, it was clear that the PU for CHE's envisaged model for regional collaboration should be placed on the back burner.⁵²

During the PU for CHE's Council meeting on 27 June 2002, Dr Eloff stated that the proposed merger had been announced in the Government Gazette on 21 and 24 June 2002.⁵³

In effect, the Minister's merger declaration of 21 June 2002 had superseded the initiative to establish a consortium between the two universities in the North

West Province. Therefore the two university Councils had not approved the intended draft agreement on the consortium nor had they resolved to submit it to the Minister of Education.⁵⁴

Although the consortium never got off the ground, the work put into it was not in vain. On the contrary, the reports written on the abortive consortium would eventually be of enormous value when the PU for CHE and the UNW were merged to create the new North-West University. When the time came, the task team members were able to apply the knowledge and experience they had gained in the consortium phase to the task of preparing for the merger. In fact, many of the original task teams were redeployed during the merger process, ensuring that the results of their earlier work were put to good use.⁵⁵

Perhaps even more important than the work of the pre-merger task teams was the involvement for a period of over two years of a large number of leaders from the two universities participating in the merger process. From 1998 onwards, they worked together regularly in a structured process and came to know one another rather well. In the process, they gained respect for all the members of their own task teams and for the other teams working on related topics. The leaders and some members of the task teams were exposed to many different viewpoints as a result of the presentations they made to the two Councils or to their committees, senates and faculties, managements, technical staff, unions and students. All of this would be to the benefit of the as-yet-unforeseen merger process after 2002.

It is safe to say that the merger process proceeded rapidly and smoothly once the two Councils had resolved to embrace the experience gained during the voluntary consortium process between the PU for CHE and the UNW.⁵⁶

2.3. Reasons for the rapid pace of change in the higher education sector

During the 1990s, the South African higher education sector was confronted with twin pressures for change. On the one hand, it was part of the global phenomenon of rapid change in higher education; on the other, it had to deal with equally urgent national political pressure for change.

From a global perspective, the pace of change in higher education during recent decades was accelerating for various complex and interrelated reasons. These include globalisation associated with restructuring, internationalisation, the growing role of the private sector, opening up of markets, increasing use of international rankings, the changing needs of students and their expectations on what to achieve with their

qualifications, and changes in the criteria for funding higher education.⁵⁷ Various higher education institutions in European countries had encountered the challenge of participating in major collaborations, alliances and mergers, often actively promoted by governments to strengthen institutions and improve performance.

These global trends have compelled higher education institutions to reconsider their fundamental role, niche market positions, structures, relationships, partnerships, policies and processes. To remain relevant and worthwhile in the modern world, they need to continue questioning their mission, their competitive advantage, how they operate internally, engage externally with other institutions and organisations, and interact with the wider society.⁵⁸

When the FW de Klerk regime was dismantling Apartheid prior to 1994, Ailie Cleghorn remarked that, *“One wonders what the legacy of this system will be for the society as a whole and for the education of its people in particular. If there are any lessons to be learned from other parts of the world, surely one is that entrenched attitudes do not easily lend themselves to change by legislation. Yet, India has reduced the severe restrictions that the caste system imposed on access to higher education, and in Canada, the Official Languages Act of 1969 has had far-reaching repercussions in increasing the status of French and its speakers. Thus, we are reminded that through legislation governments can provide direction for a renegotiation of the norms governing the relations among groups”*.⁵⁹

At the time, John Dreijmanis⁶⁰ and Jim Corrigan⁶¹ had published two reports with opposing viewpoints on their understanding of the vast pressures, problems and trends that South Africa’s system of higher education had experienced, especially during the period of emergency rule from 1986. Dreijmanis presented a rational and functional viewpoint of educational change as part of modernisation. Corrigan, on the other hand, reflected a resistance perspective of conflict with the viewpoint that nothing would change for the better without violence. Cleghorn concluded that change in education tends to follow social change and so the substantial restructuring of South Africa’s education system would only happen when the black South African majority acquired political decision-making power, or the ideological stranglehold of Apartheid over the minds of white South Africans was loosened.⁶²

It was also clear during these years of political demonstrations to end minority rule in South Africa that educational reform was key. In this respect, the Africanisation of university administrations that for decades had been dominated by white academics became an important demand.⁶³

While the long overdue public debate on higher education was raging, a Wits University Deputy Vice-Chancellor candidate argued that to broaden access, universities should admit even under-prepared students. Therefore, to enable tertiary institutions to meet the increasing demand for access, disciplines should have different enrolment quotas. Universities would have to refine curricula, admission and language policies, and implement an adequate financial aid programme to achieve this pressing goal.⁶⁴

The demand for comprehensive transformation of tertiary institutions in South Africa cut straight through the heart and soul of former white and black universities. Five years after the birth of democratic rule in South Africa, institutions were struggling to come to grips with this kind of change.⁶⁵ Dr Thriven Reddy, who identified two discourses of social transformation, described the role of higher education institutions in this process of social change. The first discourse emphasises making quantitative, procedural changes to the higher education system to improve regulation and coordination, and make the system more responsive to the real challenges of globalisation by creating a skilled workforce for the so-called *“knowledge society”*. The second discourse was embedded in the radical values popularised in the educational terrain of the struggle (the radical version of *“peoples” education*) as a template for evaluating all post-Apartheid developments. Education, according to this standpoint, must contribute to the radical, not reformist, transformation of society.⁶⁶

The national experience revealed a political transition with a new South African government facing the overwhelming task of addressing the longer term and more leaden consequences of Apartheid.⁶⁷ The following sections illustrate that in South Africa, the pace of change in the higher education sector was dictated by government policy in accordance with the new political dispensation.

2.4. Governance, legislation, government policy and legal issues to restructure and transform the South African higher education sector

The Star newspaper reported in 1997 that *“The restructuring of the South African higher education system ranges widely across mergers, incorporations, the creation of new institutional forms, and regional-level programme collaboration and rationalisation.”*⁶⁸ Since 1994, the new government had driven this radical restructuring of higher education by political will to overcome the legacy of Apartheid and with the aim of improving the rationality, efficiency and effectiveness of the system as a whole, the newspaper said. *“At the system-level, mergers are driven by a concern for the*

'fitness of purpose' of institutions. Fitness of purpose requires an institution to identify an appropriate role for itself within a higher education system that seeks to be responsive to national, regional and local needs and to achieve national policy and transformation goals, priorities and targets. This question centrally informs the national transformation agenda as contemplated in the Education White Paper 3."⁶⁹

This White Paper stated that all existing practices, institutions and values should be rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era. The goal was to become stronger and more focused and efficient, and to function within a framework of new policies and regulations to suit the post-Apartheid dispensation.⁷⁰ Among the documents that laid the foundation for the modified framework and legal policy for higher education were the 1996 National Commission on Higher Education, 1997 Higher Education Act and the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education.⁷¹

A Wyngaard and C Kapp listed some of the events that impelled the new government to reshape the higher education sector:

- *The fragmented systems inherited from the pre-1994 government(s), which led to a vertically and horizontally fragmented system along provincial level and racial lines.*
- *The inequities and disjunctions of the systems.*
- *The incoherent and poor articulation between various types of further and higher education institutions.*
- *The unequal distribution of resources and subsidy amongst further and higher education institutions.*
- *The poor throughput rates by institutions.*
- *The research output by published articles and postgraduate degrees.*
- *The declining state subsidy mainly because of poor economic growth.*
- *The impact of legislation (SAQA, NQF, Skills Development Act, Skills Development Levy, Labour Relations Act, Employment Equity) which changed the profile of institutions and which resulted in the permanent appointment of temporary staff, increased salaries and the expansion of basic fringe benefits to all members of staff.*
- *The new types of institutions, for example private and/or virtual institutions and modes of learning (open, electronic, telematic, work-based); new forms of 'production' of knowledge*

Higher education in a democratic South Africa faced huge challenges - primarily the need to achieve greater equity, efficiency and effectiveness within institutions and across the system.

such as mode 2 knowledge.

- *The competition from institutions for students, for example UK and Australian institutions offering programmes in South Africa.*
- *The declining enrolments in some institutions, migration of students between institutions and non-participation in further and higher education.*
- *The quality of teacher preparation in some colleges of education.*
- *The regional overlap and duplication in programmes.*⁷²

This was the backdrop against which government had to reshape the landscape to fit into the new political order. According to Dr Rajani Naidoo, the aim of this kind of intervention is to protect the newly defined social, political and cultural functions of higher education. This is particularly important in countries which have undergone social transformation and where democratic dispensations may be fragile.⁷³ The accusation was that for too long universities had been fixated on academic achievement, to the exclusion of other human endeavours and accomplishments.⁷⁴

Another observer also addressed this proposed cultural shift in higher education and argued that the call for the introduction of African values and ethics within the higher education sector would taint the puritanical notion of excellence that had been built on the unethical, unequal power relationship and the one-dimensional perspective of European superiority and therefore the imitation of Europe.⁷⁵

B van Wyk identified the following four focus areas of the government intervention programme in higher education: reform, change, reconstruction or restructuring, and transformation. He argued that two key policy documents, namely the Education White Paper 3 of 1997 and the National Plan for Higher Education of 2001 firmly addressed educational transformation in South Africa. *"The Education White Paper 3 articulates a vision of the establishment of a single, national coordinated system, which must meet the learning needs of citizens and the reconstruction and development of society and the economy. The NPHE outlines the framework and*

mechanisms for implementing and realising the policy goals of the White Paper."⁷⁶

Van Wyk also deduced the following key features of the intended educational transformation goals from the published literature: knowledge production, reflexive action, seeing new problems, new ways of approaching old problems, reconstruction, abandoning old ways of knowing and doing, adoption of a new, broader definition of reality, participating in key initiatives, gender and racial equality, bringing about fundamental changes, an evolution of the way in which students approach the acquisition of knowledge and skills and relate them to a wider context, rethinking, cultural change, putting controversial issues on the table, and effective communication. He also narrowed these key features down to a cluster of meanings encapsulating the intended reconstruction process:

- Equity and redress by means of gender and racial equality
- Critical inquiry in knowledge production, in rethinking and abandoning old ways of doing, and in making fundamental change
- Communicative praxis, which includes effective communication and participation
- Citizenship and cultural change in contributing to social good.^{77 78}

HM van der Merwe concluded in 2000 that after the dismantling of Apartheid rule, the term “*transformation*” was used so freely that it became a buzzword in South Africa.⁷⁹ Wyngaard and Kapp remarked a few years later that although researchers could arrange the post-1994 events in higher education into many categories such as economic, social or political events, most of these interventions were formalised in legislation, as illustrated in the next section.⁸⁰

2.5. An overview of the restructuring and transformation process in the higher education sector in South Africa after 1994

From 1994 onwards, the ANC-led government adopted an interventionist approach to educational change from primary school to the level of higher education. This approach culminated in the formulation of the following far-reaching policy documents:

- The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) Report (1996)
- *The Education White Paper 3: a programme for the transformation of higher education* (1997)
- The Council on Higher Education (CHE) Report

entitled, *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century* (2000)

- The National Plan for Higher Education (2001)⁸¹

2.5.1. Gradual government interventions to create a single coordinated system for the higher education sector

It has long been recognised that higher education institutions, in particular universities, are among the most stable and change-resistant social institutions to have existed during the past 500 years. Even so, as a vitally important part of societies around the world, higher education institutions have transformed within themselves and gradually adapted to change and global competition.⁸² From this perspective, good universities are always evolving and redefining themselves. Universities are for that reason in a constant state of flux, not because of external factors so much as their inherent predisposition for introspection.⁸³ Global reform in higher education also set an example for the post-1994 government to align its goals with these trends.

Higher education in South Africa was at this stage already in a pre-transformative change process. This was characterised by practices of “*unlearning*” as a result of the political crises of the 1980s, which set the scene for transformation that would free society from unworkable circumstances and identities, and release fresh energy for new learning and possibly positive change.⁸⁴

During the stage when the Apartheid system was being dismantled, the following initiatives informed efforts to renew higher education policy by developing new policy directives. The custodians of these initiatives were the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), a civil society initiative with origins in the “people’s education” movement, the policy forum of the Union of Democratic University Staff Association (UDUSA), and the Centre for Education Policy Development, linked to the ANC.

The ANC’s educational task group developed a new national education policy framework, and pledged that an ANC-led government would appoint a national commission to formulate recommendations to transform higher education. These initiatives accentuated five principles for a restructured and transformed higher education system: non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, redress and a unitary system.⁸⁵

This period was one of lively debate and a profusion of publications and policy expectations, all offering different viewpoints and approaching the restructuring of higher education from different angles. Cloete

and co-editors remarked that the different prevailing theories of higher education reform in the early 1990s suggested that higher education systems undergoing restructuring on such a broad scale would need policies that promoted diversification of:⁸⁶

- the types of institutions operating within the system
- the structures of these institutions
- the types of research and teaching they carried out.⁸⁷

The first democratic election in 1994 gave impetus to the restructuring of all sectors of South African society, including the education system, Cloete and co-editors said. *“Since the demise of the Apartheid order, South African higher education has seen massive changes which have left an indelible imprint on the system, its constituent institutions and practices. The first democratic government established a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), which charted a programme of transformation for the sector. By 1997, key higher education policy and legislation informed by the work of the Commission was in place to enable the systematic programme for the transformation of higher education to unfold. In the decade since the adoption of the White Paper on Higher Education and the Higher Education Act, change has manifested on many fronts.”*⁸⁸

In the first decade of democracy, the transformation of the South African higher education landscape commenced by exploring the “case” for higher education in a new dispensation as a vital social domain. The emphasis was on renewing and transforming the system by investigating the following categories:

- Legal and policy context
- Institutional landscape
- Equity
- Teaching and learning
- Research
- Community engagement
- Quality assurance
- Responsiveness
- Governance
- Financing
- Internationalisation⁸⁹

The educational aim of universities has been to develop human capital to participate effectively in the workplace and to address challenges in the production of knowledge.⁹⁰ What some universities neglected during the Apartheid regime was this primary function of universities: the production, evaluation and dissemination of knowledge.⁹¹

The vision for a transformed higher education sector after 1994 was to contribute to consolidating democracy and social justice, producing critical intellectuals, developing knowledge and expanding and improving the economy. It was foreseen that a transformed higher education system could contribute the following value to society:

- by serving the purposes of democracy and social justice, it could assist in laying the basis for greater participation in economic and social life;
- by supporting higher levels of employment, it could contribute to political and social stability, and by effectively combining these kinds of functions, it could improve the overall well-being of the nation and build the capability and capacity of citizens to exercise and enforce their democratic rights and participate effectively and critically in decision-making.

According to Cloete and co-editors, the post-Apartheid government foresaw that a transformed higher education system could contribute enormously to the social, cultural, political and economic development of its citizens.⁹² The CHE also highlighted this line of reasoning: *“Higher education is capable at once of delivering public good (opportunities for self-fulfilment, critical citizenry, free intellectual inquiry), and of responding to contextualise societal and economic needs (high-level skills and knowledge production for the modern economy).”*⁹³

Ideally, to be effective in a new political dispensation, the transformed higher education system should achieve two key objectives. It should:

- redress and radically reduce deeply embedded inequalities of access and participation in terms of students, resources and staff within the higher education system
- effectively and efficiently produce, within the constraints of limited resources, the range of graduates and research and service outputs that will support participation in a globalised knowledge-driven economy.⁹⁴

2.5.2. Accelerated transformation by the National Commission on Higher Education in 1994⁹⁵

President Nelson Mandela appointed the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) during February 1995. Eighteen months later, in August 1996, the NCHE submitted a report, A Framework for Transformation.⁹⁶ The NCHE was charged to give advice to government on the restructuring of higher education by formulating a vision and putting forward policy proposals to ensure the development of a well-planned, integrated, high-quality system.⁹⁷ The focus of the NCHE was therefore two-fold: to liberate higher education from the aberrations of Apartheid and to modernise the sector by infusing it with international experience and best practices.⁹⁸

Professor Sibusiso Bengu, the Minister of Education at the time, published the first White Paper on Education and Training on 15 March 1995 and established the first steps towards developing a new educational system by proclaiming the following result: *“South Africa has never had a truly national system of education and training, and it does not have one yet. This policy document describes the process of transformation in education and training which will bring into being a system serving all our people, our new democracy, and our Reconstruction and Development Programme.”*⁹⁹

The formal restructuring and transformation process of higher education policy formulation began with this presidential proclamation of the establishment of the NCHE¹⁰⁰ and their report at the end of 1996.¹⁰¹ This commission received a broad mandate to develop a framework for the transformation of higher education in South Africa. They sought to eradicate past imbalances by transforming this crucial area of the country’s cultural and intellectual life and in doing so realign the sector in the service of the larger transformation agenda since 1994 of the nation’s political, social and economic order.¹⁰²

According to the NCHE, the challenges facing higher education were to meet the need for highly trained person power, establish a new research agenda and learning programmes, and acclimatise to the rapid international development of the learning society, with its new means of knowledge and information production, dissemination and application.¹⁰³ This need for transformation of the higher education system stemmed from two sets of factors, *“firstly the profound deficiencies of the present system which inhibit its ability to meet the moral, social and economic demands of the new South Africa; and secondly, a context of unprecedented national and global opportunities and challenges.”*¹⁰⁴

In short, their aim was to preserve what was valuable and to address what was defective and required transformation.

The NCHE report was the founding policy document on the restructuring of higher education and was intended to advise the Minister on the shape, types and size of institutions of higher education to further the aims of the new political dispensation.¹⁰⁵

The scope of the report revolved around the following policy pillars for a transformed higher education system:

- Satisfying the need for equity: the NCHE anticipated that the proposed process of massification and increased participation of prospective students would require major expenditure and could generate challenges for new administrative arrangements. The NCHE argued that these challenges were the price to pay for the creation of a single, coordinated higher education system.
- Dealing with the potential consequences of rising enrolment on academic standards and differences in quality assurance across institutions: the NCHE proposed an overall quality improvement in the higher education system. Therefore, it promoted a policy of quality assurance and quality promotion through various forms of capacity building within a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This proposed policy would steer overall quality improvements in the system.
- Addressing the need for redress and development: the NCHE promoted a policy of greater institutional responsiveness to ensure higher levels of engagement with the process of social transformation, to generate wider benefits for society and build robust social capital. These optimistic challenges included changes in the content, focus and delivery modes of academic programmes and research focus. This kind of knowledge revision also had to be aligned with the needs of the market and civil society. Governance structures on institutional level would have to facilitate wider participation and stakeholder consultation to ensure the realisation of this kind of innovative responsiveness.
- Increasing overall participation from an elite higher education system to a mass higher education system: this policy pillar revolved around increased cooperation and partnerships. The NCHE had recommended a model of *“cooperative governance”* between the state in

a supervisory role, intermediary bodies, internal constituency partnerships of higher education institutions, and a set of linkages between institutions and civil society.¹⁰⁶

The NCHE consequently also developed a new approach and relationship between government and the higher education sector. This has been described as “*cooperative governance*” and “*conditional autonomy*”.¹⁰⁷ For example, institutions would be required to exercise their autonomy in tandem with public accountability. Another example was that the Ministry’s role as overseer of the sector would not involve taking responsibility for the micro-management of institutions. A third implication was that the Ministry would undertake its role in a transparent manner.¹⁰⁸

This move towards cooperative governance was envisaged in the Green Paper of 1996 where the role of the state was described as “*supervising the higher education system to ensure academic quality and maintain a certain level of accountability.*”¹⁰⁹ This relationship was reiterated in the White Paper of 1997, which stated that cooperative governance and relationship presupposed a proactive, guiding and constructive role for government in the affairs of higher education.¹¹⁰ Eventually this approach was formalised in the Higher Education Act (Act no 101 of 1997).¹¹¹

The NCHE also expressed faith in statutory regional structures to consult on the planning needs of regions, mergers and the rationalisation of the sector.¹¹² According to JM Jacobsz, the subject of mergers in the NCHE report was limited to teachers’ training colleges and not universities. The report focused rather on institutional differentiation.¹¹³

2.5.3. Recommendations by the Ministry and the Department of Education to warrant government policy goals and objectives in a national policy framework

The Ministry and the Department of Education (DoE) followed a general process of consensus building to convert the NCHE’s recommendations into policy. The DoE had established a Higher Education Branch in 1995 to provide capacity in this transformation process. The following papers were published to obtain a broad consensus on a national higher education policy framework:

2.5.3.1. Green Paper on higher education transformation (December 1996)¹¹⁴

The NCHE’s report was the primary resource for compiling the Ministry’s Green Paper, which did not replicate the level of detail or depth of the analysis contained in the report of the NCHE. For this reason,

Prof Sibusiso Bengu, the Minister of Education from 1994 to 1999, advised the readers of the Green Paper to study and assess the NCHE’s report in order to gain a fuller sense of the thinking behind the Green Paper.¹¹⁵

The Green Paper developed a further step in the construction of a unitary post-Apartheid system and adhered to the principle of public consultation with a broad spectrum of interest groups and stakeholders concerned with higher education. The reason for this broad consultation was that the Green Paper signalled the policy intentions of the Ministry about the extensive reconstruction and development of the higher education sector for the five years from 1996.¹¹⁶

The Green Paper envisaged a well-planned, governed and funded higher education sector as a single, coordinated system. The Ministry’s policy intentions set out in the Green Paper were aimed at clarifying the following issues to ensure that in future all students and institutions could contribute on equal terms, according to their full potential and capacity:

- *“The system of higher education must be both expanded and transformed, within the reality of limited resources. In order for such expansion and transformation to be effective, and to deliver the required results, redress is a further imperative.*
- *Redress must operate partly in terms of access: it must ensure that no-one with the capacities to succeed in higher education is barred from doing so. And redress must also operate at the institutional level, in ensuring that inherited inequities and disparities are identified and addressed”*¹¹⁷

2.5.3.2. Draft White Paper (April 1997): Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (July 1997), on the future shape and size of the sector

Government’s interventionist approach towards reforming the sector was the driving force behind the 1997 *Education White Paper 3: a programme for the transformation of higher education*, which gave the Minister comprehensive powers to plan, control and fund the new proposed higher education system.¹¹⁸ The White Paper therefore marked a new phase from policy making to implementable strategies and performance measures.¹¹⁹ It defined the “size and shape” of the proposed new system, emphasised programme-based planning and stressed a need for institutional collaboration. The planning of quality assessment by the proposed Council on Higher Education (CHE) was meant to provide a sound basis for decisions on

structural rearrangements.¹²⁰ The Higher Education Act and the Education White Paper 3 of 1997 set out the responsibilities of the CHE.¹²¹

The White Paper, released on 24 July 1997, articulated the restructuring and consolidation of the anticipated institutional landscape of higher education after 1994.¹²² It provided a key element in the broader strategy for achieving the vision and goals for the transformation and reconstruction of the post-1994 higher education system and stated this goal as follows:

*“This White Paper outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives for the transformation of higher education through the development of a single, coordinated system with new planning, governing and funding arrangements.”*¹²³

The Education White Paper 3 focused firstly on the deficiencies of the pre-1994 system, which it said had limited ability to meet the moral, political, social and economic demands of the new South Africa, and had many deficiencies. Chief among them were the inequitable distribution of access for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography, gross discrepancies in the participation rates of students from different population groups, indefensible imbalances in the ratios of black and female staff compared to whites and males, and equally untenable disparities between historically black and historically white institutions.

Other deficiencies highlighted were the chronic mismatch between the output of higher education and the needs of the economy, as evidenced by the shortage of graduates in science, engineering, technology and commerce, and the sector’s unfulfilled obligation to help lay the foundations of a crucial civil society and strengthen a democratic ethos.

In addition, too many parts of the higher education system had teaching and research policies that favoured academic insularity and closed system disciplinary programmes, and insufficient attention was paid to the local, national and regional needs of the South African economy and, more broadly, the problems and challenges of Africa. Another deficiency was the fragmentation, inefficiency and ineffectiveness of governance at system level and, at institutional level, question marks over the democratic participation and effective representation of staff and students in governance structures.¹²⁴

Therefore, the main focus of Education White Paper 3 was on the challenges of building a higher education system to support the building of a better life for all citizens. These challenges included South Africa’s economic complexities, in which a relatively well-developed technological infrastructure and increasingly

educated labour force would co-exist side by side with a peripheral rural and informal rural economy. All members of the population, including the majority previously denied access to education and training and restricted to unskilled labour, should be able to participate fully in the “*knowledge society*”. At the same time, the country’s skills profile should enable it to participate successfully in the global economy.¹²⁵

Thus, higher education should be geared towards producing skills that would make it possible to mobilise South Africa’s human talent and potential through lifelong learning, while strengthening the country’s enterprises, services and infrastructure through high-level skills training and producing, acquiring and applying new knowledge through a vibrant, well-organised and integrated research and development system.¹²⁶

The Education White Paper 3 outlined the transformation agenda of higher education as being to increase and broaden participation and overcome inequality and inefficiency, be responsive to societal interests and needs, and support cooperation and partnerships in governance. In this regard, it would be important to reconceptualise the relationship between higher education and the state, civil society and stakeholders, and create an enabling institutional environment and culture.¹²⁷

The vision of the Ministry for the end stage of higher education, after achieving these White Paper goals, was that all South Africans would enjoy an improved and sustainable quality of life, participate in a growing economy, and share in a democratic culture. The transformed system would promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all, while eradicating unfair discrimination and advancing redress. It would meet national development needs, including for high-skilled employment, and support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights. Higher education would also contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and address, the problems and demands of the country, Southern Africa and African contexts.¹²⁸

The envisaged planning objectives called for a well-planned, governed and funded higher education system to overcome the fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency of the country’s Apartheid past.¹²⁹ In turn, the broader transformation goals and objectives were to ensure an equitable, sustainable and productive single, national coordinated higher education system of high quality, and to contribute effectively and efficiently to the human resource, skills, knowledge, and research needs of the country. This strategy was consistent with the non-racial, non-sexist and democratic values enshrined in the constitution.¹³⁰

Referring to the question of values, David Batstone argued that institutions or organisations could be called value driven if they put their resources at the service of their employees and the students or public whom they serve. He said that whenever an institution tried to align its mission with the values of the workforce as a whole, the role players could transform the morale of the organisation.¹³¹

Meanwhile, the Ministry declared that the intensification of global social relations, multiple changes in the economy and technological advances in the modern knowledge society posed the following challenges to the South African higher education sector:

- equipping its students with the skills and technological expertise and innovative practices necessary to participate successfully in the new economy
- socialising a new generation with the requisite cultural values and communication competencies to become citizens of an international community
- utilising information technology that is transcending national boundaries and connecting higher education institutions around the world.¹³²

The proposed new policy framework for higher education therefore had to address two sets of challenges. Firstly, it had to overcome the legacy of the past by addressing past inequality and inefficiency, increasing access for black students and women in all fields of study, and generating new models and learning and teaching to accommodate a larger, more diverse student population. Secondly, the new policy framework had to deal with the challenges of the present and future by restructuring the higher education system and delivering the research, highly trained people and knowledge that a developing society needed to compete globally.¹³³

The Education White Paper 3 accepted the NCHE viewpoints as a framework to underpin the sector's transformation process. According to Prof Saleem Badat, "*the White Paper set out policy in support of an intention to transform higher education through the development of a programme-based higher education system, planned, funded and governed as a single coordinated system.*"¹³⁴

It was foreseen that the programme-based approach for the higher education system should be introduced at a range of institutions and learning sites, while applying a variety of teaching and learning methods. Similarly, it was anticipated that this strategy would succeed in attracting an increasingly diverse body of learners and in facilitating a wide range of key goals.¹³⁵

Certain managerial challenges were foreseen in order to operate the proposed single, national and coordinated higher education system. These were the role of detailed planning, a revised funding system that was goal oriented and performance-related, and a transformed system of cooperative governance where the government should play a steering and coordinating role.¹³⁶

The Education White Paper 3 did not pursue the proposed strategy of massification by the NCHE, instead arguing for a process of planned, well-managed expansion of the higher education sector. The White Paper 3 also did not pursue the NCHE's recommendation for a higher education forum of stakeholders, with policy advisory functions and a statutory higher education council. Instead, the White Paper proposed the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE),¹³⁷ whose members the Minister would appoint after a process of public nomination.¹³⁸

As the major statutory body for the sector, the CHE would have a wide range of functions. These would include providing independent, relevant and timely strategic advice to the Minister on matters concerning the condition, transformation and planning of the sector. The CHE would also advise on changes to the policy framework affecting the following development needs of the sector:

- New learning, teaching and communication technologies
- Language policy
- Priorities such as improved integration, equity, cost-effectiveness, allocation of public funds, research capacity, governance, student support and qualifications structure
- Performance measures, such as advice on the three-year rolling institutional plans and size and shape, including institutional redress and the optimal number and type of institutions needed to meet the goals of a transformed higher education system
- The management of quality assurance and quality promotion in the higher education sector.¹³⁹

The Education White Paper 3 explained the scope for this monitoring and evaluation responsibility of the CHE and its advice to the Minister.¹⁴⁰ This would focus on monitoring and evaluating the performance of the higher education system according to performance indicators, and monitoring and evaluating the progress made towards the transformation goals of the higher education system.¹⁴¹

With this in mind, the CHE defined its purpose as being to:

- generate knowledge about the progress of higher education transformation
- provide expert advice to the Minister
- improve the higher education sector through the application of new knowledge on systemic and institutional transformation
- strengthen democracy through dissemination of data and interrogation of policy development and implementation.¹⁴²

In turn, the focus of the CHE Monitoring and Evaluation System would be on equity, efficiency, quality and responsiveness.¹⁴³

In accordance with the White Paper, the Ministry also established a new Higher Education Branch of the Department of Education to oversee the transformation of the system. Provision for these functions was stipulated in the Higher Education Act, which envisaged establishing a Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) to coordinate quality assurance in higher education.

The founding document of the HEQC was published in 2000 for public comment and as such institutionalised a new national quality assurance regime for the higher education sector.¹⁴⁴ The HEQC was publicly launched in May 2001 as a permanent committee of the CHE.¹⁴⁵ The Education White Paper 3 explained that the establishment of the HEQC, its registration with SAQA and its modus operandi would be determined by the CHE within the framework and procedural guidelines developed by SAQA.¹⁴⁶

On the subject of institutional governance, the White Paper explained that it was the responsibility of higher education institutions to manage their own affairs through their Councils, which would be the highest decision-making bodies of public institutions. The Minister had no responsibility or wish to micro-manage these institutions. Only in extreme circumstances would the Ministry consider intervening to assist in restoring good order and legitimate governance and management in an institution.¹⁴⁷ In exceptional circumstances, due to financial or other maladministration of a serious nature that a Council had failed to resolve, the Minister could appoint an independent assessor where this would be in the best interests of higher education in an open and democratic society

As part of this institutional structure, the Ministry strongly supported the establishment and operation of Broad Transformation Forums. In these forums, institutional stakeholders could unite to collectively determine the

agenda, timetable and strategies of transformation, prepare codes of conduct, support the improvement of the institutional culture, agree and implement dispute resolution procedures, participate in interpreting the national policy framework and select candidates for top management positions.¹⁴⁸

Following the publication of the Education White Paper 3, many commentaries and reports were published, analysing and evaluating the progress made towards realising the transformation goals stated in this report. Van der Westhuizen stated that examples of policy analysis, articles, reports from discussion sessions, submissions to facilitate debates, and monographs for discussions, could be found on various web sites, eg Sabinet,¹⁴⁹ the CHE, CHET, the Department of Education and the *South African Journal of Higher Education*.¹⁵⁰

2.5.3.3. The Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997¹⁵¹

The intention of this Act was to regulate higher education in totality, bringing together all students in higher education in a common system for the first time.¹⁵² Briefly, the Act provides for the establishment of a Council on Higher Education and of an independent assessor. It provides for the establishment, governance and funding of public higher education institutions and the registration of private institutions. The Act also provides for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education, as well as for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws.¹⁵³

In the preamble to the Higher Education Act, government's vision was laid down clearly to achieve the following goals:

- “Establish a *single coordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based higher education*;
- *Restructure and transform programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic and development needs of the Republic*;
- *Redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access*;
- *Provide optimal opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge*;
- *Promote the values which underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom*;
- *Respect freedom of religion, belief and opinion*;
- *Respect and encourage democracy, academic freedom, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship and research*;

- *Pursue excellence, promote the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee, tolerance of ideas and appreciation of diversity;*
- *Respond to the needs of the Republic and of the communities served by the institutions;*
- *Contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international standards of academic quality.*¹⁵⁴

Section 3 of the Act positioned the Minister of Education as the person responsible for steering the higher education system by determining policy on higher education after consulting the Council on Higher Education, and determining the scope and range of the operations of the public and private higher education systems and of individual institutions.¹⁵⁵

2.5.3.4. Size and shape debate since 1999¹⁵⁶

Prof Kader Asmal, who was the Minister of Education from 1999 to 2004, started a call to action declaration. He said that all modern nations with strong democratic traditions and successful economies invested a great deal in the education and training of their people to ensure educational opportunities for all citizens and raise the level and quality of learning throughout their societies.¹⁵⁷

Up to this stage, the restructuring of the higher education system and transformation by means of mergers had barely been mentioned in the White Paper or in the report of the National Commission on Higher Education. However, when Prof Asmal was appointed as the new Minister of Education in 1999, this aspect of the transformation debate came alive.¹⁵⁸ While the White Paper and the Higher Education Act painted the broad brush strokes for the transformation of higher education, the detail was provided in the report from the National Working Group (NWG), *The Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South Africa*,¹⁵⁹ known as the so-called Size and Shape document.¹⁶⁰ It recommended reducing the absolute number of institutions and investigating the full range of possibilities and permutations for the future of higher education institutions, including the establishment of a single distance education institution and the non-closure of institutions.¹⁶¹

David Robbins explained the troubles afflicting South African universities and technikons during this stage of high-level planning in 1999. He contemplated that the grim scenario of campus protests, lecture boycotts, warnings of institutional collapse, widespread financial investigations, crippling amounts of outstanding unpaid student fees, and the rumours of fundamental change gave the impression that the situation in the higher education sector was becoming more complex.¹⁶²

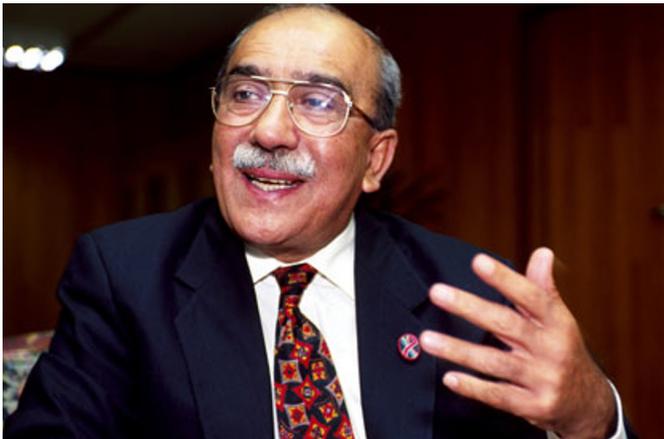
Meanwhile, two years had passed since promulgation of the Higher Education Act and government was taking a dim view of the transformation progress of higher education institutions. From government's perspective, the system was not transforming efficiently because it was not executing the policy instruments adequately. This implementation vacuum set a chain of significant developments in motion, driven by the following three interrelated factors:

- The absence of regulatory instruments to secure the transformation strategies set out in the White Paper.
- The fact that some historically advantaged higher educational institutions (HAIs) had seized unforeseen market opportunities and embarked on a range of entrepreneurial initiatives to position themselves advantageously (eg in distance education programmes utilising "telematic" delivery, partnering with private providers to tap into expanding markets, and increasing their market share of contract research and consultancies).
- The rapid shifts in student enrolments that occurred in the new open access system. African and women student numbers were rising in historically advantaged institutions, while at the same time enrolments at most historically black or so-called historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) were declining sharply, with negative implications.¹⁶³

The net result of these unplanned developments was that in the new single coordinated system, entrenched institutional inequalities and disparities were still in evidence.¹⁶⁴ By capitalising on resource opportunities and educational outcomes, a group of advantaged institutions accelerated their lead at the expense of previously disadvantaged institutions. This made ministerial intervention unavoidable.

In dealing with this state of affairs, the Minister of Education in January 2000 requested the advice of the CHE on the optimisation of the preferred size and shape of the higher education system.¹⁶⁵ The Minister emphasised that until finality on institutional restructuring could be reached, it would not be possible to put strategies in place to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the higher education system.¹⁶⁶

The CHE was tasked with conducting an overarching exercise to devise strategies to ensure that the higher education system was indeed on the road to the 21st century. The Minister asked the CHE to provide him with the following information: "*A set of concrete proposals*



▲ Prof Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, 1999 – 2004

*on the shape and size of the higher education system and not a set of general principles which serve as guidelines for restructuring. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the point. Until and unless we reach finality on institutional restructuring, we cannot take action and put in place the steps necessary to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the higher education system.”*¹⁶⁷

The CHE established a Size and Shape Task Team to perform this task from February 2000,¹⁶⁸ and recruited its members from labour, business, universities and technikons, the Department of Education and the CHE itself. The task team’s point of departure was the Education White Paper 3.¹⁶⁹ The task team released a discussion document in early April 2000 engaging key constituencies on their findings. Three months later, on 18 July 2000, the task team handed a final report dated 30 June 2000 to the Minister; this document became known as the Size and Shape report.¹⁷⁰

The task team generated recommendations on the size and restructuring of the higher education system, taking into account the number of institutions, closures, combinations of institutions and the funding criteria of the sector. In the CHE’s report, *Towards a new higher education landscape: Meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century*,¹⁷¹ the task team gave examples of possible combinations or permutations that could create a more rational and coherent higher education landscape:

- Reconfiguring the sector as a differentiated and diverse system to become responsive to the varied social needs of the country.
- In a newly reconfigured system, institutions should have a range of mandates and pursue coherent and explicitly defined educational and social purposes for the production of knowledge and student success.

- The reconfigured sector should reduce the absolute number of institutions through a variety of restructuring combinations or permutations.
- While examples of possible combinations were provided for illustrative purposes, the Minister should investigate the full range of possibilities for combinations. He should also be open to compelling combination possibilities that may emerge from an iterative national planning process.
- Under Apartheid, institutions designated for black South Africans and the technikons were disadvantaged. Within the constraints of available resources, these institutions could be developed to serve vital social needs. These considerations must inform the national planning process, the combinations that are agreed upon, and the reconfiguring of the higher education landscape. The reconfiguration proposals should create developmental trajectories for institutions to enable them to undertake specified mandates within a new national framework.
- The Minister should set up a Working Group to consider the establishment of a single distance education institution for the country. The Working Group should investigate the current dedicated distance education institutions, as well as the distance programmes of contact institutions, and provide its recommendations by the end of June 2001.
- The Minister should lift the moratorium on the introduction of new distance education programmes by contact institutions.
- There should be a re-examination of the current academic policy and qualifications structure to ensure the overall integration of the system and to orient higher education to the changing knowledge and work environment.
- With regard to the designation of higher education institutions, all multi-purpose public and private institutions that satisfy the characteristics of at least “bedrock” institutions should use the term ‘university’ and qualifying terms appropriate to their missions.¹⁷²

It is clear that this Size and Shape document alluded to the guiding principles of the NCHE, but the proposed transformation would be difficult to achieve without combining at least some of the existing higher education institutions.¹⁷³ After the initial release of the document, several institutions responded to it and it was eventually

revised, culminating in the report of the National Working Group (NWG),¹⁷⁴ the so-called Macozoma Task Team.¹⁷⁵ These reports finally led to the publication of the concluding Size and Shape document in the Government Gazette of 24 June 2002.¹⁷⁶

The Minister's suggestions on the restructuring of the higher education sector set in motion an array of new and far-reaching reports and policy developments. Simultaneously with the proposals to restructure the higher education system, the rest of the post-secondary education sector was also reconsidered, including colleges of education, technical colleges, nursing colleges and agricultural colleges, which to a greater or lesser extent went through similar processes. Colleges of education, for example, were transferred from provincial to national jurisdiction and also reshaped, amalgamated, incorporated with technikons and universities or closed (such as the Sebokeng Teacher Training College).¹⁷⁷ These interventions eventually shaped a significantly different landscape in the further and higher education sector.

2.5.3.5. The watershed year, 2001

The year 2001 was without a doubt a watershed year for higher education. The Ministry put in place four major steering mechanisms for the restructuring of the sector. The National Plan for Higher Education was released in March 2001, the National Working Group (NWG) was established in April 2001 and released their report in December 2001. The discussion document on the *Funding of Public Higher Education: A New Framework* was also published at the end of March 2001 for comments. Finally, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the CHE was launched in May 2001. Together, these developments provided firm guidelines for national planning and advice on interventions, the goal and policy-orientated framework for funding and a quality assurance system.¹⁷⁸

2.5.3.6. The National Plan for Higher Education (March 2001)¹⁷⁹

The Size and Shape document preceded the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) published in March 2001,¹⁸⁰ a month after being announced by the Ministry in February 2001.¹⁸¹ This extensive plan outlined the framework and mechanisms for implementing and realising the policy goals of the 1997 Education White Paper 3 and dealt with the transformation of the higher education system as a whole.¹⁸²

The policy framework in the National Plan, as well as the previous proposals in the Size and Shape document, was developed against the background of two distinctive circumstances:

- The political agenda of the post-Apartheid government to assert the country's national identity and nation building through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as development strategy.
- The pressures of meeting imperatives of worldwide political and economic order though the founding of the government's macro-economic policy, namely the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy.¹⁸³

The National Plan was indeed the Ministry's response to the Council on Higher Education's Report, *Towards a new higher education landscape: meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century*, released in June 2000. This plan provided the framework for restructuring the higher education system for the 21st century and identified the following restructuring priorities:¹⁸⁴

- Establishing targets for the size and shape of the higher education system.
- Providing overall growth and participation rates, institutional and programme mixes and equity and efficiency goals.¹⁸⁵
- Providing a framework and outlining the processes and mechanisms for the restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system, as well as for the development of institutional three-year rolling plans.
- Proposing that the participation rate in higher education should increase from 15% to 20% in the long term, eg 10 to 15 years, to address both the imperative for equity and changing human resource and labour needs.
- Foreseeing a five-year focus on improving the efficiency of the higher education system by increasing graduate outputs and establishing graduation rate benchmarks that institutions would have to meet.
- Proposing that academic development programmes be funded as an integral component of a new funding formula and that the role and efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme be reviewed.

- Proposing that the participation rate should be increased by recruiting workers, mature students, in particular women, and people with disabilities, as well as recruiting students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries as part of the SADC Protocol on Education.
 - Proposing to shift the balance in enrolments over the next five to 10 years between the humanities, business and commerce and science, engineering and technology from the current ratio of 49%: 26%: 25% to 40%: 30%: 30% respectively.
 - Proposing that all graduates be equipped with the following skills and competencies necessary to function in modern society: computer literacy, information management, communication and analytical skills.
 - Expecting institutions to develop equity targets for the demographic composition of the student body and for equity of access to programmes.
 - Requiring employment equity plans with clear targets for rectifying race and gender inequities.
 - Proposing diversity among institutions through mission and programme differentiation based on the type and range of qualifications offered.
 - Proposing that the programme mix at each institution be determined on the basis of its current programme profile, including the relevance of the profile to the institution's location and context and its responsiveness to regional and national priorities, as published in the Government's Human Resource Development Strategy.
 - Proposing to maintain the existing mission and programme differentiation between technikons and universities for at least five years, as this promotes the access goals and human resource development.
 - Lifting the moratorium that the Minister imposed in February 2000 on the introduction of new distance education programmes in contact institutions, provided that the programmes have been approved as part of the institution's plans.
 - Proposing that redress for historically black institutions be linked to agreed missions and programme profiles, including developmental strategies to build capacity, especially in administrative, management, governance and academic structures.
 - Proposing the establishment of a single dedicated distance education institution to address the opportunities presented by distance education for increasing access both locally and in the rest of Africa.
 - Proposing the introduction of a separate component for research in the new funding formula to ensure greater accountability and the more efficient use of limited research resources.
 - Announcing the allocation of earmarked funds to build research capacity, including scholarships to promote postgraduate enrolments, which would contribute to building the potential pool of recruits for the academic labour market.
 - Proposing that the institutional landscape of higher education be restructured in such a way as to create new institutional and organisational forms to address the racial fragmentation of the system, as well as administrative, human and financial capacity constraints, by means of the following actions:
 - Institutional collaboration at the regional level in programme development, delivery and rationalisation, particularly of small and costly programmes that cannot be sustained across all the institutions.
 - Investigating the feasibility of a more rational arrangement for the consolidation of higher education provision by reducing, where appropriate, the number of institutions but not the number of delivery sites on a regional basis.
 - Establishing a National Working Group to undertake this investigation based on the principles and goals for the transformation of the higher education system, as outlined in the White Paper.
 - Announcing a few mergers because they were not dependent on the investigations of the National Working Group.
 - Proposing to establish national higher education institutes for Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape to facilitate access to higher education.¹⁸⁶
- The implementation of the broad goals and objectives of institutional restructuring should be in alignment with the other four policy goals and objectives outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education. These were increasing access, promoting equity, ensuring institutional diversity through mission and programme

differentiation, and building high levels of research capacity.

The *Mail & Guardian* newspaper published its understanding of this kind of differentiation between institutions:

- “*Differentiated*” means a range of social and educational mandates within which institutions could fit and proclaim their vision.
- “*Diversity*” means within their differentiated mandates, institutions could develop their own missions and unique responses to the needs of the country.¹⁸⁷

It was therefore imperative that institutions firmly locate their merger planning processes within the framework of the goals and objectives as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education. Although it was expected that the initial focus would inevitably be on the structural dimensions of the merger, institutions would have to guard against this becoming the overriding focus. Instead, they should ensure that the broader goals and objectives linked to the teaching and research mandate would be addressed in parallel to the structural issues.

The National Plan rejected the CHE’s proposed differentiation through distinct institutional types. Rather, it proposed differentiation in the institutional mission and programme mix.¹⁸⁸ Initiatives linked to the following broader goals and objectives were then developed:¹⁸⁹

- The programme and qualification mix exercise, which was central to the promotion of institutional diversity. The first stage in this process was completed at the end of 2002 with the release of the approved programme and qualification profile for all institutions, including those affected by the restructuring proposals. The approved profiles provided the parameters within which academic programme planning should take place, including the rationalisation of programmes, and had to be the starting point for determining the programme and qualification profile of the merged institution.
- The regional reviews to facilitate programme collaboration and rationalisation linked to the programme and qualification mix exercise. As indicated in the document entitled *Approved Academic Programmes for Universities and Technikons: 2003-2006* (DoE, July 2002): “*The Ministry believes that the development of a regional collaboration and rationalisation framework in the identified programme areas would provide the institutions affected by the merger proposals with a clearer platform on which to plan, coordinate and rationalise their own programme profile.*”¹⁹⁰

- The Ministry had already indicated to institutions that the programmes in these affected areas would only continue to be funded from the 2004/05 financial year if institutions had jointly reviewed and submitted proposals for programme collaboration and rationalisation. This meant that regional reviews would continue to be the framework for programme rationalisation during the merger period. The deadline for the regional review and submission of proposals for programme collaboration and rationalisation in identified areas was extended to June 2003.
- However, where proposals for rationalisation only involved institutions that were in the process of merging or incorporation, the institutions would not have to submit programme collaboration and rationalisation proposals in June 2003. In cases where the identified programmes cut across merging institutions and other institutions in a region, these programme collaboration and rationalisation proposals were due in June 2003. The Ministry had recognised that these proposals were complicated but believed it was necessary to provide the institutions affected by the proposed mergers with a platform from which to plan and rationalise the programme offerings of the merged institutions.
- The new Language Policy for Higher Education, which the Minister released in November 2002,¹⁹¹ was the starting point for determining the language policy of merged institutions. It was necessary to ensure that the goals identified in the language policy were built into the policies and practices of each merged institution.
- Although the Ministry did not require the affected institutions to submit three-year ‘rolling’ plans in 2003, they had to build the key issues linked to such plans, in particular access and equity objectives, into the merger planning process.
- In addition, institutions had to consider the likely impact on the merged institution of the policy processes that were under way. This policy initiative comprised the proposals for the establishment of a National Higher Education Information and Applications Service, the introduction of a new Academic Policy, and the review of the National Qualifications Framework.¹⁹²

The National Plan provided a policy framework that emphasised clear benchmarks for transformation and a system of three-year rolling institutional plans to facilitate responsiveness and ensure any planned expansion of institutions was linked to their sustainability.¹⁹³ The merger guidelines accentuated the fact that institutional restructuring proposals should match up with the other four policy goals and objectives outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education (2001). These were increasing access, promoting equity, ensuring institutional diversity through mission and programme differentiation, and building high-level research capacity.

The National Plan was in a way also a response to the CHE's report on the size and shape debate, and therefore provided the framework and mechanisms for restructuring the higher education system to achieve the vision and goals of the White Paper.¹⁹⁴ The report of the National Working Group thus represented the next step in the transformation plan and was the basis for the implementation phase of the policy initiatives.¹⁹⁵

2.5.4. National Working Group (NWG), May 2001¹⁹⁶

During May 2001 the Ministry published the terms of reference of the National Working Group.¹⁹⁷ Headed by Mr Saki Macozoma, the National Working Group was tasked with advising the Minister on the restructuring of the institutional landscape of higher education, as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education that had been released a month earlier.¹⁹⁸ Its advice was to include the appropriate arrangements for implementing the restructuring of the sector and for providing higher education on a regional basis through the development of new institutional and organisational forms, including institutional mergers and rationalisation of programme development and delivery.¹⁹⁹

The goals for the transformation of the higher education system, as outlined in the Education White Paper 3, were the guiding principles for the National Working Group's investigation:²⁰⁰

- Social and educational goals, in particular the intended contribution of higher education to social and economic development, both regionally and nationally.
- Access and equity goals in relation to student and staff equity, as well as institutional redress.
- Quality and efficiency goals in terms of economies of scale and scope, both programme and infrastructural, as well as the spread and quality of programmes and graduation and retention rates.
- Institutional sustainability and viability goals

in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure patterns, and management and governance capacities.

- Institutional identity and cultural goals for overcoming the legacy of Apartheid.²⁰¹

The terms of reference for the NWG were as follows:

- Determine how the number of institutions could be reduced and the structure of these restructured institutions.
- Ensure that the reduction in the number of institutions does not result in the closure of existing sites of delivery.
- Consider the full range of potential institutional arrangements, including the rationalisation of programme development and delivery through institutional collaboration and different merger models.
- Consider the role and function of all existing institutions in the development of new institutional and organisational forms to achieve a new higher education landscape.
- Recommend the incorporation of the constituent campuses and the distance education centre of Vista University into appropriate existing higher education institutions within each region.
- Consider the following regional demarcations for purposes of the investigation:
 - Eastern Cape
 - Free State
 - KwaZulu-Natal
 - Gauteng
 - Northern Province
 - North-West Province
 - Western Cape²⁰²

The National Working Group submitted its findings to the Minister during January 2002.²⁰³ It made two types of recommendations. Firstly, it dealt with a number of general issues applicable to all regions. Secondly, it made proposals and recommendations on the regional consolidation of higher education provision by establishing new institutional and organisational forms, and reducing the number of higher education institutions through a merger process and appropriate funding.²⁰⁴

The National Working Group suggested that, to implement the restructuring proposals successfully, government needed to:

- make a firm commitment to finance the process
- provide a legal framework for the restructuring
- ensure governance mechanisms to implement the proposals²⁰⁵

In its report of December 2001, the National Working Group recommended that the number of higher education institutions be reduced from 36 to 21 through the specific mechanism of mergers. It also listed the specific institutions in various provinces that were targeted for the proposed merger and incorporation process.

In Potchefstroom Dr Theuns Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor and Rector, replied that the PU for CHE agreed in principle with the inevitability of the proposed restructuring process.²⁰⁶ The institution did not see the NWG proposals as a threat but as an opportunity to build a new identity based on shared values and common purpose of the institutions involved.²⁰⁷

In Mafikeng, Dr Ngoato Takalo, the Vice-Chancellor and Rector, called an emergency university assembly meeting after rumours were spread that the PU for CHE would absorb the University of North West (UNW). She made it clear that the rumour mill was wrong and that for the time being the National Working Group report was only making recommendations to the Minister of Education. She confirmed that the two institutions were about to sign a compulsory association agreement to solidify cooperative activities.²⁰⁸

There were also fears that the proposed restructuring process would strain the budget of the tertiary sector. Mr Mxolisi Mlatha, the secretary-general of the SA Students Congress, also expressed this concern.²⁰⁹

After a period of consultation and robust debate, the Cabinet endorsed the National Working Group report and approved the redesign of the higher education landscape.²¹⁰ The Cabinet completed the debate on the restructuring of the higher education system, provided the final implementation framework for the restructuring of the sector, and proposed how to achieve the principles that government had identified and been debating since 1994. After the release of the National Working Group's report, the Minister developed his proposals to create new institutional and organisational forms.²¹¹ This ultimately led to proposals for institutional mergers and incorporations to be implemented in 2004 and 2005.²¹²

2.5.5. The Cabinet decision in May 2002 and government publications in June 2002

It was clear that the fate of the South African universities and technikons was at stake and anxiously awaited after the Education Ministry had said that the restructuring would “ensure the removal of the Verwoerdian legacy that created separate and unequal institutions”.²¹³

On 30 April 2002, the Cabinet delayed the release of Minister Asmal's long-awaited recommendations amid indications of dissent in the higher education sector over a lack of consultation. Cabinet called for more information for further discussion at a next Cabinet meeting after complaints by the CHE, the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP).²¹⁴ Minister Asmal explained why his proposals had been put on hold and said that the proposed mergers were part of the broader government-initiated transformation initiatives.²¹⁵

Based on the work of the National Working Group, the Minister published a press statement after a Cabinet decision on 30 May 2002,²¹⁶ which stated that: “Yesterday Cabinet approved the Government's ground breaking proposals for the transformation and reconstruction of higher education. This marks an exciting turning point for higher education in our country, away from our shameful Apartheid past to a confident future. The long awaited proposals are a product of extensive research and consultation, which have spanned the past decade.”²¹⁷

Cabinet's approval of the blueprint for reshaping the higher education sector also provided for a three-month period for public comment. The *Sunday Times* described the Cabinet resolution as the new dawn for higher education, which would follow a decade of deliberations on how many and what type of universities and technikons South Africa needs.²¹⁸

Minister Asmal published his master plan, called *Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education*, on 21 June 2002 in the Government Gazette.²¹⁹ He made it public on 24 June 2002 in two separate government gazettes.²²⁰ These documents set a new paradigm for higher education in South Africa: as the Minister stated, it would be a rational, seamless higher education system that grasps the intellectual and professional challenges facing South Africa in the 21st century. This meant that the merging of some higher education institutions was inevitable.²²¹ After an opportunity had been given for comment and consultation, Cabinet approved the final proposal that the Minister submitted in December 2002.

These approved proposals ended the planning phase of the transformation process for higher education that had begun in 1994. Although the CHE's report of 2000 did not mention the option of reducing the number of institutions, it promised the end of the binary educational system based primarily on race. The idea of linking institutional restructuring of the system and social redress gained implementable prominence in 2002 with the Department of Education's report, *Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education*,²²² which proposed a far-reaching programme of mergers as an appropriate mechanism to bring about transformation, equity, sustainability and productivity.²²³

This report provided concrete merger goals for the affected institutions to follow and named a list of institutions that had to be merged. New policy documents secured the principle means to reach the desired goals of the proposed restructuring process, being social development, equity and quality. These policy measures, introduced during the Asmal administration, were intended to reduce inequality and simultaneously foster internationalisation of the sector in one single operation.²²⁴

The merger and incorporation plan of Minister Asmal had two contrasting dimensions. One was the need to enhance access and equity for staff and students, and build new institutional cultures and identities beyond the racial and ethnic past. The other was to enhance the sector's efficiency and manageability.

Yet the planners of this new dispensation underestimated the social and cultural effects of the past, and the extent to which particular groups and institutions had stakes to defend. Both historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged institutions objected to the Ministry's top-down approach. Nevertheless, by 2004 this government-mandated merger programme had effectively reduced 36 institutions of higher education to 23: 11 were traditional universities (offering theory-oriented degrees), six were universities of technology (offering vocational diplomas and degrees) and six were comprehensive universities (offering a combination of both types of qualifications) in one major transformation plan.

In this new dispensation the 15 technikons that had offered vocational training disappeared.²²⁵ They were either merged with one of the comprehensive universities, or transformed into universities of technology. On the other hand, certain historically advantaged universities that ranked high for research output and on international ranking lists, such as Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town, were hardly affected by the

merger process. They were apparently better equipped to withstand the political pressure from the government and defend their educational prerogatives.²²⁶

Moreover, according to Prof Jonathan Jansen, this merger and incorporation process brought about the following positive changes for higher education in post-Apartheid South Africa:

- The eradication of racial inequalities among staff and students
- An end to the severe governance and management crisis of the historically disadvantaged institutions
- An anticipated reversal of the decline in student enrolment rates
- The alleviation of the chronic fragmentation and huge imbalances caused by the Apartheid government's goals and strategies²²⁷

After Cabinet formally confirmed the restructuring proposals, the Minister communicated the decision to the Council chairpersons of the PU for CHE, UNW and Vista.

In the Government Gazettes published in June 2002, the Minister gave the specific reasons for the restructuring of the PU for CHE in Potchefstroom and a satellite campus in Vanderbijlpark, the UNW in Mahikeng and its Mankwe Campus, and the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.²²⁸ The announcement published the Minister's intention to "establish a single institution for higher education through the merger of the University of North-West, the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the incorporation of the staff and students of Sebokeng Campus of Vista University".

The restructuring of the PU for CHE and the UNW was the most important challenge that the universities had had to face in their respective histories.²²⁹ It was also symbolic of the restructuring of the entire sector, since it was the only restructuring between a primarily white and a primarily black university. This meant it was of the utmost importance to find a win-win solution – otherwise the process would fail miserably.

On 9 December 2002, the Minister announced Cabinet's final decision on the restructuring during a media conference. This announcement confirmed the Minister's intention to form a new higher education institution from the merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW. Cabinet finally confirmed this restructuring process and Minister Asmal wrote letters to the two Council chairpersons.

In the letter to Dr L Wessels, the chairperson of the Council of the PU for CHE, the Minister stated the restructuring process as follows:²³⁰ *“I intend to give effect to my proposal to establish a single higher education institution through the merger of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, the University of North-West and the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University, as outlined in Notice Number 862 in the Government Gazette (Number 23550) of 24 June 2002. The merger will be effected in terms of Sections 23 and 24 of the Higher Education Act (Act no 101 of 1997), as amended, ie the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of North-West, will be merged to establish a single higher education institution and the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University will be incorporated into the merged institution.”*²³¹ However, in the long term consideration will be given to whether the merged institution should continue to operate a campus in the Vaal Triangle.”²³²

Minister Asmal requested Dr Wessels to provide him with the following information by the end of June 2003:²³³

- The preferred name of the new institution
- The preferred official address of the new institution
- The preferred date for the establishment of the new institution
- The nominees for appointment to the Interim Council.²³⁴

It was clear that the intention of the Ministry was to establish a single, multi-campus institution in the North-West Province. This was evident from various documents issued by the Ministry (in particular the *Memorandum of Clarification*).

The following table shows the massive impact of the 2002 government proposals on the profile of the tertiary education sector.²³⁵

Institutions	Number of institutions before amalgamations, incorporations, mergers and closures	Number of existing/ envisaged institutions in 2003
Technical colleges	152	51 clusters
Colleges of education	94	0
Nursing colleges	35	27
Agricultural colleges	11	11
Universities and technikons	36	21

These dramatic changes in the South African higher education sector were framed within the overall social and political transition of the country after 1994.²³⁶ However, Minister Asmal wanted more from the process. In a paper presented at the President's Working Group on Higher Education on 10 December 2003, he invited critical reflection on the identity, roles and challenges of higher education institutions in a changing South Africa. He called for self-reflection within the higher education sector and invited deliberation and debate on three basic proposals:

“First, we need to give serious thought to the question of identity: How do we understand the very idea of a South African university?”

Second, we need to continue mobilising our institutions in re-thinking, re-orientating, and re-energising the South African university: What are the roles of a university within a transforming society?”

*Third, while acknowledging the pervasive power of the market, we need to be clear that higher education is a public good, engaged in a social compact, which includes all our people: What are the responsibilities of a university as an agent in transforming society?”*²³⁷

In April 2003, the Ministry provided merging and incorporation institutions with extensive guidelines to conduct the whole process.²³⁸ These Merger Guidelines tasked the CHE to monitor the progress of the merger and incorporation process.²³⁹

The development of a new funding framework for higher education was also part of this restructuring process.

2.5.6. The new funding framework for higher education, December 2003²⁴⁰

The pre-1994 funding framework for higher education was known as the South African Post-Secondary Education (SAPSE) formula. This formula was developed in 1982 and constantly revised for the historically white universities.²⁴¹

The SAPSE formula of 1984 was based on the assumption that students were the best judges of their own welfare and therefore best placed to make their own enrolment decisions. As a result, the revised SAPSE subsidy formula of 1993 was enrolment driven, with funding following students as they enrolled at institutions of their choice.²⁴² During the 1995 financial year, all 36 universities and technikons in South Africa were brought onto the same SAPSE funding formula.²⁴³

Prof I Bunting explained that the post-1994 period started with great expectations of funding being used as an instrument of transformation, and to bring about greater equity in the system. Previously excluded

student groups gained greater access to the system than ever before regarding their choice of institutions and programmes. The new government endorsed and steadfastly supported the global reform agenda, with its emphasis on differentiation, tight fiscal controls and the stimulation of market competition among institutions.²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the development of a new funding policy, framework and implementation schedule for higher education was based on a long and demanding investigation process from 1996 to 2003. In anticipation of the new constitutional dispensation, many objections were expressed to the underlying assumptions and principles of the SAPSE formula. Therefore, as part of its terms of reference, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) considered these objections and developed the first new funding proposals. The NCHE's approach to this matter developed into a new framework for funding and their 1996 proposals were acknowledged as the key funding principles for the transformed higher education system. These principles were:

- Equity and redress: the funding of higher education should be equitable.
- Development: the funding formula should meet the needs of a developing economy striving to become internationally competitive. It should encourage institutions to offer responsive programmes that would sustain the vocational and employment needs of the economy.
- Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability: funding should ensure that the system achieves its predetermined goals at the lowest possible cost.
- Shared costs: the government and students or their families should share the costs of higher education because of the public and private benefits that the sector generates.²⁴⁵

The refinement of these proposals was outlined in 1997, in chapter 4 of the *Education White Paper 3: a programme for the transformation of higher education*. This document proposed giving the Minister comprehensive powers to plan, control and fund the proposed new higher education system. The Education White Paper 3 declared that it was part of the national goals to develop and implement responsive regulatory funding mechanisms in line with the national higher education plan based on the need, affordability, sustainability and shared costs of the system.²⁴⁶

The 1997 Education White Paper 3 determines the scope of the new funding framework according to certain principles:

- implement system-wide and institutional reforms that reduce wasteful expenditure, increase equity in access, improve efficiency and enhance quality
- reduce unit costs based on normative costs and performance criteria
- reduce duplication and overlap in institutional, programme and service provision
- broaden the use of high-quality but less labour-intensive teaching and learning strategies
- improve student throughput
- establish a goal-oriented public funding framework that supports more equitable student access, improved quality of teaching and research, increased student progression and graduation rates, and greater responsiveness to social and economic needs
- achieve rapid enrolment growth without new investment and without causing overcrowding or devaluing the products of higher education, which would adversely affect the morale of academic staff and the quality of programmes, lead to a decline in research output and quality, cause students, employers and funders to lose confidence in the system
- acknowledge that fee-free higher education is not an affordable or sustainable option for South Africa
- adopt goal-oriented incentives as an integral part of the public funding framework, with the Minister complementing incentives by harnessing private resources for higher education
- establish a new funding framework with an appropriate balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability, with simple, transparent, flexible and fair procedures
- adopt goal-oriented planning at the institutional and system levels
- implement a new public funding framework with two main elements. The first would be a simplified mechanism for allocating general purpose, block funding to institutions on a rolling, triennial basis. The second would be to provide earmarked funds to achieve specific purposes, including targeted redress of inequities in access and capacity, student financial assistance, staff development, curriculum development, research development, libraries and information technology,

capital works and equipment, and planned improvements in operational efficiency.²⁴⁷

In the five years after the White Paper was issued in 1997, a wide range of experts debated funding models and a large number of funding model investigations were commissioned. Organisations that commissioned or undertook such studies were the Department of Education, the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA), the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) and some non-governmental organisations.²⁴⁸

Against this background, most of the public universities and technikons in South Africa had since 1998 accepted that they would in future have to adapt to two crucial changes.

First, they would have to ensure that their missions, vision and values were aligned with the premise of the 1997 Education White Paper 3.²⁴⁹ According to Bunting, this exercise involved major adjustments in the institutional ideologies of some institutions.

Second, they would have to accept that the SAPSE funding framework was not the right steering mechanism to use in a transformed higher education system committed to equity and to achieving the national development goals.²⁵⁰ The replacement of the SAPSE formula would mean major benefits for some groups of institutions and major loss of subsidy income for others. Institutions should also accept that it would take some years to implement the new funding framework.²⁵¹

During the year 2000, most of the historically black universities and many of the technikons were experiencing severe financial strain because the SAPSE funding framework had remained in place throughout the 1990s. By the beginning of the year 2001, the new funding framework outlined in the 1997 Education White Paper 3 had still not been implemented²⁵²

The funding processes that were part of the new steering mechanisms for higher education were outlined in the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education: *“The planning process in conjunction with funding and an appropriate regulatory framework will be the main levers through which the Ministry will ensure that targets and goals of this National Plan are realised. The Ministry will from 2003 directly link the funding of higher education institutions to the approval of institutional three-year ‘rolling’ plans, rather than the current practice whereby funding is mechanically determined by past student enrolment trends. This means, in effect, that from 2003, the approved institutional plans will determine the level of funding of each higher education institution. The effective use of funding as a steering lever requires the*

*development of a new funding formula based on the funding principles and framework outlined in the White Paper.”*²⁵³

*The National Plan “therefore proposes that academic development programmes should be funded as an integral component of a new funding formula and that the role and efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme needs to be reviewed”.*²⁵⁴

The principle of using a funding policy to steer the higher education sector through a linked planning-funding system was in line with policies in many other countries.²⁵⁵

The first draft of the new funding framework was published for comment in March 2001. The Ministry released a discussion document, *Funding of public higher education: A new framework*, with two main elements (both of which had been proposed in the 1997 White Paper):

- A formula or mechanism to allocate funds for general purpose or block grants to higher education institutions through a range of different subsidies, such as a teaching input subsidy, teaching output subsidy and research outputs.
- A set of earmarked funds designed to achieve specific purposes and which could not be spent for any other purpose.²⁵⁶

The Minister’s next step was to task the National Working Group with the development of an appropriate administrative, management, governance and funding structure for the sector, based on the Higher Education Act.²⁵⁷

The National Working Group made far-reaching proposals for structured forms of regional collaboration by applying an appropriate mix of incentives and sanctions. For this, it used the programme approval and funding processes outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education.²⁵⁸

During 2002, the government injected R3,1 billion into the restructuring of the sector and to bail out financially ailing institutions.²⁵⁹

Then, on 9 December 2002, the Department of Education published the new funding framework for public higher education.²⁶⁰ This consisted of the formal policy framework, *Funding of Public Higher Education*, and a statement on higher education funding for 2004 to 2006. This document explained the structure of the higher education budget and the migration strategy from the SAPSE formula to the new funding formula for the financial years 2004/05 to 2006/07.²⁶¹ There

was actually an increase in the budget allocation to the two merging institutions in the North West Province, as shown in the following table.

Financial assistance to universities ²⁶²

Institution	2002/03 R=thousand	2001/02 R=thousand
UNW	117 020	113 567
PU for CHE	261 437	249 229

The funding policy for the new funding framework was due for implementation over three years from 2004. It differed notably from the 2001 draft, and some significant changes were applied from 2006 onwards.²⁶³

This restructuring of the funding policy was based on a dual strategy. Firstly, government had changed the traditional funding formula for higher education by placing greater control over the management and manipulation of the formula in the hands of the Minister of Education. Secondly government had introduced the idea of “capping” student numbers in higher education institutions by means of “enrolment planning”, thereby changing the policy discourse of participation to a planning discourse focusing on efficiency, redress and sustainability.²⁶⁴ This approach accommodated the principles contained in the NCHE 1996 funding proposals.

In a presentation to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education on 24 August 2004, the Department of Education provided the underlying philosophy, context and composition of the new funding framework.

The central premise underpinning the funding policy framework was that the higher education system must be planned, governed and funded as a single national coordinated system.

The emphasis on planning with financial implications was intended to ensure that the higher education system responds to the national development agenda in terms of access, redress and human resource development needs. This meant the size and shape of the system could not be left to market forces and uncoordinated institutional decisions on student enrolments and programme offerings.

Another key principle was that the higher education system should be steered towards meeting national goals and priorities through a combination of navigation instruments, ie planning, funding and quality assurance.

The planning model to obtain funding would involve three steps:

- The Ministry determines national policy goals and objectives.
- The institutions develop three-year rolling plans indicating how they intend to address the national goals and objectives.
- The interaction between the Ministry and institutions results in the approval of institutional plans to release funds.²⁶⁵

During this in-between period, role players in the higher education sector actively debated the merger and incorporation proposals of May 2002. *Business Day* remarked that for a sector funded to the tune of R7 billion, there was an alarming lack of national consensus about the role of higher education.²⁶⁶ Its share of the national budget has since increased significantly as a result of annual budget allocation increases; for 2009/10, for example, it was R19.3 billion.²⁶⁷

2.5.7. Responses to the merger and incorporation proposals

Cabinet’s adoption of the restructuring proposals received extensive media coverage. A number of institutions voiced their discontent while others either supported or remained indifferent to the matter.²⁶⁸

Prof Itumeleng Mosala, the chairperson of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Historically Disadvantaged Tertiary Institutions in South Africa (ASAHD), told *City Press* newspaper that the restructuring proposals were insensitive to the plight of black universities. He said that four historically white universities had been left untouched while only two black universities had survived, showing that black universities were being sacrificed in the proposed merger process.²⁶⁹

ASAHD met with President Thabo Mbeki to explain their criticism of Cabinet’s restructuring proposals. After this meeting, at the request of the President, the Ministry prepared a clarification document of 47 pages, entitled *Memorandum of clarification on transformation and mergers in higher education*.²⁷⁰

One month after the Cabinet decision on the restructuring of the higher education sector, SAUVCA requested vice-chancellors to submit a summary of their response to the recommendations and rationale published by the Minister of Education in the June 2002 Government Gazette.²⁷¹

For this purpose, the PU for CHE developed a report with comments on the report of the National Working Group (NWG). In this report, the university:

- Agreed in principle that the higher education system needed to be restructured and agreed with the general approach of the NWG, but stated a concern that only three of the 11 NWG members had been present for a meeting with the PU for CHE delegation.
- Questioned the fact that the NWG did not apply its own guiding principles in the recommendations on the different regions.
- Objected to some statements of the NWG, eg:
 - That the graduation rates of the PU for CHE were below the benchmarks set in the National Plan. The PU for CHE's submission to the NWG showed clearly that the graduation rates were between 5 and 30 percentage points above the mean for the sector.²⁷²
 - Typified the PU for CHE as a regional university, stating that it had managed to "import" 12 000 students from other provinces and countries, in contrast with comments on UCT and the University of Stellenbosch.
 - Noted that the report was vague about the way in which regional collaboration initiatives were already being undertaken, such as in the North-West Province.
 - Supported the criticism of the 2001 benchmarks exercise of the NWG.
 - Commented that the NWG failed to recognise sufficiently that PU for CHE and UNW were in the category of geographically challenged institutions. In the Cabinet report clarifying transformation and mergers in higher education,²⁷³ the Ministry resisted a federal merger in the North-West Province.²⁷⁴
 - Indicated that this process should incorporate the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University into the Vaal Triangle Campus of PU for CHE, without transferring any property to the new university. This would have serious consequences for the staff and students at the Sebokeng Campus.²⁷⁵

Mr Shalo Mbatha from *City Press* described the merger between the PU for CHE and UNW as Prof Asmal's revolutionary merger that would make Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of Apartheid, turn in his grave. The reason was that Potchefstroom was previously perceived as a high-profile "*verkrampste*" (conservative) institution, with a history either glorious or sad, depending on which side of the political or racial divide the observer belongs. According to Mbatha, the Potchefstroom Campus "*produced some of the best Afrikaans minds that had the world spellbound – both by their efficiency and brutality. It was the hotbed of Afrikaner nationalism*".²⁷⁶

Prof Jonathan D Jansen identified the 10 most important changes that would flow from the Cabinet's decision on the restructuring of the higher education sector:²⁷⁷

- The changing size and shape of higher education
- The changing meaning of autonomy and accountability (He talked about "*the gradual but systematic erosion of historical standards of autonomy that were ingrained within the institutional fabric of universities*".)²⁷⁸
- The changing nature of higher education providers (a reference to private higher education)
- Changes in student distribution and characteristics in higher education
- The changing organisation of university management and governance, by introducing new management patterns and revising the role of councils
- The changing roles of student politics and organisation
- The changing models of delivery in higher education
- The changing notion of higher education - between free trade and the public good
- The changing value of higher education programmes (the rise of the economic sciences and the decline of the humanities)
- The changing nature of the academic workplace.²⁷⁹

Dr Fred Hayward, a member of the American Council of Education, remarked in 1998 after the publication of the first restructuring documents of government that no other country had tried to change so much simultaneously and that the scale of transformation in higher education was amazing.²⁸⁰

Jacobsz referred to the viewpoint of DW Lang in 2002 and a study of mergers in higher education, which declared that the “merging” concept was in itself rather controversial. The reason was that the term “merger” was widely used without precision and sometimes without accurate or aligned understanding on the part of role players. It was also impossible to deal with all the variables that impact on the merging of higher education institutions, which was also evident in the merger process of the NWU.

*“However, it is well known that people are the main role players in the processes of merging higher education institutions. In managements’ attempts to gain common ground on variables that may affect directly or indirectly, positively or negatively on higher education, various psychological forces manifest. Some of the psychological forces may be established intentionally, while others may manifest themselves unintentionally. An imponderable number of variables may be involved in the equation of psychological forces, of which only a few may be active on a conscious level. The psychological forces may possibly also change according to the changes in the expectations and situations of the parties involved”.*²⁸¹

The basic approach of role players in this far-reaching change management process in the restructuring of the South African higher education sector would be to find a balance between globalisation,²⁸² international trends in higher education, and the rapid pace of change due to the transformed political and social order prescribed by the Ministry.²⁸³

A group of researchers at the University of Pretoria embarked on a broad set of empirical studies on mergers in higher education and published their results in 2002.

The researchers were uncomfortable with the education change assumptions and the planning instruments for steering higher education institutions. For instance, SAUVCA was adamant that voluntary collaboration had a greater chance of success than mergers and incorporations that the Ministry imposed.²⁸⁴

They also felt uncomfortable with the simplistic transfer of lessons learned from mergers in stable economies. In particular, the researchers found that the writings on mergers in higher education tended to under-describe and under-theorise the merging of different kinds of higher education institutions. Furthermore, they questioned the lack of fitting theoretical propositions that could explain the possible course and effects of mergers in South Africa.²⁸⁵

John Harris, John Tagg and Mike Howell commented on the international change challenges confronting

higher education institutions: “*Postsecondary education institutions across the world face unprecedented challenges to their success, and even their survival. Colleges and universities operate in a world of rapid technological change, dramatic global population growth, and urgent demands for life and work skills that are changing constantly. Change is not an incidental outcome of accidental causes but a permanent and growing feature of the world we live in. Can higher education institutions as presently organised on the model of research universities effectively function as national, mass, postsecondary systems?*”²⁸⁶

Over and above having to contend with changing international trends, merging higher education institutions in South Africa were also confronted with the post-Apartheid government’s new ideology of doing away with the fragmented dispensation of the pre-1994 order. These two strategic thrusts could bring the newly formed NWU to a standstill, because it was all too clear that role players on different ideological sides had vastly different views and expectations of the merger process.

The Cabinet’s merger and incorporation proposals elicited both positive and negative responses. In the case of the North-West Province, three issues in the reasoning of this announcement were challenging:

- The limitation on delivery sites because of the sharp reduction in the number of universities and technikons, from 36 to 23, in an effort to reduce or remove the historical divide between universities created under the Apartheid homelands system and formerly white or privileged universities.
- The need to give the assurance that job losses would not accompany the mergers and incorporations, and that access, primarily in learning sites, would not be reduced
- The need to enable the development and provision of more technikon-type programmes in the Province.²⁸⁷

Of all the mergers taking place in South Africa, the formation of the North-West University on 1 January 2004 probably represented the most contrasting combination of all. The campuses differ hugely in size and character, prompting the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper to predict cultural clashes between the merger partners.²⁸⁸

The one partner was the University of North-West, which had its roots in the University of Bophuthatswana; this was a homeland institution founded in 1971 with a mixed history of Apartheid and very proud local community involvement. Severely destabilised after 1994, it had small pockets of excellence and uniqueness in 2003, but was on average in a precariously managed state with a

significant imbalance between academic and support staff, and a severely depleted Senior Management embroiled in ongoing disputes. Demographically its staff was mostly black and its 8 669 registered students were almost exclusively so, and mainly from a rural Tswana background.

The other partner, the PU for CHE, grew from a theology faculty established in 1869 to become a well-managed and well-established teaching university busy with a transition towards a greater research focus. It also had some elements of international excellence and uniqueness.²⁸⁹ Its demography was very different in comparison with UNW, with mostly white (and male) staff. Of its 27 727 students, 6 839 were on the main and satellite campuses and 81% of these students were whites from various parts of the country. Furthermore, most of the campus students were from a conservative Afrikaans background. The remaining 10 888 students were enrolled for distance studies and 95% were black. The majority of the registered black students were teachers busy with on-the-job skills upgrades in deep rural areas.²⁹⁰

Anticipating the effect of these demographic differences between the merger partners, commentators foresaw a problem in uniting campuses so far apart geographically. The distance between Mahikeng and Potchefstroom is 220 kilometres, while Potchefstroom is 110 kilometres away from Vanderbijlpark, which is in turn 330 kilometres from Mahikeng.

The Sebokeng Campus of Vista University, with its 597 black students and a mixed group of black and white staff members, was situated about 25 kilometres from the Vaal Triangle satellite campus of the PU for CHE.²⁹¹

These huge administrative, demographic, and geographic differences made this merger and incorporation process an extremely complex one. For that reason, the NWU has been considered as one of the restructured universities where the government policy of redress and affirmative action has faced major challenges.²⁹²

Dr Theuns Eloff believed that the merger and incorporation was the most difficult challenge in the history of the PU for CHE.²⁹³ He said that the transformation of the African state and its politics had been completed when the restructuring process commenced but that the societal transformation was still unfolding. The challenge was thus to strike a win-win balance between the merging institutions. He mentioned the example of the entrance requirements for a BSc degree. At the PU for CHE, a prospective student needed an M count of 19. At UNW, a student would be admitted with an M count of nine.²⁹⁴ On a positive note, the two universities had been discussing various forms of cooperation for quite some time before the merger announcement.

Academic cooperation already existed in a few specialised fields; with such different markets, however, very few sustainable synergies existed. Even under ideal circumstances, this merger would have been difficult to execute.²⁹⁵

During July 2004, Dr Jannie Jacobsz did an evaluation of the differences in perception of the merger process between UNW and the PU for CHE. He used data collected from Dr MN Takalo and Dr Theuns Eloff, the two vice-chancellors of the previously autonomous universities that merged to become the NWU. The purpose of the study was to analyse the opinions of the two most senior officials who were actively engaged in the merger process. One participant was from a “historically disadvantaged higher education institution” (HDI) and the other from a “historically advantaged institution” (HAI). Both officials remarked how difficult the merger process was but also mentioned that there were high levels of commitment among role players to make the merger succeed.²⁹⁶ The summarised findings of Jacobsz provide insight into the merger process in North-West Province.

Dr Rolf Stumpf, former Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), raised the question as to whether or not the various proposals on mergers and incorporations made sense. His reaction was that in some cases the proposed mergers did make sense, but in other cases not.²⁹⁸

Dr Stumpf was positive about the following mergers:

- NMMU
- Natal Technikon and ML Sultan Technikon, now Durban University of Technology (why Mangosuthu University of Technology was not included in this new institution remains a mystery),
- The University of KwaZulu-Natal
- The unbundling of the former Vista University.

He was also convinced that some mergers did not make a lot of sense for these reasons:

- A general university and a university of technology were proposed for Bloemfontein, which hardly qualifies as an industrial hub, while Johannesburg, the country’s prime business and industrial hub, needed a designated university of technology.
- The effects of geographical distance on establishing and sustaining cohesive and integrated merged institutions seemed to have been underestimated:
 - It would have made far more sense to

The summarised findings of Jacobsz provide insight into the merger process in North-West Province.

Theme or type of force	Act of force	Finding
Government	Power enforced	Not collaborative but autocratic by constructing both the game and rules. As an irresistible force with the juridical base, they enforced transformation and development with political correctness. Respondents were disoriented, angry and frustrated and could do nothing about the government's decision except to manage it. This is due to an inappropriately exploited political power base that made the merger unavoidable. Although the Minister of Education had little empathy with the position of the respondents' constituencies, the possibility of improved university management was envisaged
Management	Limited momentum	Different negotiating styles negatively influenced the impetus towards merger implementation.
	Opposing directions	Much tension and conflict surfaced in a stormy start between the two former management teams due to a lack of trust and possible prejudice due to the enforced nature of the negotiations.
	Equilibrium	The negotiations were utilised as a tactical weapon and hence turned the negativity into a relationship of trust.
Council	Limited resistance	The respective Councils had to accept the merger and assist the relevant management teams in managing it.
	Power	The new Council appeared not to have been composed according to agreement but according to the government's agenda and authority.
	Limited direction	This possibly led to limited progress with the merger six months into it.
Peers	Psychological distance and tension	Peers on campuses had reservations about the merger, causing a psychological distance due to differences associated with institutional culture and values. Reference to " <i>Potchification</i> " on the Mafikeng Campus contributed to tension; however, leadership ensured that tension was limited and that peers on campuses collaborated
Students and alumni	Direction	No reference was made to existing students but only to the future breed of students emanating from the merger. Alumni had some reservations about the direction of the merger.
Strategy	Direction	Much difficulty was experienced in deciding on a merger strategy, both before the merger and even six months into it. Staff had to support the strategy and their behaviour was driven by conviction.
Culture	Direction	Many differences were highlighted in terms of campus cultures. Acceptance of unique campus cultures brought about calm, but there were concerns that government would not be satisfied.
Resources	Strenuous	The ability to ensure sufficient resource provision within an expensive merger context was flagged as a potential constraining factor.

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merge Border Technikon, outside East London, with the reconfigured University of Fort Hare, which was to incorporate Rhodes University's East London Campus anyway, than merge it with the University of Transkei in Mthatha.²⁹⁹ Another comment on this issue was that the merger would not enhance efficiency, because the distances between the universities were too great. As such, the merger would be unequal in terms of resources and "*no one can annex Fort Hare*".³⁰⁰ On this issue, *Pretoria News* reported that no minister would risk closing down black universities such as Fort Hare or Zululand without unacceptably high levels of political fall-

out.³⁰¹

- The merger between the University of the North and Medunsa to form a new University of Limpopo was also strange.
- For the NMMU, and for other comprehensive universities, one of the major frustrations was that no one could predict what kind of institution it would end up as.³⁰²
- The fact that some proposals on mergers also made "*ludicrous gaffes*" such as twinning the PU for CHE with the former University of Bophuthatswana.³⁰³

Natal Witness reported that the standing of any

university in the eyes of the international community was closely related to the name some institutions had built up over time (for example, Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard and Yale, or the Sorbonne).³⁰⁴

The NWU's media image report for January 2004 on the topic of the merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW reflected the following coverage.³⁰⁵

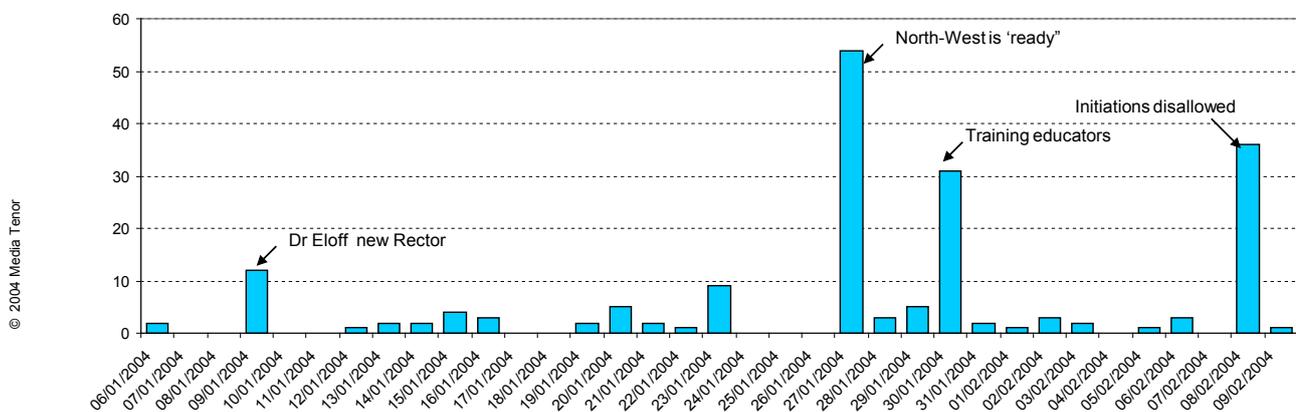
Ms Nithaya Chetty from the *Mail & Guardian* expressed her view that the restructuring of higher education offered universities a unique opportunity. She argued that in attempting to address the historical legacy of South African universities, the government had passed several pieces of legislation, formulated guidelines and set up regulatory bodies and systems to change the course of the country's universities. This intervention had ushered in the period of transformation in the higher education system in which universities found themselves.

This had created a unique opportunity for institutions to rethink the kind of university they wished to become.³⁰⁶ The founding principles of each restructured institution would forever determine its future trajectory. It was therefore critically important that careful thought be given to the manner in which change was managed at each institution. This opportunity would not offer itself again. Increasingly, powerful university managers found it convenient to impose change on their institutions in autocratic ways.³⁰⁷

Prof Tinyiko Sam Maluleke said that in South Africa, "we call what has happened to the higher education sector *transformation* – an over-used and much-abused word. It can be brandished violently like a sword against enemies or sprayed gently like holy water (depending on the topic, the speaker and the audience). To be fair, ANC planners and thinkers, including most of the ministers

Main focus: New institution

Subjects of coverage on NW University in SA media: January 2004



Largest focus on the combined institutions (Potchefstroom Campus, Mafikeng Campus and the new North-West University) was focused on the new setup. Controversial issues such as initiation and crime related issues were reported on in-between.



*of education we have had over the past 20 years, have been rather clear and largely consistent about what the transformation of higher education entails”.*³⁰⁸

Those universities that would stand tall among all South African universities in future would be those that had taken the goals of transformation seriously, and had effected change by democratic means and worked tirelessly to protect the intellectual freedoms that are the basis of the university.³⁰⁹ In this regard, Prof Jonathan Jansen³¹⁰ collated the complex stories of the higher education “*merger tales*”, and described the narratives produced by university managers.³¹¹

2.5.8. Legal obligation for merging institutions³¹²

The merger between the PU for CHE and UNW and the incorporation of the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University took root in the government’s desire to restructure the former institutions. Legal frameworks for this process included the founding principles in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act (Act no 108 of 1996)³¹³ and the government publications and agreements relating to the merger process.³¹⁴

At the end of June 2002, the Cabinet accepted the Minister of Education’s proposals to restructure the higher education sector, and published these in two separate Government Gazettes on 21 and 24 June 2002. The affected institutions were given a dialogue period until 4 October 2002 to make submissions to the Ministry.

Against this background, the NWU officially came into being on 1 January 2004. This historic event was a consequence of the South African Government’s vision of a transformed national higher education landscape that would address past imbalances and use resources more effectively to meet the equity, quality and social imperatives of the country.

The NWU was created through the merger of the former PU for CHE (with a satellite campus situated at Vanderbijlpark) and the former UNW (with its Mankwe Campus), as well as the incorporation of the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University (on 2 January 2004).³¹⁵

The Gazetted reasons for the merger and incorporation process were as follows:³¹⁶

- to overcome the Apartheid-induced divide between historically white and historically black institutions

- to promote a more representative staff and equitable student corps
- to enable the development and provision of a broader and more comprehensive spectrum of career-oriented programmes, in particular technikon-type, professional and general programmes suited to regional and national needs
- to enhance administrative, managerial, control and academic abilities
- to consolidate academic staff and to encourage intercampus collaboration, which could enhance research ability
- to build research capacity
- to enhance sustained viability through increased size of institutions.³¹⁷

This announcement of the intended merger between the PU for CHE and UNW, and the request of the Minister to interested parties to comment with proposals on his June 2002 announcement, resulted in a series of urgent internal and inter-campus meetings to comply with the legal obligations:³¹⁸

- The Councils of PU for CHE and UNW had until 4 October 2002 to comment on the Minister’s merger proposals.
- Both Councils had to recommend the names of members of an Interim Council to the Minister, who would then appoint the Interim Council Elect on 1 July 2003.
- The two Councils should recommend the programme mix for the new merged institution to the Minister before the end of 2002.³¹⁹ At the second meeting of the Joint Operational Team on 13 November 2002, it was still not clear if the two institutions were exempted from submitting a PQM proposal before December 2002.³²⁰ The Department of Education eventually granted an extension until the end of March 2003.³²¹

The merger and incorporation was without doubt the most important issue on all campuses following the June 2002 announcement by the Minister, and discussions between June and October 2002 reflected the state of relations between PU for CHE and UNW during these hectic months.



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CHAPTER 3

Internal views of the merging partners in the North-West Province

3. Official views of the two merging universities on the proposed merger and incorporation

3.1. Background and context

After the Department of Education had dealt with other education subsectors, its attention shifted to the higher education sector. Initially, the department's focus was on the so-called *Size and Shape* report of the Macozoma Task Team. Based on this, the Minister, Prof Asmal, published his suggestions on the restructuring of the sector in June 2002. After providing the opportunity for comment, Prof Asmal submitted his final proposal to Cabinet in December 2002. Cabinet formally confirmed his proposals and, the Minister communicated the decision to the Council of the PU for CHE, UNW and Vista University.

The restructuring of the PU for CHE and the UNW was the most important challenge that the two universities had faced. Since it was the only restructuring between a primarily white and a primarily black university, it also symbolised the restructuring of the entire sector. This made it critical to find a win-win solution for all parties.

3.2. Official view of the PU for CHE Council on the restructuring with the UNW and Vista (Sebokeng Campus) ¹

The Minister set a tight schedule for the merger process and made 4 October 2003 the deadline for feedback. Despite the time constraints, the Council PU for CHE consulted its different constituencies and, after careful consideration, eventually finalised its proposal. This response was based on the following criteria:

- If the final timelines that the Minister envisaged were met, a new university would come into being. It would be a legal person with a new name and a specific address or addresses.
- After the full new Council had been appointed, the new institution would appoint a chancellor.
- It would have a single set of standards, policies and systems, and a single set of constitutionally based values.
- The new institution would develop its own corporate brand name and identity, and would develop its own language plan, in line with ministerial policy.
- Its Council would appoint a Vice-Chancellor, who would report to the Council and be

responsible for coordination within the organisation. The Vice-Chancellor and his or her office would also be responsible for overall policy, encompassing finance, legal matters, academic programmes, standards, policies and systems, as well as the value system.

- An institutional office with as thin a layer as possible of support staff would support the Vice-Chancellor, so that the emphasis would be on the core business at the campuses. At institutional level, there might be a Registrar and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as well as directors providing strategic support for IT, human resources, finance and the like.

In its response to the Minister, the PU for CHE pointed out that a number of factors would influence the unity of the new institution. These factors included the geographical distances between the campuses and differences in the institutional culture and ethos of the merging universities, such as graduation ceremonies, management philosophies, language and, in the case of the PU for CHE, its Christian character. Other factors were the fears and concerns of the different stakeholders, especially fears of being “*taken over*” or losing a specific ethos or trademark. Furthermore, there were differences in the programmes being offered as well as in the approaches to research and the implementation of expertise.

The PU for CHE response also took cognisance of the challenge of accommodating diversity in the merger process. It noted that the merger represented radical change for both existing universities, (one more than 133 years old and the other almost 25 years old). From a legal-technical point of view, both would have to be closed to make way for the new university.

This would bring fresh challenges, such the need to ensure a renewed sense of belonging in the new institution. The PU for CHE proposed that some continuity be maintained by allowing a variety of sub-brand names to be used with the new corporate brand name and leveraging campuses' current strengths to retain and recruit students and staff.² Since the new university would consist of several campuses, the idea was that each would have a sub-brand name or a collection of brand names. In addition, the campuses should have sufficient authority and variety, and be sufficiently decentralised, to enable them to innovate, take initiative and compete with each other in a healthy way.

The PU for CHE proposed that the new university should consist of the following campuses (in alphabetical order):

- Mankwe, a technikon-type campus to which a Rustenburg/Phokeng technikon campus might later be added
- A Mmabatho university campus
- A Potchefstroom university campus
- A Vaal Triangle university campus

The new university would leave room for variety in campus culture and ethos, based on the institution's overall unity and value system. Within that value system, every campus would be able to operationalise its own values and put them into practice.

Other steps were proposed to maintain the balance between unity and diversity:

- There would be space for a variety of languages as mediums of administration, communication and instruction. Every campus would develop a language plan in line with an overall language policy.³
- The new university would offer a variety of academic programmes, which would be negotiated. In the interests of access, the university would retain the existing delivery sites.
- Each campus would have its own principal and campus management committee. The principal would report to the Vice-Chancellor of the new university and be part of his or her management committee.⁴
- The campuses should manage their own financial and academic administration, apply academic standards and conduct their own marketing, recruitment and fundraising.
- There would be a relatively strong decentralised management structure on each campus, operating within clear parameters known as boundary conditions.
- Each campus could select a board of trustees consisting of a number and categories of members as agreed by the Council of the new university. This board would be responsible for the ethos of the different campuses and would technically be a sub-committee of the university Council.
- The Higher Education Act required the merged institution to have a single Senate and the Joint Senate Committee would have to give advice.
- The new university would have an Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC),

drawn from the elected Campus Student Representative Councils (CSRCs).

- The same principle would apply to the Institutional Forums.
- As for the future of Sebokeng Campus of Vista University, it had become clear that this campus would have to be incorporated into the new institution in terms of article 24 of the Higher Education Act. In other words, this aspect would be an incorporation and not a merger in terms of article 23 of the Act. An action plan to steer this incorporation would have to be developed

The two merging universities met at a planning workshop and then asked Prof Asmal for the opportunity to do a presentation to the Ministry on 23 September 2002 on their merger proposal. In the meantime, Dr Eloff notified the PU for CHE's alumni about the proposed merger and that certain conditions were linked to the merger process.⁵

According to the PU for CHE, the two Councils should make a joint submission to the Minister on the establishment of the merged university. The merging of the two universities should also be informed by the seven boundary conditions that the PU for CHE Council had approved on 27 June 2002 and which had the support of Senate, Management and other stakeholders:

- **Effective management:** the structure of the new institution should ensure effective management and governance.
- **Standards and quality:** the new institution should function in such a way that academic, research, administrative and quality standards could, in the medium term, be raised and maintained, as befits a university of international repute.
- **Financial sustainability:** the new institution should be able to meet all its financial obligations on time and should make provision for planning, discipline and the necessary financial systems.
- **Educational viability:** the new institution should be structured and managed in such a way as to grow into an accessible and viable entity that attracts students from all over South Africa and the subcontinent, and responds particularly to the needs of the region.
- **Funding during the merging process:** the necessary funding should be made available to achieve the merger objectives.
- **Institutional culture and ethos:** an essential factor determining the success of the new

institution would be the continuation of the best aspects of the existing institutional cultures and ethos, within the framework of the Constitution and its foundational values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

- **Maintaining the existing support base, eg niche markets and branding:** the establishment of the new institution should not erode the support base of the existing universities, which would be a source for recruiting students for the new institution and strengthen the new institution's financing and research focus.

Although restructuring through a merger and incorporation was not the affected universities' first choice, they accepted it and negotiated with the following issues in mind:

- creating unity within the new university by allowing for diversity on the various campuses, including using the existing or new brand names
- accommodating the boundary conditions set by the two Councils
- balancing equity/transformation and efficiency in the governance, management, structure and operations of the new institution. Without an efficient and effective institution, the best progress in transformation would be nothing more than a token gesture and would not serve the education interests of the region or the country.

Taking all this into account, the PU for CHE was of the view that the best way to establish a worthwhile merged university was to follow a dual approach of unity and diversity, maintaining the fine balance between the two. This, together with appropriate branding, would enable an educationally and financially sustainable higher education institution and campuses.

Elaborating on this, the PU for CHE believed that striking a balance between unity and diversity would enable the new university to build and maintain standards and assure quality despite the geographical distribution of the different campuses. The view was also held that room should be left for the campuses to retain their niche markets, and that some diversity in institutional culture and ethos was necessary. It was felt that this approach would give the new university the best chance of achieving the Cabinet's objectives as stated in the Government Gazette of 21 June 2003.⁶

While the university authorities were busy developing plans for the new institution, a student from the PU for CHE wrote a letter to the *Sowetan* newspaper, accus-

ing the university of denying black students the right to education because of "a lack of equity, racial division, a shortage of accommodation, lack of transformation, language barriers and overt ethnic consciousness."⁷

During the PU for CHE Council meeting of 28 November 2002, and in anticipation of the Minister's response to the two Councils' submission, the decision was made to establish three committees to further the merger process and negotiations with the UNW. These would be joint committees representing both universities: a joint senate committee would focus on the academic business of the two institutions, a joint operational team would attend to management matters and a joint oversight team would have an oversight role, which would entail leading the merger process and taking care of any communication with the authorities.

Minister Asmal, in a letter dated 9 December 2002, wrote to the chairperson of Council, confirming his proposal of 25 June 2002 for a merger between UNW and the PU for CHE and the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University. He emphasised that the entire Cabinet was in favour of the merger, and requested that certain information be provided to him before June 2003. This included the proposed name and address of the new institution, the date on which it would be established (preferably 1 January 2004) and a proposal on Council members.⁸

During January 2003, members of the Management Committee held constructive talks with two senior educationists, Prof Dan J Ncayiyana and Dr Bernadette Porter.

Prof Ncayiyana, co-author of the publication on the management of higher education institutions,⁹ was of the opinion that the PU for CHE and UNW were following the correct type of merger process and were making sound preparations for it. He also expressed the view that more attention be paid to staff matters, that the timetable the Minister was proposing was extremely ambitious and that it would be advisable to create a forum where staff and students had the opportunity to discuss the restructuring process. Dr Bernadette Porter, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey Roehampton, delivered presentations at the various campuses and shared insights about the restructuring process at her university.¹⁰

Regular communication on the merger and incorporation process kept staff and students informed about developments. On 7 February 2003, the joint operational team published the first edition of a restructuring newsletter containing relevant information about the process.¹¹ On 11 and 14 February, Dr Eloff informed the staff and

students of the PU for CHE about the proposed merger.¹² On 19 February 2003, the PU for CHE compiled the first “Position paper of the PU for CHE on the proposed structure and management of the NHEI”,¹³ and this was tabled at Senate on 4 March.¹⁴ On the same day, Senate approved the proposed negotiating strategy and appointed a task team to advise the joint operating team and the two Councils.¹⁵ This task team submitted its report to the Registrar on 25 March 2003.¹⁶

All the preparatory work done was summed up in a working document, which from 4 March 2003 became the official standpoint document of the PU for CHE on the restructuring with the UNW and Vista.¹⁷ Council approved the working document on 7 March 2003.¹⁸ On 19 March 2003, Dr Eloff gave staff and students a comprehensive overview of the negotiating strategy and explained the work of the joint task teams.¹⁹ Similar information was published in a comprehensive newsletter that Dr Eloff sent to all former students of the PU for CHE.²⁰

Two important documents were tabled when the Council of the PU for CHE met on 10 April 2003. These documents, which management had compiled in cooperation with the Senate, encapsulated the official view of the PU for CHE on the restructuring process with the UNW and Sebokeng campus of Vista University.

The essence of the first document was that the PU for CHE accepted the unitary nature of the new institution while highlighting the importance of retaining aspects of each campus’s unique character, which needed to be further explored and defined

The second document focused on the ethos and character of the new institution. This document dealt with the Christian nature and character of the PU for CHE’s ethos, along with the question of how this could be integrated into and realised in the new institution. Council accepted both documents as the basis for further discussions with the UNW.²¹

In the meantime, in preparation for a Council meeting scheduled for 19 June 2003, management drew up a document entitled, *Agreement between the PU for CHE and UNW on the nature and structure and related matters concerning the to-be-established New Higher Education Institution*, along with an addendum to this agreement.²²

Council approved this document with minor revisions, paving the way for further negotiations with the UNW. The contents of this document were of cardinal importance and dealt mainly with:

- The name of the new institution, North-West University, and that it would have four campuses, namely Potchefstroom, Mafikeng,

Vaal Triangle and Mankwe

- The location of its head office, which would be in Potchefstroom
- The language policy, which would be flexible, functional and multilingual
- The institutional framework, which would have space for diversity in terms of the values and ethos of campuses
- The format of Council and its composition. An official new council (possibly an interim council initially) would function from 1 January 2004. With this in mind, an effort would be made to have an interim council in place from October 2003.

A document dated 26 June 2003, known as *Perspectives on the merger*, gave a comprehensive and practical explanation of how the restructuring process would unfold.²³

With the spadework in full swing, the management of the university, as well as the various committees formed, set to work with the aim of implementing the merger on 1 January 2004. The first important aspect was the establishment and functioning of the interim council, which had to be legally constituted and functioning by 17 October 2003. Furthermore, finality was needed from the Minister as to the composition of the new council and the drafting of a new Statute to replace the Standard Institutional Statute from 1 January 2004. On 19 September 2003, at the meeting of the PU for CHE Council, a number of merger-related matters were addressed Dr Eloff reported back on Prof Asmal’s response to the submission made to him. In essence, the Minister was satisfied with how things were going and the way the two institutions were working together, but was concerned about the proposed process for constituting a new council. He requested that eight names be submitted to him as soon as possible as nominations for the ministerial appointees on council. In accordance with the applicable legislation, he would then name a number of appointees.

Since June 2003, as mandated by the Council, the management of the PU for CHE had been giving considerable attention to the restructuring, especially practical ways for ensuring the effectiveness of the new institution. As no name had yet been approved for the new university, it was referred to in discussions as the New Higher Education Institution (NHEI). The negotiating team of the PU for CHE was requested to give continual attention to the seven boundary conditions that the Council had accepted on 27 June 2002.²⁴

Management succeeded in ensuring that the interim council would be formally and juridically functioning from 20 October 2003 based on the following arrangements:

- A draft Statute submitted to the Council was accepted and presented for approval.
- Close attention was given to the financial implications and consequences of the merger.
- Attention was also paid to the possible merging of the new council and the process that would be followed for this. On 27 November 2003, the council of the PU for CHE held its last meeting. The last matters dealt with before a new Council started functioning in 2004 were arrangements for the tasks of the interim council, such as approval of the draft Statute, and arrangements for constituting a new Council, together with an interim management and interim Vice-Chancellor.
- Council noted the details and method of how the new Council would be constituted
- Council approved a document from management on the transition and operational matters that would be critical in establishing the new university. According to this document, the interim council would meet on 5 December 2003. The North-West University would come into being on 1 January 2004. Care would be taken to ensure that the new Council would be officially announced and could meet on 16 January 2004.

At the end of the meeting of 27 November, the PU for CHE Council approved an epilogue that looked back at the past with fondness, at the present with sober realism, and at the future with faith and optimism.²⁵ In summary, the merger process from the perspective of the PU for CHE was characterised as follows:

- The merger was based on political convictions and policies. It was undoubtedly necessary that the country's education system be the subject of redress and that a new national plan and actions be initiated
- Leaders played a decisive role:
 - Dr Theuns Eloff, rector of the PU for CHE, approached the matter with empathy, good vision and insight, faith and trust in God and a sober sense of the realities, but also listened with understanding and an open mind to the criticism and advice of internal and external stakeholders.

- The chairperson of the Council, Dr Leon Wessels, used his political experience and love for his alma mater to give Council excellent leadership and to support the rector.
- The members of the management team of the PU for CHE, and the members of the Council, trusted the leadership given and gave their effective support.
- It was striking that in this history, the Council and Senate of the PU for CHE, inspired by a Christian outlook and conviction, did not choose the path of resistance and confrontation with the authorities but also did not take the path of least resistance. It was directly and indirectly evident throughout the merger that the approach was one of service and obedience to God and those whom he had appointed as authorities, insofar as the laws and provisions of the authorities were not in conflict with the law of the kingdom of God. The Christian background and ethos of the PU for CHE entailed walking this path prayerfully and with conviction, and both Council and Senate were committed to finding a way through this exceptionally sensitive and complicated matter. It is therefore appropriate to look back with gratitude at how the Lord gave his guidance to and listened to the prayers of the new university.
- Christians were convinced that nothing happens by coincidence, but that God arranges everything for the best.
- Now, a decade later, it is clear that much good has come from the merger and that the NWU as a whole and in relation to its campuses has taken a stable and respected place in the national and international academic world.²⁶

3.3. Official view of UNW Council on the restructuring with the PU for CHE and VISTA (Sebokeng Campus)

After the June 2002 announcement of the Minister of Education, the Management Committee of UNW scheduled the following meeting dates and workshops to consult and inform various stakeholders about merger-related developments, with a view to keeping the UNW Council informed:

- 22 July: Staff at Mankwe Campus
- 25 July: Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology

- 29 July: Faculty of Commerce and Administration
- 30 July: Faculty of Human and Social Science
- 22 August: Faculty of Law
- 26 August: Heads of administrative and support departments
- 19 September, 23, 27, 29, 31 October and 3 November: Support staff members
- 5 November: Faculty of Education
- The Staff Association Executive declined to attend a workshop, but the workshop facilitator consulted with some members of the Executive on 29 September.²⁷

The UNW Council met on 12 and 13 July 2002 and decided to accept the proposed merger in principle. The Council identified the most important characteristics of the merger process, such as a tangible plan for integration, an audit of assets and liabilities, an audit of human and financial resources, and a plan to install an Interim Management team for the new merged institution. The UNW Council resolved that discussions with the PU for CHE be held on the following issues specifically: values and ethos; access; transformation; religion, and culture.²⁸

The UNW Senate noted on 29 August 2002 that the UNW Council had accepted the merger with the PU for CHE in principal, with modalities still to be decided on. However, it did not accept the proposed Collaboration Agreement with the PU for CHE. Instead, Senate accepted the proposal that the two Executive Committees of the Councils take on an oversight role for the merger process, and constitute a task team to formulate the submission to the Minister of Education. Senate also resolved that the task team approach the different UNW constituencies to solicit their views on the proposed merger, and that these viewpoints should be presented to the university community during a full University Assembly.²⁹

On 6 September 2002, at a University Assembly, the UNW stakeholders made presentations on a number of topics and adopted a resolution to accept the merger:³⁰

Here is a summary of the topics covered at the University Assembly.

- **The model of the proposed merger**
The submissions supported a complete merger, which would result in a unitary institution that would be in line with the broader transformation process of the country towards becoming a non-racial society. The merger should result in one university for the North-West Province with one name, one Council and one Senate.

- **Governance and administration**
Stakeholders from both universities should be equally represented in the governance structures. The management structures should be acceptable to both the UNW and the PU for CHE. There should be a central point where the institutional management power resides, but it would be necessary to devolve some of the management powers and authority to the campuses of the new university. Managers would need diverse skills to deal with staff, students and other stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds.
- **Programmes**
The merger may require rationalising certain programmes to address the issue of duplication. This process should be handled with caution so that programmes would not be centralised at one campus, forcing students to travel long distances to where the programmes were offered. For this reason, the Programme and Qualifications Mix (PQM) for the new university needed the attention it deserves.
- **Access**
 - **Fee structure**
The merger should retain an affordable fee structure, especially for those students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - **Course structure**
The course structures of the two institutions were not exactly the same. Therefore, managers should conduct the restructuring in a manner that would suit students from both institutions. The new university should allow pipeline students to complete their studies within the prescribed time
 - **Language and religion**
The UNW must put forward the following non-negotiable standpoints: *“That, in the interest of social justice, all individuals shall be afforded the opportunity to realise their personal, educational, economic and social aspirations through access to learning opportunities that are life-enhancing. This requires that all material and immaterial objects which have a potential of blocking the enjoyment of the right of access to education by anyone, be removed In the case of PU of CHE, it was known that language and the emphasis on Christian principles have been major*

*obstacles to the mentioned access. In appreciation of the fact that the new university shall be a public institution, in South Africa, which derives all that it does from the public, it was recommended that the sole use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction be scrapped. The Alumni also submit that any emphasis on religion should be absolutely discouraged".*³¹

■ **Resolution**

The University Assembly unanimously agreed on the following four issues:

- A merger of the two institutions as equal partners was necessary to attain the objectives of transformation.
- The merger process should be seen as an endeavour to improve academic standards at institutions of higher learning.
- All students should have equal access to resources, irrespective of their economic background, race, culture and religion.
- No worker should be worse off after the merger. Managers should handle the rationalisation of both administrative and professional personnel with the utmost care.³²

The UNW Task Team met with the Premier of the North West Province and the MEC for Education on 17 September 2002.³³

On 20 September 2002, the UNW Council supported the proposal to select a Council Task Team, with the mandate to formulate the submission to the Minister.³⁴

The UNW Council also adopted the following additional position, based on the report from the University Assembly of 6 September and the proposal from the joint task team between the two universities of 16 September 2002:³⁵

- To adopt, as a starting point, the proposal of the formation of a new institution, and to apply the guidelines contained in the National Plan on Higher Education.
- To clarify the grassroots perception that the Consultative Document for the UNW and PU for CHE Councils did not reflect the position of the UNW Council.
- To support a unitary merger with the PU for CHE, and to reject the federal proposal on the creation of three independent university campuses.
- To apply a guiding principle on language, eg the basis of the choice of language is whether it promotes access, equity and redress, and is in line with the profile of learners.
- To accept the proposal that the joint Council meeting could meet in a workshop and reorganise in committees, followed by the reconvening of all members.
- To make a joint submission to the Minister, outlining the issues agreed upon and still pending.³⁶

After the joint Council meeting between PU for CHE and UNW on 21 September 2002, the Joint Management Task Team could start work on the detailed planning of the merger and incorporation plan.



Endnotes

- 1 See Potchefstroom Campus archive, Official view of the PU for CHE on the restructuring with the UNW and Vista, 24 March 2003
- 2 A brand name is a collective set of important issues, which have come to be associated with a specific institution or product over a long period of time. This includes the values, character, quality, entrepreneurial orientation, market share and excellence – in short, an institution's reputation. A brand name is established over decades and is one of an institution's most valuable assets – and not something that may be dropped without serious negative consequences for the organisation
- 3 In the case of the PU for CHE, it is envisaged that Afrikaans will be retained as the primary but not the only language of instruction, in line with the Minister's language policy, while the Vaal Triangle may remain parallel and/or double medium and Mmabatho and Mankwe will remain English
- 4 It may be decided that the present Mankwe campus (because of its relative small size) would remain for the time being as a satellite campus of Mmabatho, and would therefore not need a principal and management committee
- 5 Beeld, 27 August 2002, report, p 8
- 6 NWU Institutional Office archive, Official view of the PU for CHE on the restructuring with the UNW and VISTA (Sebokeng), 24 March 2003
- 7 Sowetan, 2 September 2002, report, p 16
- 8 NWU Institutional Office archive, Addendum 4, NWU Merger and Incorporation, CD-ROM vol2, 2000-2002: 406-407
- 9 DJ Ncayiyana and FM Hayward, Effective governance: a guide for council members of universities and technikons, (Pretoria, Centre for Higher Education Transformation, 1999)
- 10 Potchefstroom Campus archive, PU vir CHO, Bestuurskomitee, notule, 4 Februaruarie 2003, par 5.1, 5.2
- 11 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Restructuring update, vol 1, issue 1, 7 February 2003
- 12 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Newsletters from Theuns Eloff, 11 and 14 February 2003
- 13 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Position paper of the PU for CHE on the proposed structure and management of the NHEI, 19 February 2003
- 14 Potchefstroom Campus archive, PU vir CHO, Bestuurskomitee, notule, 4 Maart 2003, par 21
- 15 Potchefstroom Campus archive, PU vir CHO, Uitgebreide Bestuurskomitee, notule, 18 Maart 2003, par5.1.2
- 16 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Advies van die Taakspan van die Senaat oor die samesmelting met die Universiteit Noord-Wes, Maart 2003, 13p
- 17 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Amptelike standpunt van die PU vir CHO oor die herstrukturering met die UNW en Vista, 4 Maart 2003
- 18 Potchefstroom Campus archive, PU vir CHO, Raad, notule, 7Maart 2003, par 3.4
- 19 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Nuusbrief deur T Eloff aan personeel en studente, 19 Maart 2003, 4p
- 20 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Nuusbrief deur T Eloff aan oud-Pukke, 24 Maart 2003, 8p
- 21 Potchefstroom Campus archive, PU vir CHO, Raad, notule, 10 April 2003, par 7.1
- 22 NWU Institutional Office archive, Addendum 5, NWU Merger and Incorporation, CD-ROM vol1, 2003: 333-340
- 23 NWU Institutional Office archive, Addendum 6, NWU Merger and Incorporation, CD-ROM vol1, 2003: 374-375
- 24 Potchefstroom Campus archive, PU vir CHO, Bestuurskomitee, notule, 4 Februarie 2003, par 5.4
- 25 NWU Institutional Office archive, Addendum 7, NWU Merger and Incorporation, CD-ROM vol 2, 2003: 438
- 26 A le R du Plooy, Die stigting van die Noordwes Universiteit: 'n Oorsig oor hoe die Raad van die PU vir CHO die proses van samesmelting hanteer het (NWU Institutional Office archive, ongepubliseerde verslag, Junie 2012)
- 27 Mafikeng Campus archive, Report on some consultations about the merger with PU for CHE in the light of recent student protest and complaints by the Staff Association, sa, pp 1-9
- 28 Mafikeng Campus archive, Process document, sa, p 2
- 29 Mafikeng Campus archive, UNW Senate Committee meeting, minutes, 29 August 2002, par 25.15
- 30 Mafikeng Campus archive, Process document, sa, p 5
- 31 Mafikeng Campus archive, Report of the University Assembly, 6 September 2002, p 2
- 32 Mafikeng Campus archive, Report of the University Assembly, 6 September 2002, pp 1, 2
- 33 Mafikeng Campus archive, Process document, sa, p 5
- 34 Mafikeng Campus archive, Travis, Theunsforcouncil September 2002, p 1
- 35 Mafikeng Campus archive, Consultative document for the UNW and PUCHE Councils, (UNW-PUCHE version, 2002-09-18, Draft x4), pp 1-3
- 36 Mafikeng Campus archive, Joint Meeting of the Councils of the Universities of North-West and Potchefstroom, minutes, 21 September 2002, par 2.2

CHAPTER 4

The finer merger and incorporation detail starts to merge

4. The formal planning and rollout strategy of the merger and incorporation process by the two universities

4.1. The merger and incorporation process followed by the two merging universities

Time flies when there is much work to be done. Indeed, the period between June and September 2002 was the high tide of intensive discussions and detailed planning for the proposed merger and incorporation process between two very different universities, which had been given the deadline of 4 October 2002 to make a submission to the Ministry of Education. With no time to waste, the two Councils embarked on an inclusive schedule of meetings to obtain feedback on the proposed document for the Minister. As regularly as clockwork, each new week brought new insights for the formulation of a merger and incorporation plan for the new institution.

Calculating the costs of the proposed merger was part and parcel of this work. An estimate of R161 million was submitted on 6 June 2003 by the two convenors of the Merger Finance Task Team, Prof AAI Bootha and Prof IJ Rost.¹ The Interim Management approved this merger cost by April 2004.²

During the planning period, the Councils of the two merging universities had to debate the far-reaching decision of the Minister and prepare an official response. In terms of their Statute, this meant, among other things, that the two institutions had to engage and consult with the Senate of each university. Similarly, they had to engage with their Institutional Forum, student representative council and support services. Naturally, discussions also had to continue with the direct role players, including both institutions and the Department of Education.³

On 10 June 2002, the Executive Management Committee of the PU for CHE debated the June press release of the Minister. In the release, the Minister announced the proposal that the PU for CHE and the UNW should merge and that the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE should be retained, but that the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the new institution.⁴ The broad themes of the Executive Management Committee's discussion were as follows:⁵

- Dr T Eloff informed the meeting that Cabinet had already approved the Minister's proposals for the restructuring of the higher education sector. A new institution would come about.

- The consortium model and draft contract drawn up for regional cooperation in the province, and which the PU for CHE Senate had approved, was still considered the most appropriate basis for discussions with the Minister on the future of the PU for CHE and the UNW as this model would best serve the educational objectives of the university.
- The aim was to table a comprehensive submission on this matter at the next meeting of the Council of the PU for CHE on 27 June 2002.⁶

Any further uncertainty about the Minister's plan was dispelled in an official letter that Prof Asmal wrote to Mr W van Wyk, chairperson of the PU for CHE Council, on 25 June 2002. Mr van Wyk's term as a member of Council was due to expire on 30 June 2002.⁷ During the Council meeting of 27 June 2002, Mr W van Wyk was succeeded as chairperson by Dr L Wessels.⁸ Dr Wessels served as Council chairperson of the merger process from this date.

In his letter to Mr van Wyk, Prof Asmal gave formal notification of his proposal that the PU for CHE, UNW and Sebokeng Campus of Vista University be merged into a single, new university, and that this had been published in the Government Gazette of 24 June 2002 – all in accordance with the Higher Education Act no 101 of 1997.⁹ This was formally announced in the Government Gazette of 21 and 24 June 2002. A document entitled, *Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education*,¹⁰ was also made available. The management of the university continued to hold discussions with the UNW on a joint proposal to the Minister.¹¹

The PU for CHE Council meeting on 27 June 2002 accepted the inevitability of the merger and incorporation, but with different modalities. The Council's preferred vehicle for the merger was the North-West Education and Training System (Nowets) consortium, with extended timeframes for the merger process. Council also resolved that the seven boundary conditions should serve as the framework for negotiations and should be the criteria for measuring the success of the merger and incorporation process. To enhance the official response of the university, Council requested the following interest groups of the PU for CHE to comment on the Minister's proposal: Senate, the Convocation and alumni, the Institutional Forum, the SRC of the Potchefstroom Campus and the SRC of the Vaal Triangle Campus.¹²

At its meeting on 12 and 13 July 2002, the UNW Council received a draft collaboration agreement between UNW and the PU for CHE, as well as a draft of UNW's proposed response to the Minister for restructuring higher education in the region. The UNW Council resolved the following issues relating to the proposed merger:

- to accept, in principle, a merger with the PU for CHE, with modalities still to be decided upon
- not to accept the proposed collaboration agreement with the PU for CHE
- to accept the proposal that two Executive Committees of the Councils be tasked to take on an oversight role for the merger process
- to constitute a task team to formulate the submission to the Minister.
- to approach the different constituencies to solicit their views on the proposed merger and to present these views to the university community at a full University Assembly.¹³

The Councils of the PU for CHE and the UNW, having met on 27 June and 12 and 13 July 2002, respectively, also developed a joint process, resulting in a joint submission to the Ministry on 1 October 2002.¹⁴

The merger was not the first choice of either university, but after realising that it was a legal and political matter, both Councils decided to go ahead with the process as soon as possible. The main reasons for this decision were as follows:

- nothing was to be gained by foot dragging
- human beings prefer to accept things they are certain about (even if they do not like them) rather than experience prolonged uncertainty
- both universities are vulnerable to the effect of uncertainty on student enrolments and staff mobility
- a long transitional period and prolonged uncertainty would, as was confirmed in discussions with the Department of Education, destroy any benefits the merger might bring
- in the course of their discussions on structured cooperation, the merger partners had built a measure of trust that had not existed before.¹⁵

The first meeting between the Executive Committees of the PU for CHE and UNW Councils and the two Vice-Chancellors took place on 2 August 2002 at the offices of the Human Rights Commission in Johannesburg. This meeting was held in a good spirit and resolved its first joint action step. This was to request their Management

Committees to convene a workshop on 7 and 8 August 2002.¹⁶ The mandate was to discuss issues raised by the two Councils and develop different scenarios or options for the merger. These would be used to draft a proposal for the Minister, without taking any firm decisions, and to report to the two Councils.¹⁷

The following people attended during this first joint executive meeting:

- Adv L Wessels (Chair: PU for CHE Council)
- Adv Marlize Kruger
- Dr MN Takalo (Vice-Chancellor: UNW)
- Dr N Smit (Member: PU for CHE Council)
- Dr T Eloff (Vice-Chancellor: PU for CHE)
- Mr L Nyhonya (Member: UNW Council)
- Ms L Sebege (Deputy Chair: UNW Council)
- Prof AAI Bootha (Secretary: UNW Council)
- Prof CFC van der Walt (Secretary: PU for CHE Council)

The two Vice-Chancellors provided an overview of and background to the Minister's proposals as they stood in the Government Gazette of 21 June 2002. The two parties agreed not to oppose the proposed merger by government between the two universities and to clarify the critical issue of the scope of the NHEI, whose market stretched beyond the boundaries of the North-West Province. They also agreed to prepare for a joint submission by the two Councils and to hold off on making any decisions during the preparations for the submission to the Minister. Finally, they agreed that the meeting of 7 and 8 August should go ahead as agreed by the two Councils.

The parties at the meeting compiled a framework and broad mandate as a guideline for management, working towards 4 October 2002 to submit their proposal to the Minister. Key points in this framework were to engage with officials of Vista University on the incorporation process and to develop innovative options for the merger, all of which should be consistent with the principles of the Constitution. Issues to consider included having one decision-making body for the new institution, along with its language, religion, ethos and culture.¹⁸

On 6 August 2002, UNW convened a University Assembly during which various stakeholders made presentations about the process and their understanding of the proposed merger.¹⁹

The Management Committees of the two universities held their first workshop on 7 and 8 August at Bakubung in the Pilanesberg. Each university had eight representatives. Although mutual trust was lacking at first, matters

improved when the two sides realised they had a common problem: the obligation to submit a joint submission that would serve the interests of both institutions to the Minister of Education by 4 October 2002.

As a result of this sober analysis of the challenges ahead, the two universities came to understand each other's perceptions, prejudices, fears and expectations, and their diverse mandates. At the same time, they both accepted the necessity to be proactive otherwise the Minister could enforce a unilateral merger in the North West.

Together, they completed a thorough analysis of the Ministry's proposal and agreed that a unitary merger was not the best option to deal with the intentions of the Minister. Instead, they developed various options, ranging from a consortium to a regional university with decentralised campuses.²⁰

These options, named "X, Y and Z",²¹ served only to set the parameters for further discussions on the campuses, and were never formally adopted by any official body of the two universities.²²

The workshop also looked at timeframes for the consultation process with all relevant role players and constituencies, and appointed a joint management task team (four a side), led by the two Vice-Chancellors.²³

This joint task team met three times, on 13 August, 11 September, and 16 September 2002 to proceed with the planning, incorporate all comments and finalise the draft proposal for the Minister.

Dr Eloff communicated the progress of the PU for CHE-UNW discussions to all staff on 12 August 2002.²⁴

Two days later, on 14 August, the PU for CHE's Senate discussed the proposals from the management workshop with the UNW and selected a Senate task team to advise Senate on the restructuring proposals.²⁵ The task team studied all the relevant documents and submitted a report, *Advice to the Senate*, on 26 August.²⁶ Representatives of the Institutional Forum also attended this Senate meeting and agreed to submit a report to the Council meeting of 29 August 2002.

Students from both PU for CHE campuses and the Convocation also decided to follow their own process and report to Council on 29 August 2002.

Meanwhile, a delegation from the PU for CHE informed representatives of the Action Group Higher Education and their chairperson, Prof Pieter Kapp, about the progress of negotiations during a meeting on 15 August.

On 16 August, the Executive Committee of the PU for CHE Council met and noted a report by the Management Committee on the progress made since the Council meeting of 27 June.²⁷

On 19 August, the two Vice-Chancellors met with the Superintendent-General of the North-West Education Department, Dr A Karodia, and had a frank and constructive discussion. The principals were impressed with his pragmatic thinking around the merger process and its outcomes. They left with the impression that if the two universities agreed on an approach, the North-West government would probably lend its support to such a proposal.

The PU for CHE's Institutional Forum met on 7 and 22 August 2002 to discuss the negotiation process.

The PU for CHE sent a newsletter to its alumni on 23 August, asking them to comment on the merger and incorporation, and directing them to the webpage <http://www.puk.ac.za/info/> for information. The Exco of the "Bond van Oud-Pukke" was also asked to comment.²⁸

Meanwhile, the Minister's tight timetable for the merger became a bone of contention in some circles. After the alumni newsletter went out, some of Dr Eloff colleagues claimed that he was rushing meetings to obtain certain outcomes. Dr Eloff was reminded to act cautiously because Senate was not a rubber stamp to go along meekly with the supposedly unavoidable merger.²⁹ This remark illustrates the stressed state of affairs at the Potchefstroom Campus of the PU for CHE, where the initial deliberations were held.

On 28 August 2002, the Senate of the PU for CHE reviewed the recommendations of its task team and:

- associated itself with the policy objectives of the National Plan for Higher Education, namely the promotion of access and representativeness, fairness and equity, diversity and serviceability to the country and the region, quality higher education, research capacity and effectiveness; and
 - accepted the need to realise these objectives and to:
 - develop strategies to enhance institutional capacity, productivity and sustainability
 - develop retention strategies for support communities and niche markets
 - develop strategies to create diversity in institutional cultures in line with the constitutional values of freedom, equity and human dignity
 - develop plans for academic quality and research capacity
- assure adequate government funding in accordance with agreed allocation criteria

- develop ways to collate reliable industry information
 - develop structures for good and responsible governance
 - develop realistic time frames that take the geographical distances between the campuses of PU for CHE and UNW into account.
- Senate took the view that merging the PU for CHE and UNW into a new institution would definitely not achieve these objectives and rather favoured a “new functional configuration”.³⁰
 - Senate agreed that, by virtue of the composition of its student body, the PU for CHE was not merely a regional university, nor did it wish to be – no matter what form the new university would take. Nevertheless, Senate reiterated its willingness, as in the past, to serve the interests of the North-West Province.
 - Senate did not agree with the view that a merger between these two institutions was unavoidable.
 - Senate argued that instead of a merger, another functional configuration could develop. This might amount to a uniquely relevant combination of cooperation, merging and creating something new. In accordance with the objective of diversity, such a functional configuration had to be capable of making provision for a unique approach to scholarship and a unique institutional culture for each of the various units. The relevant parties should negotiate such a functional configuration with each other, as well as with the Minister and the Department of Education.
 - Senate argued that this kind of functional configuration would make a much bigger contribution to the realisation of the objectives of the National Plan than a merger would. A functional configuration could support the following developments:
 - provide a solid framework for profound change within a realistic period, and retain niche markets without alienating communities
 - facilitate quality improvement and the expansion of research capacity
 - contribute substantially to greater accessibility and demographic representativeness among staff and students
 - contribute to meaningful programme realignment
 - develop the ability to meet regional and national needs
 - encourage greater solidarity, functionality and effectiveness.³¹

On the same day as the Senate meeting, 28 August 2002, the PU for CHE task team met to prepare documentation for the Council meeting. It decided to ask for a renewed mandate to negotiate further, but not to recommend any specific option.

On 29 August 2002, the Council of the PU for CHE held an important meeting to deal with some critical matters.

The advice of the Senate task team was thoroughly discussed. In effect, Senate had reconciled itself with the National Plan but had set a number of conditions for the university’s academic standards, value system and ethos. Council debated Senate’s outspoken opposition to a “unitary merger” in favour of a “functional configuration” that would have to be defined and designed. Senate had also objected to the fact that on 27 June 2002, the Council had decided, without consulting Senate, that the merger was inevitable. Furthermore, Senate had recommended that the Council seek specialised legal advice.

Council also noted that the Institutional Forum supported the decisions Council had taken on 27 June 2002. The management of the Convocation of Alumni was still studying the documents as of 29 August, but supported the National Plan and the direction that Council was taking, especially the seven boundary conditions it had set. Council was also mindful of the need to respect the ethos of the PU for CHE, as well as the goodwill of the support community.

Council took note of the developments, especially the importance of considering and consulting Senate in decision making, and gave management the following mandate, which had to be ready by 20 September:

- continue to deal with the matter, and ascertain and evaluate the views of important parties such as Senate, the Institutional Forum and others
- consult with the management of the UNW to finalise the report to the Minister

- consider obtaining legal advice from senior legal practitioners on the position of the university, as well as the submission to the Minister
- in collaboration with the UNW, prepare a draft response to the Minister for tabling at the Council meeting on 20 September 2002.³²

Events then happened thick and fast.

On 29 August 2002, the UNW Senate also met and decided to request SENEX to collate the submissions from the different faculties on campus. The UNW Senate did not pose specific “boundary conditions”.³³

On 31 August 2002, the two Vice-Chancellors met again and reported on each other’s progress, exchanged views and discussed strategies to enhance the planning process.

The PU for CHE Senate met again on 4 September 2002 and received feedback from the Council meeting. The Senate took note of the Council’s mandate and decided to wait until its meeting of 18 September to receive feedback from management and its proposal to the Council meeting of 20 September. Eventually the PU for CHE Senate agreed to the basic outline of the proposed submission to the Minister.

On 5 September 2002, the PU for CHE task team met and agreed to present a draft written proposal to the joint task team of 11 September.

On 6 September, the UNW University Assembly adopted a resolution to accept the merger and negotiating process.³⁴

On 11 September, the joint task team met and received feedback from the two principals. It also discussed the PU for CHE’s written proposal and decided to consider and comment on it by 16 September.

On 12 September, the UNW Council task team convened to start preparing a document for Council, which would provide input to the Minister’s document. The meeting also discussed the PU for CHE’s written proposal tabled on 11 September 2002 to the joint task team. On 14 and 15 September, the UNW Council task team met again to further thrash out a proposal for the UNW Council.

On 16 September, the joint management task team of the two universities met again. After intensive negotiations, they finalised a joint proposal for submission to the respective meetings of the Councils on 20 September 2002. The highlights of this proposal, which would be the first step towards a joint merger and incorporation process, were as follows:

1. The Councils of PU for CHE and UNW individually and jointly agreed with the objectives of the National Plan about the need to restructure the higher education landscape.

2. The two universities had engaged in a process to identify the best way to achieve these objectives. However, significant stakeholders had expressed opposition to a unitary merger. To obtain the commitment imperative for the success of a merger, the concerns of all stakeholders had to be addressed. The process so far had identified benefits that could flow from the merger. The challenge was to sustain the cooperation and retain the support of stakeholders.

3. In the spirit of cooperation and patriotism, a new higher education institution and a new Council should be established to achieve the objectives of the National Plan and the Ministry.

4. The new institution should be established by 30 June 2003, with a new, permanent Council (as opposed to an interim council).

5. The new Council should appoint the Chancellor and the Chief Executive Officer of the new institution by the end of 2003. The CEO should be accountable to Council for the coordination, synergy and cooperation between the campuses.

6. In the interests of achieving a viable merger, provision should be made for a transitional period. This would enable the new institution to move from a formal merger state to a state of substantive viable integration of the different units. For this phase the following issues had to be addressed:

- the nature of governance at lower levels in the institution, including the operational roles of the senates and councils
- the functioning of the new institution as a multi-campus system
- the new institution as a comprehensive entity
- sufficient plans for diversity within a unitary institution
- adequate timeframes and properly managed processes
- a policy and practice for functional multilingualism
- commitment to values that would promote a suitable environment for education,

learning, research, study and service as a truly South African institution

- the nature of managerial accountability for campuses that are more than 300 kilometres apart, in a manner that stakeholders would support and that would achieve the objectives of educational reform
- stakeholder concerns that had been raised, including the potential disruption of family life through relocation, job security, employment equity, staff and programme rationalisation and the possibility of higher tuition fees and language as a barrier to entrance.

7. It was important that stakeholders committed to and took ownership of the merger process and final merger proposal. Mechanisms were needed to ensure a transparent culture, responsiveness and collective decision making at all levels.³⁵

8. Another critical success factor would be to ensure that the merger and incorporation process integrated the boundary conditions set by the Council of PU for CHE (paragraph 9 below) and the principles supported by the UNW (paragraph 13 below).

9. The seven boundary conditions set by the Council of PU for CHE were:

- **Effective management:** the new institution should be structured so that it could be effectively governed and managed
- **Standards and quality:** the new institution should function in such a way that in the medium term, teaching-learning, research, administrative standards and quality measures could develop as befits a university of international repute.
- **Financial sustainability:** the new institution should be capable of meeting all its financial obligations on time and have the necessary planning, discipline and financial systems.
- **Educational viability:** the structure of the new institution should enable it to grow into an accessible and viable entity. It should be an institution that could attract students from all over South Africa and the subcontinent, and respond to the needs of the region in particular.

- **Merger funding:** the necessary funding should be available to achieve the merger objectives.
- **Institutional culture and ethos:** the new institution should combine the best aspects of the existing institutional cultures and ethos, within the framework of the Constitution and its foundational values of human dignity, equality and freedom.
- **Maintaining the existing support base or niche markets and branding:** the establishment of the new institution should maintain the support base of the existing universities, as it would be a source for recruiting students and would also strengthen the new institution's finances and research efforts.

10. The PU for CHE was in agreement with the principles stated by UNW (see paragraph 13). Its vision was that the new institution would consist of three university campuses (at Mmabatho, Potchefstroom, and Vanderbijlpark) and a technikon-type campus at Mankwe. (The thinking was that a Rustenburg/Phokeng technikon campus could be added later, with the possible support of the Bafokeng nation.)

11. The PU for CHE saw itself as an integral part of the new institution, with relevant experience and real strengths that could contribute to the success of the merger and the effective functioning of the new institution. It was ready to play a pivotal role in addressing past inequalities and assisting in transforming the higher education system. It was also ready to serve the new South African social order in terms of the Constitution, to meet pressing national and regional needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities as the young South African democracy unfolds.

12. UNW was in agreement with the first five boundary conditions of the PU for CHE as these were necessary for ordinary good governance in the education sector. However, to put these conditions into practice, the criteria underlying them had to be further explored and clarified

Consensus on the remaining two conditions (institutional culture and the existing support base) was elusive. The reason was that these touched on very specific issues relating to PU for CHE, its traditions and stakeholders. The boundary conditions would also affect the integration phase of the merger process (see paragraph 6 above).

Hence, it was important to continue dialogue on these points.

13. The UNW proposed that the merger process adhere to the following six principles:

- The commitment from the merger partners to create and become part of a fully authentic South African university.
- This commitment should provide for diversity and differences that could build the wealth of the diverse cultures of the university community, and contribute to the consolidation of democratic transformation. This principle represented the dynamic opposite of entrenching unequal and disparate developments.
- The new institution would be a national entity, not defined by provincial boundaries and narrow interests. It would serve its region, province and the wider South African and Southern African regional communities.
- A commitment to social justice, which would realise equality of opportunities.
- Enable access for participants.
- Promote the goals of an equitable staff and student body.

To fully assess and clarify the practical meaning of these principles, the criteria underlying them needed to be further explored and mechanisms put in place to achieve them as the merging process unfolded. The new university had to be an institution with a new ethos and culture that should be part of a non-racial educational landscape. The challenge was to overcome the divide between historically white and black institutions through a democratic process.³⁶

At the time, the PU for CHE was made aware that the final position of UNW on the six principles would be clear after the UNW Council had discussed their stakeholder responses on 20 September 2002.

14. The universities expressed the need to further negotiate with each other and the Ministry on the establishment of the new institution and its boundary conditions. This would be based on the values contained in the Constitution and the aims set for higher education in the context of democracy.³⁷

Meanwhile, the merger parties were actively engaging the education authorities. On 16 September 2002, the PU for CHE task team met with the Premier of the

North-West and the MEC for Education, at their request. The following day, 17 September, the UNW task team also met with the Premier and the MEC, again at their request. The discussions were cordial and the Premier undertook to consider the final documentation agreed to by the two Councils, with a view to giving the province's endorsement of the proposal.

On 18 September, the Senate of the PU for CHE met and approved the joint proposal to the Councils, subject to certain conditions. These were that Senate:

- did not support a unitary merger
- supported the boundary conditions set by the Council of the PU for CHE
- supported the idea of the two Councils submitting a consensus report to the Minister
- requested its Council to ask the Minister for a more flexible timeframe for negotiations with UNW.³⁸

Various interest groups of the PU for CHE also aligned themselves with the process. The Institutional Forum agreed to the basic proposal resolved by Senate on 18 September 2002. The following day, the PU for CHE's Convocation met and agreed to the basic proposal. Also on 19 September 2002, a mass meeting of alumni of the PU for CHE was held to discuss the basic proposal.³⁹

The meeting of the PU for CHE Council was scheduled for 20 September to finalise the document for the Minister before the joint Council meeting with UNW the next day.⁴⁰

During this meeting, Council noted that Management had fulfilled its mandate and held discussions with all interested parties. Meanwhile in preparation for the meetings of both Councils, the restructuring task team of the PU for CHE and the UNW had compiled a draft document. Council noted that the Senate and Institutional Forum, as well as the management of the Convocation of the 'Bond van oud-Pukke', had accepted this joint document on the way forward. Council decided to accept the proposed report to the Minister as the basis for the joint meeting with the Council of the UNW on 21 September 2002.⁴¹

The UNW Council received the following documents for the second ordinary meeting of 20 September 2002: the report of the University Assembly held on 6 September 2002, the fourth draft of the consultative document for the UNW and PU for CHE Councils, a process document and an amendment to it, a consultative document entitled *Institutional options for the proposed merger of the UNW and PU for CHE*, and the report on the workshop held at Bakubung on 7 and 8 August 2002 on institutional options for the merger.⁴²



▲ Combined management team for the merger and incorporation process, 2003⁴⁶

At its meeting on 20 September 2002, the UNW Council made the following resolutions about the merger process:

- as a starting point, to adopt the proposal on the formation of a new institution and to apply the guidelines contained in the National Plan on Higher Education
- to clarify that the *Consultative Document for the UNW and PU for CHE Councils* did not reflect the position of the UNW Council
- to support a unitary merger with the PU for CHE, and to reject the federal proposal of creating three universities
- to apply a guiding principle regarding language, ie that language choice should be based on whether it promotes access, redresses the past and is in line with the profile of the learners
- to make a joint submission to the Minister
- that the delegation of Council to meet with the Minister on 1 October 2002 would consist of Adv FDP Tlakula, Ms LK Sebego, Mr L Hlabatau, Mr K Rabanye, Mr N Mahlangu, Mr NT Molusi, Mr JF Schutte, Rev J Tau, Dr NM Takalo and Prof AAI Bootha.⁴³

Optimism was in the air that consensus on the way forward was close.

4.2. Consensus viewpoints of the two universities, established on 21 September 2002 at Magalies Park⁴⁴

The two Councils had a joint meeting on Saturday, 21 September 2002 at Magalies Park in the Hartebeespoort Dam area. At this joint meeting the two universities reached a historic consensus on the founding principles of the new institution.⁴⁵

Their starting point would be to compile a joint submission to the Ministry, outlining points of consensus and disagreement, and requesting more time for negotiations. The significance of this cannot be overemphasised: the fact that the two universities were willing to present a joint consensus position to the Minister shows how far they had come with the merger and incorporation process and how much progress they had made in building a relationship based on trust.

At the 20 September meeting, both Councils agreed that the new institution should be constructed according to the guidelines of the National Plan on Higher Education, with constitutionally entrenched values, as a comprehensive, unitary, multi-campus and divisionalised institution. They also agreed that the new institution and its Interim Council Elect, consisting of members of each existing Council, should be in place by 1 July 2003. The Interim Council would then work with the existing Councils, senates, managements and other relevant structures to establish overall policy frameworks for the new institution.

To prepare for the establishment of the Interim Council, the two existing Councils agreed to form a Joint Oversight Committee and a Joint Operational Committee drawn from the two managements, later named the Joint Operational Team, to take the process forward.

Both Councils agreed that language, institutional culture and ethos, access and redress, and the analysis of boundary conditions were pressing matters to be addressed and negotiated. Agreement was also reached that the joint delegation to the Minister of Education should consist of six people, comprising the two Chairpersons of Council, the two Deputy Chairpersons and the two Vice-Chancellors. The delegation could co-opt additional members as required and, if possible, should meet before presenting the consensus positions to the Minister.⁴⁷

After the joint meeting of the two Councils, the Joint Management Committee of the universities received a mandate to prepare a joint submission to the Ministry. As it had very little time to prepare, the Joint Management Committee realised that it was simply not feasible to develop detailed options and that it was more important to structure a process for the way forward. The strategy was to provide enough detail to the Ministry on 1 October to establish the sincerity of the two universities and to gain the Ministry's support for further negotiations.⁴⁸

Next, on 1 October 2002, a joint submission was made to the Minister, the aim being to empower him to announce the final merger and incorporation plan for the new university before the end of 2002. The joint submission gave detailed perspectives on the proposed merger and was signed by Adv Pansy Tlakula, Chairperson of the

Council of UNW, and Dr Leon Wessels, Chairperson of the PU for CHE Council.⁴⁹

After the presentation to the Minister, the two merger partners issued a joint statement announcing their intention to construct a new institution of higher education by means of a merger and incorporation, in line with the guidelines of the National Plan for Higher Education. This institution with constitutionally protected values should be a comprehensive, unitary, multi-campus, divisionalised institution.⁵⁰

In the release, they announced that an Interim Council would be formed, consisting of members of the present two Councils.⁵¹

The Interim Council would work in alignment with the present Councils and other structures (such as the senates) to form broad policy frameworks for the new institution.

The universities would establish the necessary processes and structures required to let the negotiations progress smoothly. As mentioned earlier, these structures would include a Council committee, joint operational committee from the two managements and a joint senate committee.

The two universities announced their commitment to further negotiations on language, institutional culture and ethos, and access and redress. They also pledged to further clarify these boundary conditions, along with any other fundamental and substantive issues identified by either of the two parties.⁵²

In submitting their joint proposal to the Minister, the PU for CHE and UNW became the first merger partners to present a plan for a new comprehensive, multi-campus institution. As the two Vice-Chancellors said in their joint statement, the proposed plan would, if accepted, create a unique higher education institution with a careful balance between much-needed unity and essential diversity.⁵³ They believed that the proposed model could contribute substantially towards the transformation of higher education in South Africa and that the non-adversarial approach could become a model for other proposed mergers.⁵⁴

4.3. The joint working committees conducting the merger process⁵⁵

To ensure that the NWU would be up and running and firing on all cylinders when 2004 arrived, a number of task groups were established quite early in 2003, co-led by people nominated by the two universities' managements and approved by their Councils. They also nominated liaison groups and committees to ensure properly consulted, binding decisions at the appropriate levels throughout the fledgling university.

Establishing a large number of task groups and reporting lines ensured that the hierarchical decision-making processes of a university could develop. Due to the vastness of the merger and incorporation task, a clear order of priority was agreed on and followed, dealing with first things first and allowing other matters to follow in due course, although still according to a clear timeline.⁵⁶

What really set the pace for the efficient and timeous implementation of the merger was the decision of the two merging universities to form joint working committees and teams, each with clear terms of reference, to attend to specific requirements in preparation for the final merger and the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.⁵⁷ On 20 October 2002, representatives of the two institutions agreed on the need to conduct a compatibility study and form three top-level joint committees, namely the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC), the Joint Operations Team (JOT), and the Joint Senate Committee (JSC). The composition and terms of reference of all three committees⁵⁸ were finalised on 13 November 2002.⁵⁹

The core challenge facing the merging universities was to ensure that the merger went ahead without any disruption in the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching. Come the beginning of 2004, new students had to be able to enrol, learn, be given accommodation and undergo assessment. Staff, infrastructure and other resources and processes had to be in place to ensure the proper functioning and financial viability of the new institution from the outset.⁶⁰

Hence, the guiding principle of the merger task teams was to consider the existing policies, rules and procedures of the two universities, as well as examples of best practice from the higher education scene, locally and internationally before deciding on a final position. This approach benefited significantly from the work done in the "Nowets" consortium process referred to earlier.⁶¹

4.4. The composition of the joint merger committees

The three joint merger committees set up by the Councils of the merging universities played a crucial role in ensuring that the merger and incorporation was properly planned and carried out. Here is a brief overview of each committee.

Joint Oversight Committee (JOC)

The membership of the JOC consisted of the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of the two Councils, the two Vice-Chancellors and eight other representatives (four from each university).

The members representing the UNW were FDP Tlakula, K Rabanye, LK Sebegu, LM Hlabatua, and MN Takalo, MNS Sitole, NT Molusi, S Langtry and K Travis (the scribe).

The committee members representing the PU for CHE were L Wessels, CJ Smit, F Venter, M Kruger, S Abrahams, S Roopa and T Eloff.⁶²

The JOC held its first meeting on 28 March 2003⁶³ and met three more times, on 2 and 24 May and 6 June 2003⁶⁴ to oversee the merger process in line with its terms of reference. These were to advise the two Councils on making recommendations to the Minister and on matters such as the formal declaration of the new institution, including the establishment of an Interim Council, a draft Statute for the new institution and various contentious issues to be listed in the submission to the Minister.⁶⁵

Joint Operational Team (JOT)

The JOT was responsible for all operational and organisational matters, subject to the sanction of the JOC. It was agreed that each of the two universities would maintain the right to determine the composition of their own delegation on this decisive committee.⁶⁶ Consequently, the UNW appointed members based on skills and experience, as well as attempting to be as inclusive as possible, while the PU for CHE appointed members in accordance with the task that would need to be executed.⁶⁷

The team members from the PU for CHE were Theuns Eloff (the Vice-Chancellor), Chris van der Walt, Maarten Venter, Wilma Viviers and Francois du Preez.

The members from the UNW were Ngoato Takalo (the Vice-Chancellor), Motsei Modise, Claudia Pietersen, Dan Setsetse, Debra Baletseng and Stephen Langtry.

The team met 11 times as follows:

- 30 October 2002, Mmabatho
- 13 November 2002, Potchefstroom
- 5 December 2002, Mmabatho
- 5 February 2003, Potchefstroom
- 19 February 2003, Mmabatho
- 25 March 2003, Potchefstroom
- 7 April 2003, Mmabatho
- 21 - 23 April 2003 (*Bosberaad*) – Hunter's Rest
- 13 May 2003, Potchefstroom
- 3 June 2003, Mmabatho
- 17 June 2003, Potchefstroom

Joint Senate Committee (JSC)

The JSC's role was to attend to academic programme matters. It comprised two co-conveners and four members from each of the two Senates of the merger partners.⁶⁸

The members from the PU for CHE were AL Combrink (convenor), DJ van Wyk, HJ Steyn, GJ de Klerk, HA Koeleman and J Swanepoel.

The UNW members were S Mashego (convenor), MW Lekgotlo, SH Taole, RM Manyane, KM Meko, NM Senne and AC Nyakutse.⁶⁹

4.5. Timeframes for the merger and incorporation process

Through discussions with the Ministry, it became clear that a two-year interim period was no longer attainable or desirable, because it would only create even more uncertainty. From a legal point of view, the two Councils could not continue to exist once an Interim Council was established.⁷⁰ Therefore the JOT prepared a proposal on viable interim arrangements for the JOC.

The JOT proposed that, in the course of 2003, the two universities should negotiate and provisionally decide on the full Council. From those 30 names, they should choose eight names for the Interim Council, and submit a recommendation about a chairperson to the Minister.

Another suggestion was that the Interim Council should hold its first (and last) meeting as soon as possible after the implementation of the new university. At that single meeting the Interim Council should complete everything that the Higher Education Act and the Standard Institutional Statute required. The full Council should preferably meet by mid-January 2004 for the first time and start its governance role in terms of the merger guidelines.

The JOT proposed cut-off dates for the negotiating teams:

- The term of office of an Interim Council and an Interim Management might be as short as two weeks depending on whether or not the teams could reach consensus on the names of members of the Interim and full Council.
- The new institution's Statute should be negotiated as completely as possible by January 2004 so that the full Council could approve it at its first meeting. In the event of uncompleted negotiations, the full new Council could establish an in-principal framework to finalise the negotiations.
- By the end of June 2003, the merger partners should be ready to advise the Minister on the

name of the new institution, its commencement date, its official address and the names of the Interim Council members.

- A recommendation about the commencement date of the new institution would only be possible by the end of June 2003 owing to the slow progress of the compatibility study, which could drag on until mid-May 2003. This meant the team could only complete the cost analysis by mid-June.

These tight timelines did not dampen the enthusiasm of the merger teams, which made good progress. The table below shows the proposed timetable and objectives from February 2003 until the first quarter of 2004 for the merger, incorporation and restructuring process.⁷¹

4.6. Progress on final agreements and negotiations on the progress with the implementation phase of the merger and incorporation process^{72 73}

The following timeline for the merger negotiations illustrates the pace of progress the merging universities were making.

- **21 September 2002:** The joint Council meeting on 21 September 2002 concluded the following agreements:
 - A JOC and a JOT should be formed by the end of November 2002 to manage the

process before the Interim Council was established.

- The Councils would submit a report to the Ministry before the end of 2002 and develop a budget to cover the merger and incorporation process from the time of the Cabinet decision in June 2002 until the establishment of the Interim Council.
- Before the establishment of the Interim Council, the existing Councils should reach substantive agreements on all the merger and incorporation issues, including the boundary conditions representing the founding criteria of the new institution.
- The two Councils should agree on the terms of reference for the Interim Council, which would primarily focus on the overall policy and systems for the new institution.
- After following a consultative process, the two Councils would recommend the membership and chairpersonship of the Interim Council to the Ministry before the end of February 2003.
- In order to respond to the Ministry's directive about the Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM), the Councils should set up a Joint Senate Committee (JSC)

Month	February	March	April	May	June	July-September	31 October	1 January 2004	First quarter of 2004
Meetings and objectives	Confirmation of process. Joint meeting of Councils (7 March) Meetings of JOC (14 and 28 March).	Meetings of JOC Meeting of PU for CHE Council (10 April) Meeting of UNW Council.	Finalisation of recommendations to Councils. Meetings of JOC	Decisions by Councils Meeting of UNW Council Meeting of PU for CHE Council	30 June Advice to the Minister on: Name and official address of the new institution. Names of members for the interim Council for the composition of the new Council	Names of new Council. Finalise draft Statute.	Names of new Council. Finalise draft Statute.	Establishment of a new higher education institution. Interim council constitutes for the minimum period. Constitution of the new Council by mid/end of January.	Adoption of the new Statute. Appointment of office bearers.
Process	Compatibility study Cost analysis Appointment of task teams to investigate substantial matters and to advise JOT and JOC on matters such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures • Access and academic rules 								

- The two Councils undertook to make regular progress reports to the Ministry and indicated that the two Vice-Chancellors were available for further discussions with officials of the Department of Education.
 - The two universities thanked the Ministry for the opportunity to comment, and declared that they would appreciate the Ministry's response as soon as possible. They also stated that the greatest obstacle to the success of this process was continued uncertainty.⁷⁴
 - **28 September 2002:** Based on this preliminary consensus, the two Vice-Chancellors wrote to the Premier of the North West Province, Dr Popo Molefe, informed him that the two Councils had reached consensus, and requested him to comment on their consensus proposal. On 28 September 2002, the Premier's Office confirmed telephonically that he endorsed the submission to the Ministry.
 - **31 December 2002:** Templates for the compatibility study were completed, dates finalised for joint Council, JOC, JOT and JSC meetings, recommendations made on the establishment of the Interim Council, and requirements identified for funding and external facilitation.⁷⁵
 - **22 January 2003:** Dr Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor of the PU for CHE, met with students' parents at the Vaal Triangle Campus to explain the planning process for creating a new institution with a new name and four campuses (at Potchefstroom, Mankwe, Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark), each with its own identity.⁷⁶
 - **4 February 2003:** The monthly planning for the restructuring process from February 2003 until the first quarter of 2004 was completed.⁷⁷
 - **7 March 2003:** The second joint meeting of the Councils of the UNW and PU for CHE was held.⁷⁸ A presentation was made on the progress of the merger process, the aim of the compatibility study, a "gap analysis" and costing.⁷⁹ The joint Council meeting accepted a very tight timeframe for the merger process. The JOC meeting of 28 March endorsed the practicalities of the excited planning period:
 - **24 or 25 March:** JOT meeting
 - **28 March:** JOC meeting to endorse JOT proposals
 - **22 April:** complete the internal component of the compatibility study.
 - **3 June:** complete the compatibility study's external component
 - **23 June:** complete the cost analysis of the restructuring process
 - **27 June:** proposed date for JOC decisions on the name and address(es) of the institution, and the date of inception
 - **28 August:** proposed date for the JOC to decide on the names of the Council members and Interim Council
 - **28 November:** proposed date for the JOC to accept the draft Statute of the new institution
 - **1 January 2004:** proposed date to initiate the new institution
 - The managerial challenge for the senior management and two Councils during this above-mentioned planning period was to build trust and understanding on the campuses during the restructuring process.⁸⁰
 - **25 March 2003:** After a slow start, the JOT demonstrated the early gains made by discussing a progress report to the JOC. In particular, the report highlighted the progress made in reaching consensus on the nature and structure of the new institution. Specifically, there was consensus that the new institution should be one multi-campus institution with one Council and Chancellor, one Vice-Chancellor and at least one Deputy Vice-Chancellor, one Senate, one Institutional Student Representative Council, one Institutional Forum, an Institutional Registrar and Directors for strategic support services.
- Although no consensus had yet been reached on the nature of the campuses, there was common ground on the management structure at campus level (comprising a principal who would report to the vice-chancellor and be part of his or her management committee, a registrar and a management committee).
- There was also consensus on the institutional framework, meaning a single set of standards, policies and operational systems; a single set of constitutionally based values, and one vision and mission. In addition, the two universities had agreed to develop a new corporate brand, identity and institutional culture for the new institution, and to develop a language policy for it in line with the Ministerial policy. As for the new university's PQM,

the merger partners had decided that the Joint Senate Committee should advise the Joint Operational Team on this.

Showing yet more progress, the two universities had reached consensus on the matters which the Minister had to be advised of by 30 June 2003. Here, they agreed that the name of the new institution should reflect the values and goals of a truly South African university, that the official address of its institutional management should be on the premises of one of the existing campuses, and that 1 January 2004 would be the preferred date of establishment. There was also agreement on the importance of a compatibility study between the two universities and on the notion that the term of the Interim Council should be as short as possible.⁸¹

As far as the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University was concerned, the JOT noted that discussions had been under way between the local managements of Vista Sebokeng and the PU for CHE Vaal Triangle Campus. These discussions included the possibility of establishing a formal management forum comparable to the JOT to develop an incorporation plan.⁸² Prof P Prinsloo of the Vaal Triangle Campus received a mandate from the Management Committee of the PU for CHE to develop an incorporation plan with the local task team in the Vaal Triangle.⁸³

- **28 March 2003:** The JOC held its first meeting to discuss the progress report from the JOT. It noted the consensus on a common vision and mission⁸⁴ and the lack of consensus on the five key issues of language, institutional culture, ethos, access and redress and the unpacking of boundary conditions.⁸⁵
- **April 2003:** This was deal-breaker month. According to Dr Rolf Stumpf, former vice-chancellor of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, affected institutions broadly followed two strategies in their merger process. *“The ones involved in mergers in a few cases spent fruitless months deciding on what they should do. Others decided that the odds were stacked against them and simply got on with the job as quickly as possible.”*⁸⁶ It was clear that in the North West Province the latter strategy was used from the inception of the merger and incorporation planning process.
- **7 April 2003:** The JOT meeting discussed the progress made with the compatibility study and established a number of task teams to do detailed planning on the results of the study.⁸⁷ During this meeting, the so-called *“deal breaker issues”* between UNW and PU for CHE were highlighted and the two parties decided to try and resolve these issues at a workshop called a *“Bosberaad”* from 21 to 23 April at Hunter’s Rest Lodge.
- **10 April 2003:** The PU for CHE Council reconfirmed their official view on the restructuring process.
- **11 April 2003:** A clarification meeting was held with the Department of Education to provide relevant information to the convenors of the task teams.
- **15 and 16 April 2003:** Preparations were made for the JOC *Bosberaad*.
- **16 April 2003:** The PU for CHE and the UNW were requested to submit proposals for a new name for the merged and incorporated institution to the Minister by 30 June 2003.⁸⁸ With this in mind, students, alumni, staff members, parents, unions, authorities, businesspeople and communities were asked to send proposals for assessment before 20 May 2003.⁸⁹ Participants were asked to propose a name that reflected the values and objectives of a truly South African university and complied with one or more of the criteria set. These criteria were that the names must reflect the aspirations of stakeholders, strive for international best practice, give prominence to the region where the institution is based, avoid names of individuals, unify and affirm the new institution without undermining the identities of the two existing institutions, and seek permanency and sustainability.⁹⁰
- **21 to 23 April 2003:** For the JOT *Bosberaad* at Hunter’s Rest, which was held to work on outstanding issues, the PU for CHE management prepared a discussion document that was sent to Dr Takalo, Vice-Chancellor of the UNW. At the workshop, however, the UNW delegation was not willing to discuss the proposal of the PU for CHE. The participants exchanged harsh words but managed to find some common ground and negotiations were back on track by the first evening.⁹¹ The parties eventually developed a joint proposal for the JOC meeting of 2 May 2003, which ultimately formed the basis of the agreement between the two Councils.⁹²
- **23 April 2003:** The PU for CHE Executive Management Committee received feedback from students.⁹³
- **13 May 2003:** The JOT meeting resolved the status of funding from the Free University

in Amsterdam and finalised a Memorandum of Agreement to be signed by the two Vice-Chancellors and Dr WG Noomen of the Free University in Amsterdam.⁹⁴ This funding of 14,600 euros was intended to support the merger in a structured way, facilitated by Dr H Brinkman of the Free University.⁹⁵

- **2, 23 and 24 May 2003:**⁹⁶ JOC meetings were held to discuss progress reports from the JOT.⁹⁷ A progress report was drafted for the two Councils on 24 May at the Indaba Hotel, Fourways.⁹⁸
- **May 2003:** During the month of May, the two universities' Senates discussed progress on the new institution's PQM, academic programmes, sub programmes and modules.
- **6 June 2003:** A JOC meeting was held at the offices of the National Business Initiative (NBI).⁹⁹ The JOC finalised a progress report to the two Councils on the transitional arrangements,¹⁰⁰ also finalised a Resolution Register,¹⁰¹ and submitted a proposal to cover the estimated once-off merger cost of R161 million.¹⁰²
- **19 June 2003:** After careful consideration and lengthy deliberations the UNW Council determined the position it would take at the JOC meeting scheduled immediately after the Council meeting.¹⁰³
- **19 June 2003:** The fifth meeting of the JOC endorsed the proposed Memorandum of Agreement¹⁰⁴ on the institutional framework, the name of the institution, the wording of the draft language policy, and the institutional culture and ethos,¹⁰⁵ and submitted a report to the Councils.¹⁰⁶
- **20 June 2003:** During a special meeting of the UNW Council,¹⁰⁷ amendments were made to the wording of the addendum to the Memorandum of Agreement.¹⁰⁸

Later that day, after a gruelling meeting, the Councils of the PU for CHE and the UNW reached agreement on the nature, structure and related matters concerning the establishment of the new institution.¹⁰⁹ The issues at stake were the name, management seat and language policy of the new university. So long and intense was the meeting¹¹⁰, which also touched on the Christian character of the PU for CHE, that the *Rapport* newspaper called these negotiations between PU for CHE and UNW a "mini-Codesa".¹¹¹

Here is a summary of the most important issues agreed on during the meeting between the two Councils.

Institutional framework

This framework outlines the main characteristics of the new university, which would be a multi-campus institution encompassing the existing campuses. The new university would have the following characteristics:

- a single set of policies, systems and standards at an institutional level
- a single set of constitutionally based values
- one vision and mission
- a new own corporate brand name and identity
- its own language policy, in line with ministerial policy
- a unique institutional culture and ethos.¹¹²

The name of the new institution

Section 65 of the Higher Education Act declared that a Council of a public higher education institution may, with the approval of the Minister and by notice in the Gazette, change the name of that higher education institution.¹¹³

The proposal was that the name of the new institution would be North-West University, which would have four campuses.

The Interim Council would be responsible for developing the new corporate brand name and identity of the new university. However, for marketing purposes, the campuses would use their existing brand names until the new Council decided on the branding of the institution and its campuses. In the marketing of campuses, the logo of the new institution would apply in all instances.

Chancellor

There should be one Chancellor for the institution.

Interim Council and Council

There would be an Interim Council for governance purposes from July 2003 and one Council after January 2004.

To minimise uncertainty and ensure continuity, the Interim Council's term of office would be kept as short as possible.

Composition of the permanent Council

The composition of the permanent Council would be as follows:

Type	Category	Number of full members
Internal (40%)	Management (vice-chancellor and deputy vice-chancellor)	Two
	Campus principals – non-voting	
	Senate designates – two each	Four
	Other academic staff – one each	Two
	Non-academic staff – one each	Two
	SRC-designated members – campus(es) not represented may have one non-voting member each	Two
External (60%)	Convocation/alumni – two each [By designation in terms of the existing rules]	Four
	Community leaders – two each [By designation in terms of the existing rules]	Four
	Ministerial appointees [By consensus – the joint Council to agree on names of suitable persons to be forwarded to the Minister]	Four
	Corporate investors/donors [By consensus – appointed by joint Council]	Four
	Special expertise [By consensus – appointed by joint Council]	Two

Composition of Interim Council

The Interim Council would consist of eight members and a chairperson; in the interest of continuity, they would be eligible to be among the 18 external members of the permanent Council.

By 28 August 2003, the Councils of the PU for CHE and the UNW had selected nine names from the 18 external members and submitted them to the Minister for appointment as members of the Interim Council.

In addition to other statutory functions, the Interim Council would address the following matters:

- appointing the Interim Management, drawn from the two management committees; its term of office would start on 1 January 2004
- recommending the draft statute to the new Council
- formalising matters as required by the Higher Education Act, the Standard Institutional Statute (SIS) and agreements reached in 2003 by the previous Councils¹¹⁴
- giving notice that the constituting meeting of the new Council would be held on 16 January 2004
- determining the agenda for the first meeting of Council.

Senate

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, the Joint Senate Committee (JSC) and JOT should negotiate one Senate and define the composition of the Senate for formulation in the proposed Statute.

Student Council

The Student Councils and JOT discussed the formation of the Institutional Student Council, and defined its composition for the drafting of the Statute.

Institutional Forum

The Campus Forums and JOT determined the composition of the Institutional Forum for the drafting of the Statute.

Management structures

Management seat of the new institution

Section 65 of the Higher Education Act declared that the seat of a public higher education institution should indicate the physical location of the institution.¹¹⁵

The Councils agreed that the site of the management seat and address of the new institution would be in Potchefstroom.

Management at institutional level

The Vice-Chancellor, appointed by Council, would be the Chief Executive Officer of the new university. The Institutional Office should have a thin layer of support staff so that the emphasis would be on the core business carried out at the campuses. At institutional level, support to the Vice-Chancellor should consist of the following positions:

- at least one deputy vice-chancellor
- an institutional registrar who would also serve as the secretary of Council
- Institutional directors for strategic support services

Management at campus level

Each campus would have its own Principal, a Campus Registrar, and a Management Committee. The Campus Principal would report to the Vice-Chancellor of the new university and would be part of the Institutional Management Committee (IM) of the Vice-Chancellor.

Language policy

The Council of the new institution, in agreement with the Senate, would develop a language policy, in line with all relevant ministerial policies, that would be flexible and functional and promote multilingualism.

This policy would promote access, integration and a sense of belonging, and would redress the language imbalances of the past.

In line with this policy, the campuses would develop campus language plans, which would take into account the language needs of students and the language realities on the ground.

Institutional culture and ethos

The new institution would develop a unique institutional culture and ethos. This would be based on a single set of policies, standards and systems, a single set of constitutionally based values, one vision and mission, an own corporate brand name and identity, and an own language policy. This arrangement should make room for variety in campus culture and ethos, based on the unity and value system of the new university. The values contained in the Constitution, especially human dignity, equality and freedom, would direct the

institutional culture. These values should include promoting unity in diversity at all levels.

The new institution would promote tolerance and respect for all perspectives and belief systems and ensure a suitable environment for education, learning, research and community service.

Funding for the merger

Funding of the merger from the Ministry was a substantive matter, which had to be resolved before the joint Council could inform the Minister of the name and address of the new institution, the preferred date for its establishment and the nominees for appointment to the Interim Council.

Budgeting for 2004

For 2004, each campus should carry on with its own budgeting process, but a joint budget committee would be established to ensure that the respective 2004 budgets amounted to at least a break-even budget (cash-flow break-even). Another principle was that 2.5% of the total subsidy income and tuition fees for 2004 would be reserved for the strategic positioning of the new university.

According to the annual financial statements of the Department of Education for the year ended 31 March 2003, the actual amount transferred was R117 189 for the UNW and R264 811 for the PU for CHE.¹¹⁶ These allocations were intended to enable the new institution to function and to cover some of the merger and incorporation costs.

Process to address outstanding matters

The Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) of the Councils of the UNW and the PU for CHE would continue overseeing the merger and incorporation process, and would advise the new Council on all outstanding matters, including the finalisation of the Statute. The new Council of the merged and incorporated institution would have the authority to reconsider any of these matters.¹¹⁷

- **22 June 2003:** The agreement reached on 20 June was met with objections from both merging universities' constituencies:
 - There was an outcry from alumni of the PU for CHE, who voiced their views in a survey and on a webpage. A vast majority of those who spoke up via these channels indicated they were not in favour of this change and that doing away with the name of PU for CHE would be a tragic end to 150 years of proud history.¹¹⁸ Mr

Tim du Plessis wrote that the name of the institution would be NWU and the people on the Potchefstroom Campus would still be PUKKE, so would the name or the people and products determine the character of the university?¹¹⁹

- The perception from the UNW was that the merger had turned into a takeover by the PU for CHE.¹²⁰
- Contrary to these claims, two leaders in Potchefstroom were praised for their vision in actively supporting the creation of a new institution. They were Dr Theuns Eloff of the PU for CHE, and Councillor Sitish Roopa, the mayor of Potchefstroom.¹²¹
- **24 June 2003:** The two Councils' chairpersons, Dr L Wessels and Adv FDP Tlakula, wrote a letter to Minister Asmal to report on the new institution's preferred name, official address, date of establishment, and nominees for appointment to the Interim Council.¹²²
- **21 July 2003:** In accordance with the request of Minister Asmal on 9 December 2002, the two Councils reported that they had agreed upon the following information on the new university:
 - The preferred name would be North-West University and it would have four campuses, namely at Mahikeng, Mankwe, Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle.
 - The preferred management seat and official address would be located at Potchefstroom.
 - The preferred date of establishment would be 1 January 2004.
- The names of the eight members of the Interim Council, including Adv FDP Tlakula as the chairperson, were proposed¹²³
- On 30 September 2003, the Interim Council would start to prepare for the establishment of the new university.¹²⁴
- **22 July 2003:** At a meeting with the Minister, the following matters were raised as possible problem areas:
 - Chairperson of the Interim Council: the Minister indicated that he could not accept the nomination of Adv Tlakula because of her involvement in the national election process.
 - Composition of Council: the Minister expressed concern about possible legal action if the process of establishing the new Council began too early and was already activated during 2003. He requested the Councils to forward the names of the eight nominees to be considered as Ministerial appointees.
 - The merger cost: Prof Asmal indicated that a once-off cost in the order of between R140 million and R200 million would not be problematic, if the expenses were approved in advance.¹²⁵
- **29 July 2003:** The Executive Management Committee (EMC) of the PU for CHE discussed the proposed management model.
- **2 August 2003:** A clarification meeting took place between members of the Councils of the PU for CHE and UNW.¹²⁶
- **4 August 2003:** The JOT Committee discussed the following merger task teams:¹²⁷

Task team	UNW co-convenor	PU for CHE co-convenor
Coordination of task teams	Mr LM Hlabatau	Prof CFC van der Walt
Access and Academic Rules	Ms Motsei Modise	Prof NJ Kotze
Communication	Mr Theo Rossouw	Ms Shamiela Abrahams
Finance and Infrastructure	Prof AAI Bootha	Prof IJ Rost
Human Resources	Mr Dan Setsetse/ Ms Revelation Mokogele ¹²⁸	Prof CJ van der Watt
Information Technology	Ms C Pietersen	Mr A Juyn
Institutional Environment	Mrs KR Mokgele	Prof Ian Rothman
Joint Senates Committee	Prof SN Masego	Prof AL Combrink
Language	Dr R Manyane	Prof MM Verhoef
Library	Ms Dudu Mkosi	Mr Tom Larney
Quality Assurance	Prof SN Masego	Prof SJP du Plessis
Research Management	Dr MP Maaga	Prof JC Geertsema
Students Life and Sport	Prof M Sathekge	Prof HJ Reyneke
Legal Issues and Contracts	Mr Dan Paadi	Mr Frans Kruger
Commercialisation (discussion group)	Prof SN Masego / Mr Dan Setsetse	Prof F van Niekerk
Governance and Management	Dr MN Takalo Mr LM Hlabatau	Dr Theuns Eloff Prof CFC van der Walt
Transitional arrangements	Ms Motsei Modise	Mr FJ du Preez
The 3.6 issues (as defined in the joint submission to the Minister on 1 October 2002): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language ▪ Institutional culture ▪ Ethos ▪ Access and redress ▪ Unpacking of boundary conditions ▪ Other fundamental and substantive matters to be identified by any of the partners. 	Dr MN Takalo	Dr Theuns Eloff (vice-chancellor)

- **4 August 2003:** The Department of Education's Merger Unit visited the PU for CHE and UNW.¹²⁹
- **7 and 8 August 2003:** The JOT task team held a workshop at Bakubung to resolve issues in a consultative document for the two Councils.¹³⁰
- **13 August 2003:** During a meeting between JOT members and the task teams, the following progress reports were discussed: human resources, finance and infrastructure,¹³¹ JSC, library, language, student life and sport, IT, communication, legal issues, institutional environment, transitional arrangements, memorandum of agreement, Mankwe Campus and the incorporation of Vista's staff and students.¹³²
- **14 August 2003:** Reports on the task teams' progress on the following were finalised:
 - Scope and summary of outstanding matters
 - Matters on which consensus had been reached
 - Matters on which guidance from the JOT or other task teams was needed
 - Detailed information on once-off and ongoing merger cost
 - Matters that had to be in place by January 2004
 - Matters for which transitional arrangements had to be made.¹³³
- **25 August 2003:** A circular was sent to all staff of the PU for CHE and UNW to inform them of the progress made with the merger and staff issues such as service conditions and institutional rules.¹³⁴
- **2 September 2003:** The PU for CHE and UNW JOT Committee revised and finalised the merger and incorporation task teams, as shown in the next table.¹³⁵

Task team	UNW co-convenor	PU for CHE co-convenor
Coordination of task teams	Mr LM Hlabatau	Prof CFC van der Walt
Access and Academic Rules	Ms Motsei Modise	Prof HN Kotze
Finance and Infrastructure	Prof AAI Bootha	Prof IJ Rost
Human Resources	Mr Dan Setsetse	Prof CJ van der Watt
Information Technology	Ms C Pietersen	Mr A Juyn
Joint Senate Committee	Prof SN Mashego	Prof AL Combrink
Transitional Arrangements	Ms Motsei Modise	Mr FJ du Preez
Communication	Mr Theo Rossouw	Ms Shamiela Abrahams
Institutional Environment	Mrs KR Mokgele	Prof Ian Rothman
Language	Dr R Manyane	Prof MM Verhoef
Library	Ms Dudu Mkosi	Mr Tom Larney
Quality Assurance	Prof W Lekgotlo	Prof SJP du Plessis
Research Management	Dr MP Maaga	Prof JC Geertsema
Student Life and Sport	Mr TJ Sathekge	Prof HJ Reyneke
Legal Issues and Contracts	Mr Dan Paadi	Mr Frans Kruger
Commercialisation (discussion group)	Prof SN Masego/ Mr Dan Setsetse	Prof F van Niekerk
JOT sub-task teams Governance, management and “3.6 Issues”	Dr MN Takalo	Dr Theuns Eloff
Statute	Mr LM Hlabatau	Prof CFC vd Walt
Management structures	Mr Dan Setsetse	Dr MJ Venter
(17) Incorporation task team – Vaal Triangle	Prof PJJ Prinsloo and Prof NP Maake	

- **8 September to 31 December 2003:** Merger process issues to be resolved during this period were the Interim Council chairperson, Interim Council elect, Interim Management elect, legality of processes to establish the structures of the new institution, finalising the draft statute and finalising timeframes.¹³⁶
- **12 September 2003:** A JOC meeting was held to discuss the detailed cost analysis for the merger, the submission to the Minister, management report on the rest of the process, and a report on the incorporation of the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.¹³⁷
- **15 September 2003:** Dr L Wessels and Adv FDP Tlakula informed Minister Asmal of the nominees for the Interim Council.¹³⁸
- **19 September to 28 November 2003:** Due dates were set for the process of obtaining approval of the draft Statute at UNW. This started in April 2003 when a task team, consisting of Prof CFC van der Walt and Mr LM Hlabatau, was appointed to draft the Statute for the NWU¹³⁹. Subsequent dates set for taking the process through to its conclusion were:

 - **19 September 2003:** The third ordinary meeting of the UNW Council approved the principles for drafting the Statute within the timeframes proposed by the JOC.¹⁴⁰
 - **23 September 2003:** The draft Statute was forwarded to all members of the two Councils, two Senates and two Institutional Forums for their comments.
 - **1 October 2003:** The draft Statute was forwarded to all staff members of both merger partners for their comments.
 - **2 and 7 October 2003:** Special meetings of Senate were held to discuss the draft Statute.
 - **8 October 2003:** The SRCs of both universities provided their first comments on the draft Statute.

- **6 October and 6 November 2003:** Meetings of the Institutional Forum at both universities were held to discuss the draft Statute. The Institutional Forums submitted their comments on 29 October.
- **17 October 2003:** The draft Statute served before the first meeting of the Interim Council Elect.
- **30 October 2003:** The Interim Council Elect agreed that a new draft Statute would simultaneously be sent to members and to Ms Sanette Boshoff at the Department of Education
- **14 November 2003:** The Interim Council Elect agreed to send the revised draft Statute to all stakeholders for further input prior to the Council meeting of 28 November 2003.¹⁴¹
- **16 November 2003:** A special meeting of the Council Executive was held to oversee the process.
- **18 November 2003:** The draft Statute was forwarded to the Alumni Office of both universities and the President of the PU for CHE Convocation was invited to comment.
- **18 November 2003:** The draft Statute was forwarded to the SRCs of both universities to comment.
- **18 November 2003:** The draft Statute was forwarded to the Staff Association with a request to invite comments.
- **21 November 2003:** A special meeting of Senate was held to discuss the draft Statute.
- **26 November 2003:** The Institutional Forums issued a joint statement containing comments on the draft Statute.
- **28 November 2003:** The fourth ordinary meeting of the Interim Council Elect was held to discuss inputs of members and the draft Statute was forwarded to the technical team.¹⁴²
- **21 September 2003:** Dr Eloff announced that on 1 January 2004, four new universities would start their operations with new management structures and transitional councils, and that of the four, the NWU had made the best progress with its merger and incorporation.¹⁴³ He declared that negotiations between the merging

partners were the best win-win option because they could not take protest action, embark on legal alternatives or privatise the institutions.¹⁴⁴

- **13 October 2003:** The Joint Management Committee (JMC) met to discuss the merger process between September and 31 December 2003,¹⁴⁵ and made preparations for the first meeting of the Interim Council Elect.¹⁴⁶
- **17 October 2003:** The establishment of an Interim Council Elect was the next step in the creation of the new university. The “*normal*” procedure for a merger would therefore be to establish the Interim Council, constitute the Senate and other bodies, and out of these constitute the permanent Council. The two former universities therefore decided that the Interim Council would meet a number of times during 2003 as Interim Council Elect (duly allowed by the Merger Guidelines).

The first meeting of the Interim Council Elect was held on 17 October 2003,¹⁴⁷ to work on the prescribed preparations to establish the new university.¹⁴⁸ The aim of these meetings was to address the merger and incorporation issues; then, at its first formal meeting on 5 January 2004, the Interim Council Elect would formally ratify the previous planning work and complete any other legal obligations it may have. This would open the way to constitute the new Council on 16 January 2004, and at the very least to resolve the following issues:

- accept the draft Statute and submit it to the Minister for his approval
- decide on a process and procedure for appointing Senior Management
- receive reports on various transitional issues from the Interim Management and take the necessary decisions.¹⁴⁹
- **21 October 2003:** The Department of Education announced the new name of the merging institution, North-West University, and the Chairperson of the Interim Council, Mr MR (Robinson) Ramaite.¹⁵⁰
- **26 October 2003:** A sense of early unity was created at the Vaal Triangle Campus when more than 50% of the full-time students voting in the 2003/04 Campus SRC elections cast their ballots for Mr Eric Ntumba. Mr Harm Stavast, the director of Student Affairs, said that the SRC came into being by popular vote, reflecting the moderate spirit on campus. Mr Ntumba reflected on the election as follows:

*“We’ve come a long way. But too often people on campus hide the racial issue behind that of culture. Race is not the problem, but people want to stay in their comfort zones and this willingness can stifle transformation. Fortunately, my leadership is strengthened by the many students from various cultural groups who are willing to accept change and to make a difference.”*¹⁵¹

- **30 October 2003:** The second meeting of the Interim Council Elect finalised the process of constituting the Council of the NWU.¹⁵²
- **3 November 2003:** NWU set the merger pace in the restructuring debate when its Interim Council Elect held an inaugural meeting two months before its legal commencement date of 1 January 2004. Dr Takalo said the two Councils planned to accept the draft Statute at the end of November and send it to the Interim Council Elect. That body’s first and final meeting, chaired by the consultant Mr RM Ramaite, was scheduled for 5 January 2004; it would then send the Statute to the meeting of the full Council on 16 January 2004.¹⁵³
- **14 November 2003:** The third meeting of the Interim Council Elect finalised the process of appointing the Interim Management.¹⁵⁴
- **14 November 2003:** Minister Asmal proclaimed the proposals for the new university in two Government Notices, one for the merger¹⁵⁵ and one for the incorporation.¹⁵⁶
- **15 to 28 November 2003:** The UNW campus was closed due to student protest action. Students were protesting against the merger plans with the PU for CHE, as well as the election to the SRC of students from Botswana. They barricaded the main entrance, claiming they had been excluded from consultations on the merger process. The UNW reopened on 19 November to allow students to prepare for the examinations.¹⁵⁷ The UNW Council meeting of 28 November 2003 resolved the students’ issues.¹⁵⁸
- **5 December 2003:** The fourth meeting of the Interim Council Elect finalised the appointment of the Interim Management and the composition of the NWU Council.¹⁵⁹

This good progress cemented the solid foundation laid for the merged and incorporated institution.

4.7. The necessity to align institutional planning with other prescribed goals in various related policies

Merging institutions were expected to link their organisational planning with other goals set by Government, such as the following initiatives:

- The institution-wide programme and qualification mix (PQM) exercise, which forms the basis of institutional diversity. Although the first stage in this process was completed at the end of 2002 with the release of the approved programme and qualification profiles for all institutions, the debate at NWU continued for many years. One reason was the stronger coordinating mechanism needed due to the physical distances between campuses.¹⁶⁰
- The regional reviews to facilitate programme collaboration and rationalisation for the PQM exercise. To quote from the document, *Approved Academic Programmes for Universities and Technikons: 2003-2006* from July 2002: “The Ministry believes that the development of a regional collaboration and rationalisation framework in the identified programme areas would provide the institutions affected by the merger proposals with a clearer platform on which to plan, coordinate and rationalise their own programme profile.”¹⁶¹
- At NWU this goal generated heated debates in the Senate and Council. Possibilities for this kind of rationalisation within the North-West region were to move faculties and link them to certain campuses.
- The Minister released the new Language Policy for Higher Education in November 2002. It was intended to be the starting point for determining the language policy of merged institutions.¹⁶²
- The development of three-year rolling plans. Although the Ministry had not required the merging institutions to submit three-year rolling plans in 2003, they had to make sure that key issues associated with such plans, such as access and equity objectives, were an integrated part of the merger planning process.
- It was advisable that the merging institutions should consider the impact on themselves of the various policy processes, such as the proposal for the establishment of a National Higher Education Information and Applications Service, the introduction of a new Academic Policy and the review of the National Qualifications Framework.¹⁶³

4.8. The functioning of merger subcommittees: eg JOC, JOT and other subcommittees

4.8.1. Preparations for the transition of governance and management ¹⁶⁴

After the Government announcement early in 2002 the intended merger between the PU for CHE in Potchefstroom and the UNW in Mahikeng, the two universities initiated a series of meetings to work out the process for the merger. These initial meetings were often characterised by prejudices, misperceptions, fears and inflated expectations on both sides.

The Senior Management Committees of the two universities held a two-day workshop at Bakubung in the Pilanesberg on 12 August 2002. Although the meeting had a slow start, matters improved when the two sides came to the realisation that they had a common problem: by no later than 4 October 2002, the Minister of Education was expecting them to submit a joint submission that would serve the interests of both institutions.

Government had specifically proposed a unitary merger. The two universities analysed the Government's objectives for a unitary merger and agreed that a merger of this kind would not necessarily achieve the objectives of the Minister and the Government's vision of a transformed national higher education landscape. Consensus was also reached that it was in the interest of both universities to be proactive with regard to the merger proposals. They knew that if no inputs were made or influence exerted, the Ministry would go ahead and unilaterally enforce the merger.

The two universities agreed to jointly develop alternative proposals to the Minister's expectation of a unitary merger. This option ranged from a strengthened consortium approach on the one hand, to a regional university with decentralised campuses allowing each other space for diversity.

The universities agreed to form several joint committees or teams to attend to specific requirements of the restructuring of the universities and the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University. Three of the top-level joint committees, the Joint Oversight Committee, the Joint Operations Team and the Joint Senate Committee, were established on 30 October 2002:

The Joint Oversight Committee represented the two Councils of PU for CHE and UNW. The members included the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of the two Councils, the two Vice-Chancellors and eight other representatives of internal and external stakeholders. The terms of reference of the committee were to advise the Councils on making recommendations to the Minister

and on matters such as the establishment of an Interim Council and a draft statute for the new institution, among other things.

The Joint Operations Team, initially referred to as the Joint Operations Committee, was given wide terms of reference. Its role was, among others, to:

- prepare the ground for the establishment of an Interim Council for the new institution
- formulate a draft vision for the new institution to be approved by the Interim Council
- establish process management protocols, such as deadlock-breaking mechanisms and criteria for decision-making on important issues
- review and set up task teams for academic programmes, administrative systems, policies and procedures
- coordinate communication with different stakeholder communities
- put in place processes that would allay the fears and concerns of staff. ¹⁶⁵

The following issues of *Restructuring Update*, an internal communication newsletter, were distributed on the various campuses at the initiative of the Joint Operations Team:

- **7 Feb 2003:** *Restructuring Update*, vol 1, issue 1
- **4 March 2003:** *Restructuring Update*, vol 1, issue 2
- **17 April 2003:** *Restructuring Update*, vol 1, issue 3
- **23 May 2003:** *Restructuring Update*, vol 1, issue 4
- **27 June 2003:** *Restructuring Update*, vol 1, issue 5

The Joint Senates Committee (JSC) was formed to attend to academic programme matters and comprised two co-conveners and four members from each of the two Senates of the merging partners.

4.8.2. The roles of the Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Operations Team ¹⁶⁶

The Joint Operations Team (JOT) played a very important role in coordinating the activities of the various committees and task teams, as well as in approving their recommendations before submitting them to the Joint Oversight Committee for approval. Clarity was given at the meeting of 13 November 2002 on the JOT's role in providing leadership and initiating and steering processes that would lead to the establishment of the new institution, in line with the submission to the Minister.

When it became clear that an Interim Council would replace the existing Councils of the merging universities at the beginning of 2004 and that the Interim Council would appoint an Interim Management, the JOT recommended to the Councils that the period of the Interim Council should be as brief as possible. To implement this plan, the draft Statute of the new institution should be ready before the end of 2003 for approval by the Minister to constitute the Interim Council. In this way, the period of governing and managing in accordance with the Standard Institutional Statute¹⁶⁷ and an Interim Council would be limited to a few months if not weeks.¹⁶⁸

A generic Standard Institutional Statute was drawn up for all the new universities and could not suit all the specific circumstances of newly merged institutions. In the case of the merger of UNW and PU for CHE, the Standard Institutional Statute was found to be unsuitable in many ways; for example, it made provision for one CEO and one Student Representative Council (SRC) and did not address the question of managing remote sites at all.¹⁶⁹ SAUVCA and the Committee of Technikon Principals attempted to amend four articles in the Standard Institutional Statute to suit the specific needs of merging institutions.¹⁷⁰ However, the Department of Education's response was that the Standard Institutional Statute was a transitional document and should be replaced by a new Statute for each new university, providing for its specific needs.¹⁷¹

At the JOT meeting on 5 December 2002, the Vice-Chancellors gave feedback from meetings of their respective Councils. Both Councils had approved the terms of reference of the JOT, but the nomination of delegates for the Joint Oversight Committee had become an interesting cause of disagreement. The UNW Council had nominated five people and PU for CHE had nominated six; the Vice-Chancellor of UNW consequently had to convince the UNW Council of the merits of "the other side" having one more representative.¹⁷² There was a strained relationship between the UNW Council and managers. The *Cape Argus* newspaper was of the opinion that the breakdown in higher education was partly due to poor relationships between higher education Councils and their executives.¹⁷³

The two institutions had previously agreed to conduct a compatibility study to compare the two universities. Mr Dan Setsetse (UNW) and Prof Chris van der Walt (PU for CHE) were appointed to compile a document by the end of March 2003 to outline the areas of the study, establish priorities and set up the necessary task teams. The template for this compatibility study was also tabled at the JOT and approved with the addition of programmes, research and commercialisation of expertise. As soon as the template was ready, the two institutions would determine the process for completing the relevant data;

the JOT would then analyse the information to determine which areas needed to be outsourced for investigation.

At the JOT meeting on 25 March 2003, a progress report was submitted at the request of the Chairpersons of the two Councils. It reflected on the extent of consensus reached on the structure of the new higher education institution, along with areas where there was no consensus and areas that still had to be investigated¹⁷⁴

A Compatibility Study Task Team met on 1 April 2003. The team evaluated the results of the internal compatibility study and analysed the information they had. They could not identify any matter for immediate outsourcing, but suggested that experts who worked daily in specific areas be appointed to joint task teams to do the following work:

- identify what was in place at both institutions at that time
- identify the areas where there were gaps or differences
- find ways to reconcile the gaps
- where applicable, base the cost-analysis of the merger on the cost of bridging the gaps.

The compatibility study identified 19 major areas, ranging from human resources management to transitional arrangements, which needed the attention of task teams consisting of experts in those fields.¹⁷⁵

At the JOT meeting of 13 May 2003, the Vice-Chancellors were mandated to develop a draft vision and mission for the new institution. Several reports from task teams were also tabled at the meeting. One of the most important recommendations of the Human Resources Task Team was to outsource the exercise to determine the cost of closing gaps in an effort to adhere to equity. A decision was made to request the Department of Education to fund an external investigation of this aspect.

Integrating the ICT systems of the merging universities was identified as another major area that would need external funding.

At this meeting, a request was received from the Vista Sebokeng Campus to participate as observers in the JOT. This request was accepted and the Sebokeng Campus was asked to nominate two representatives.

By 26 May 2003, major decisions had already been taken on the functioning of the new institution from the beginning of 2004. For the 2004 registration process, the existing academic rules, admission policies, fees, registration forms, calendars, programmes, lecture timetables and test and exam timetables of the PU for CHE and UNW would prevail. The Interim Council would have to approve this arrangement.

A crucial next step was to inform all stakeholders about the intended establishment of the new institution. Adding to the sense of urgency was that the Minister, was expected to publish an announcement on the creation of a new institution in the Government Gazette at the end of September 2003. The existing Statutes of the PU for CHE and the UNW would continue until the end of 2003. Formally, the Standard Institutional Statute (SIS) would be the new institution's Statute until the Minister signed the newly developed Statute into law.¹⁷⁶ Although integration of the universities' operational systems was a priority, the existing systems would have to be maintained for the duration of 2003.

Schedules for meetings of the Interim Council, Interim Management and eventually the permanent Council were set for 5, 6 and 16 January 2004, respectively.

Meanwhile, at the JOT meeting held on 17 June 2003 it was reported that the Joint Oversight Committee had reached agreement on a number of issues, and that the respective meetings of the Councils could discuss the report in June 2003. These agreements constituted a major step in the merger process. The Councils of the merging institutions met on 20 June 2003 and, following on recommendations from the Joint Oversight Committee, agreed on various matters:

- A unitary, multi-campus university would be established on 1 January 2004, with one vision and mission, a single set of policies, systems and standards at institutional level, as well as a set of constitutionally based values.
- The new institution would have its own corporate brand name and identity, its own language policy in line with the Ministerial policy, and a unique institutional culture and ethos.
- Its name would be North-West University, and it would have four campuses, namely Mafikeng, Potchefstroom, Vaal Triangle and Mankwe.
- The proposed site of the management seat and address of the new institution would be at Potchefstroom.
- An Interim Council Elect would be established and would be in place from 30 September 2003 until 1 January 2004, when an Interim Council could be established. Once the Interim Council had taken over the governance of the new university, it would task the Interim Council Elect with the responsibility for developing a new brand and identity for the new institution.

- In the interest of continuity, the proposal was to keep the period of the Interim Council as short as possible, and to select the eight members and Chairperson from the 18 external members of the two university Councils by the end of August 2003.
- The campuses would use their existing brand names for marketing purposes until the new Council had decided on the branding of the new institution and its campuses. The proposal was to conduct the marketing of campuses under the banner of the new institution.
- To minimise uncertainty, the new university would have one Chancellor.¹⁷⁷

The Joint Management Committee (JMC) meetings between the PU for CHE and UNW played an important role in supporting and coordinating meetings of the Joint Oversight Committee and the Joint Operations Team. During a JMC meeting on 10 September 2003, the agendas of the last JOC and next JOT meetings on 12 and 16 September were finalised to steer the merger process between September and 31 December 2003.¹⁷⁸

After a JOT meeting on 16 September 2003 a joint four-page letter to all staff members from the two Vice-Chancellors explained in detail the progress and further implementation strategies for the merger and incorporation progress.¹⁷⁹ JOT also approved a public notice from the two Vice-Chancellors to all interested parties of the two merging institutions, to explain the composition of the new NWU Council.¹⁸⁰

The JMC meeting of 13 October 2003 dealt with the following operational issues, ensuring that all implementation matters were in place before the founding of NWU on 1 January 2004:

- Evaluating the merger and incorporation process and checking which issues still had to be resolved. Examples were the Chairperson of the Interim Council, principle of an Interim Management Elect, legality and processes for establishing governance structures such as Council and Senate, and the making of the draft Statute.
- Evaluating the timeframes during September and December 2003. The very tight timeframes were indicative of the busy last quarter before 1 January 2004:

Date	Event/activity
19 September	The two Councils of merging institutions met separately. The JMC compiled a comprehensive report of the merger process between 8 September and 31 December 2003. ¹⁸¹
30 September	Notice in Government Gazette on Interim Council Elect
Before 8 October	Special Senate meeting
8 October	Final date to receive comments on the Statute
13 October	Joint management Committee meeting
17 October	First Meeting of Interim Council Elect (ICE)
23 or 24 October	ICE meeting
30 October	JMC meeting
3 November	Draft Statute submitted to Department of Education
12 November	Final business plans from task teams
13 November	JMC meeting
14 November	ICE meeting
27 or 28 November	Last UNW and PU for CHE Council meeting
4 December	ICE meeting
5 December	JMC meeting

- Drafting the terms of reference of the JMC on request of the JOC, to act also as an Interim Management Elect.
- Listing the final names and procedure for the first meeting of the Interim Council Elect on 17 October 2003 and the fact that in the absence of a chairperson, Ms Sebego and Dr Wessels could act as co-chairpersons in the same manner as they chaired the JOC meetings. According to the Merger Guidelines, the Interim Council Elect could operate from 1 October, with the last meeting of the JOC taking place on 12 September 2003.
- Discussing the different categories and composition of the NWU Council and specific notices to invite nominations.
- The management structure of NWU.
- The report from the Joint Senate Committee on academic issues.
- Receiving feedback on the draft Statute and preparing a revised draft for the meeting of the Interim Council Elect.
- Obtaining feedback from the staff association and unions on the service conditions.
- Checking the wording of the diploma and degree certificates for the March and April 2004 graduation ceremonies.
- Using the funds from the Free University of Amsterdam for the proposed management capacity training.¹⁸²

4.8.3. The role of the Joint Senate Committee ¹⁸³

The Senates of both the PU for CHE and UNW accepted the principle of a joint committee to prepare the way for instituting the Senate of the new university on 12 November 2002. The Joint Senate Committee would have a core task team consisting of representatives from each Senate, and was given the right to co-opt experts¹⁸⁴.

The Joint Senate Committee (JSC) worked according to a mandate issued by the Joint Oversight Committee and ratified by both Senates. The membership of the JSC fluctuated from time to time in response to varying needs. Thus, discussions and decision-making were not limited to the core task team; the numbers increased significantly at times, especially when critical issues were being discussed.

The mandate of the JSC was to deal with the following matters:

- the new institution's PQM and associated programme issues

- research and research management alignment
- access and academic rules
- recognition of prior learning policy, processes and procedures
- faculty and Senate structure

The JSC established six task teams to carry out these tasks, based on the principle of equal representation of the campuses (Mankwe was included as a separate campus).

Prof HN Kotze of the PU for CHE was appointed convenor of the task team on access and academic rules. At the JSC meeting of 18 June 2003, this task team reported that they could not agree on the rating system that the new institution should use for admission of students. The advantages and disadvantages of both the Swedish point system (used by PU for CHE) and M-Score used by UNW were considered, but without consensus on any system.

The JSC proposed to refer the matter of access to the different faculties. They could indicate which requirements for access were applicable, and the task team would then coordinate responses from faculties and consolidate them into a report.

However, it was only at the subsequent meeting of the JSC that the members agreed to streamline the mandate of the task team to give a clear breakdown of the components of access, academic rules, and recognition of prior learning (RPL).

With respect to access, the task team was requested to collate the responses from faculties into a report. For RPL, on the other hand, a new draft policy was to be developed and submitted to the JSC, taking into consideration the expectations of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and the Department of Education.

Concerning the academic rules, problematic issues had to be identified and a draft action plan developed for the compilation of one set of academic rules for the new university. Subsequently, a separate subcommittee of the task team attended to each of the three components.

At the meeting of the JSC on 10 September 2003, it was reported that the subcommittee on access could not meet due to time constraints and that a report on matters of access was therefore not possible. However, the PU for CHE submitted a separate proposal for cognisance by the JSC. The JSC would consolidate this document with that of the UNW once the latter was available.

The RPL subcommittee could also not meet due to time constraints, but a joint report was compiled among members of the subcommittee. The JSC agreed to use the report as a basis for discussion and to submit it to

the Joint Management Committee as work-in-progress.

The subcommittee on academic rules could also not meet, but a document on Senate Discretionary Conditional Exemptions (SDCE) and Standardised Assessment Tests (SAT) had been submitted by the UNW delegation. JSC took note of the document but would await a joint report to be tabled at the next meeting.

At the next meeting of the JSC on 12 November 2003, a draft General Admission Policy was approved for the new university. The meeting also agreed to take the necessary steps to develop a selection process for the Senate Discretionary Admissions.

4.9. Senate, faculty and management structures ¹⁸⁵

4.9.1. Proposed structures

The UNW had already developed a proposed faculty structure for the new institution and this was submitted for discussion at the first meeting of the task team on faculty structures, held on 21 July 2003 in Lichtenburg. Mr AC Nyakutse was requested to give feedback to the JSC meeting being held on 28 July 2003 at the Mafikeng Campus of the UNW.

At this meeting, he indicated that the PU for CHE representatives in that task team did not support the idea of discussing or proposing a faculty structure at that stage, arguing that it was premature. Furthermore, they had indicated that there was a need for thorough consultation at faculty level, taking cognisance of the proposals about the structure of Senior Management which the two Councils had accepted. The members of the PU for CHE delegation maintained that “*structure follows strategy*” and that they were not prepared to discuss faculty structures until they had consulted about the envisaged Senior Management structures.

After a thorough discussion, the JSC could not reach agreement and so decided to break for separate discussions.

The following proposals on the restructuring of faculties were on the table:

- discussing the proposed model of UNW
- disbanding the task team and adopting the Standard Institutional Statute
- the phasing in of the new structure
- that the PU for CHE should also propose a draft model of envisaged faculty structures
- introducing a bottom-up consultation process on the new structures

- seeking arbitration if a meeting reached a deadlock
- discussions between the two co-conveners and the Joint Operations Team in mid-August 2003.

After two breaks to hold separate meetings the JSC could still not come to an agreement. The PU for CHE delegation indicated that they wished to withdraw from the meeting given the lack of progress and would discuss the matter further with their Vice-Chancellor, Dr Eloff.

The two Vice-Chancellors were invited to attend the meeting of JSC on 10 September 2003. They addressed the JSC on the following matters:

- timeframes and case scenarios until November 2003
- guiding principles for academic structures and the composition of a new Senate
- statute of the new university
- the process of getting to 2005.

The Vice-Chancellors explained that the term of office of the Interim Council would be very brief and that the JSC was expected to make recommendations about the composition of the Senate within the following three weeks. They also indicated that the management structures of the new institution would comprise a Vice-Chancellor with an institutional management consisting of an institutional registrar, institutional directors, possibly a deputy vice-chancellor and campus rectors. The proposal was to keep the institutional office as lean as possible to ensure effective management and pave the way for a decentralised management system due to the distances between the various campuses. Each campus would have an academic manager who would report vertically to the campus rector with respect to line functions, and work horizontally (across campuses) with respect to academic functions (eg curriculum, content and standards).

The JSC was requested to take cognisance of the proposed management structure, and was urged to come up with recommendations for a Senate (of between 50 and 60 members) by mid-October.

The plan was to use the existing academic rules of both institutions until the end of 2004 to enable the JSC to draft and adopt new rules for the new institution. In its deliberations, the JSC should work towards achieving the merger objectives, which were equity and equality in standards and exit qualifications for all learning sites.

Members of the JSC were of the opinion that a lack of trust was what kept the JSC from making headway in the

negotiations. There was also insensitivity at times and the only way to break down this barrier would be to develop mutual trust among members. Some members felt that the committee was too large and could not deal with urgent matters, although its size did have the potential to secure greater buy-in to the restructuring process. It was agreed that task teams of the JSC would do all the preparatory work, identify possible problems and make recommendations where necessary.

All the task teams of the JSC were requested to submit their reports on Friday, 3 October 2003, in time for the JSC meeting of 8 October 2003. The JSC agreed that the subcommittee on faculty structures should reconvene, and for that purpose, the subcommittee was re-constituted as follows:

- Prof AL Combrink and Prof SN Mashego serving in an advisory capacity
- Prof J Swanepoel and Mr RL Kettles acting as legal experts
- Prof GJ de Klerk and Dr TM Thiba giving organisational expertise where possible.

The subcommittee would have the right to co-opt expertise, and it was reminded that recommendations about Senate and faculty structures had to be made to the Joint Management Committee before mid-October 2003.

Dr Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy was appointed as the interim convener of the task team on access, academic rules and RPL, and quickly improved the coordination and organisation of the various subcommittees. She immediately sent a memorandum to the members of the new "streamlined" subcommittees, informing them about the revised briefs, the timeframes and their responsibilities.

The co-conveners of the JSC emphasised on 8 October 2003 that during the next meeting they should reach an agreement about recommendations of the composition of Senate. The JSC resolved that it would be best to discuss this matter in separate groups for 30 minutes and then to report back to the meeting. The meeting continued as agreed and then requested the subcommittee on faculty structures to reconvene separately to advise the JSC about findings on the composition of Senate, also within half an hour.

4.9.2. Proposed composition of Senate

After thorough discussion, the subcommittee on faculty structures made a proposal that the composition of Senate be as follows:

Vice-Chancellor	1
Deputy-Vice-Chancellor	1
Campus Principals	4
Deans	14
Academic staff	33
Non-academic staff	2
Students	4
Council members	2
Director Research	
Director Academic Support Services	1
Appointed academics (two per campus)	8
Total	71

(Note: Although the Institutional Registrar would be a member of Senate, he/she would not have voting powers).

The JSC accepted this proposal and referred it to the JMC for consideration and inclusion in the first draft of the Statute for the new institution. This had already served before the respective Senates.

The JSC recommended 14 faculties (nine from PU for CHE and five from UNW) for the time being, but a concern was expressed that the committee still needed to discuss the alignment and reconfiguration of faculties in order to make a recommendation to the Joint Management Committee (JMC). The aim of the reconfiguration was to bring functionality into faculty structures.

The JSC reminded the JMC of the complications caused by the fact that most of the Deans at the UNW were in acting positions.

During the next meeting of the JSC, held on 12 November 2003, Prof SN Mashego reported that the JMC had accepted the recommendation of the JSC about the composition of the Senate. He added that the Institutional Registrar would be a member of Senate with voting rights (thus bringing the total number of Senate members to 72), and further that the draft Statute had been submitted to the Department of Education. Feedback from the Minister of Education was expected by 25 November 2003.

The JSC subsequently received and considered proposals from both UNW and PU for CHE regarding faculty structures. After thorough discussions, it was agreed that the subcommittee on faculty structures should reconvene to discuss both proposals. It was also

agreed that these proposals be tabled at the respective faculties of the two universities to obtain their opinions. Since this was the last meeting of the JSC before the merger in January 2004, the JMC was advised that a report from the subcommittee on faculty structures was the only outstanding issue on the table of the JSC and that they could submit a report at a subsequent meeting.¹⁸⁶

4.10. Conditions of service

The joint Resources Task Team produced draft conditions of service. Two members of the Mafikeng Staff Association were full members of this task team, while the PU for CH had no union representatives on the task team.

The Vice-Chancellor's Office at Mafikeng sponsored a *Bosberaad* for all unions to discuss draft conditions of service on 5 November. A revised draft was sent to stakeholders on 10 November with an invitation to all unions to attend a joint meeting between both Managements and unions on 19 November 2003. The Mafikeng Staff Association refused to attend this meeting because it had no legal standing.¹⁸⁷

Eventually Mr Peter Nkaiseng of Pienaar, Swart and Nkaiseng prepared a negotiated report on the service conditions and transitional arrangements for staff members, which was approved by the Interim Council on 9 January 2004.¹⁸⁸ The Interim Council gave the Interim Management authority to do whatever was necessary to harmonise conditions of service, including the development and adoption of new conditions of service in line with the new institution's ethos and the applicable law.¹⁸⁹

4.11. Student Life Task Team

The joint Student Life Task Team and representatives of the SRCs from both universities discussed the composition of the new SRC on 3 September 2003. The meeting decided to schedule a *Bosberaad* to reach some finality on the proposed structure. This was held during the weekend of 11 to 13 September at Lenyebi with delegates from the four SRCs on the different campuses.

During this meeting, an interim body was appointed, composed of representatives from all four SRCs. This interim body held a first meeting on 3 October in Mahikeng and decided to create an Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC). The interim body should only function to do the following work:

- deliberate and write a constitution for the ISRC
- deliberate and write the ISRC's submission for the draft Statute of NWU
- deliberate and oversee any other student issues during the transitional period.

The interim body concluded its submission to the Statute and sent it to the technical team of the Statute on 8 October. They resolved to agree to disagree and to submit two opposing viewpoints on this matter. They also resolved to agree to the verdict of a higher authority on this matter.

On 11 November 2003, notices by SASCO/ANCYL called students at the Mafikeng Campus to meet. They resolved to meet with the Vice-Chancellor the next day to discuss grievances on the lack of consultation on the draft Statute and the 2004 registration of students with outstanding fee balances. The protesters erected barricades at the main gate on 12 November, submitted their grievances on 13 November, and demanded a special Council or Council Executive meeting. Negotiations continued and on 17 November, barricades were again erected at the main gate. On 19 November, agreements were made about the exams and student debt; students would be responsible for arranging with management to settle outstanding debts.¹⁹⁰

4.12. NWU Statute

Towards the end of 2002, it had become increasingly clear that the developing national higher education policy initiatives could necessitate the merging of the PU for CHE and UNW into one single higher education institution in the near future. It was, at that stage, crucially important to consider all possibilities and prepare to meet the future. After appropriate analysis and consultation, it was clear that the parties would have to develop a draft Statute for the new merged university.¹⁹¹

The work commenced and a seminal document was conceptualised; it not only met the various Constitutional, legal and national policy directives, but also provided the essential structure and rigour to ensure a viable new, merged university. Although much was still to happen nationally and regionally, both in the higher education sector and at higher education institutions and relevant representative bodies, including at the PU for CHE and UNW, the process of developing a possible draft statute for a merged university in the future was under way. It was, among other considerations, intended to serve as a document that could eventually give guidance to the two universities, comprising their councils, senates, staff, students and their very important and extensive bodies of organised alumni, donors and supporters.

The purpose and role of this process grew in importance as the eventual merger process became a reality. By that time, the draft Statute had become the draft foundational document during various interactions between the two Councils and also with the Ministry and Department of Education. These interactions became even more

decisive when the Councils of the PU for CHE and UNW unanimously approved the draft Statute after extensive consultation with all the stakeholders of the two universities.

The draft Statute that was adopted and presented to the Minister was the document that was eventually signed and gazetted as the first Statute of the North-West University. Arguably, the most important first milestone on the NWU's road to success had been achieved!¹⁹²

On 10 June 2005, the NWU Council noted that the Minister had accepted the draft Statute,¹⁹³ which was published in the Government Gazette on 8 August 2005. In August 2006, the NWU made the deadline set by the Minister of Education for implementing the new NWU Statute - including all unitary and integrated structures.¹⁹⁴

4.13. The Interim Council Elect (ICE) and Interim Council

The Councils of PU for CHE and UNW had to recommend the names for an Interim Council Elect to the Minister, who then would appoint the ICE on 1 July 2003.¹⁹⁵ The ICE should consist of members of each current Council. During this time, the ICE should work with the existing councils, senates, managements and other relevant structures, to establish overall policy frameworks for the new institution.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, the ICE operated between 17 October 2003 and 1 January 2004, when an Interim Council could be established.¹⁹⁷

The Interim Council oversaw the affairs of the newly founded NWU from 1 January 2004 until the first meeting of the permanent Council on 12 February 2004.¹⁹⁸

4.14. First meetings of the NWU Council

The role and functions of the NWU Council

In terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997, Council must govern the university subject to the Act and the University Statute. The generic Standard Institutional Statute¹⁹⁹ was the operative Statute of the NWU in terms of the Act until the publication of the NWU Statute on 8 August 2005, when this Statute became effective. In terms of the NWU Statute, Council is responsible for the following functions:

- governing the NWU through the adoption of purpose and value statements and strategic plans and policies, as well as the Statute, the Rules, processes and delegations of authority
- monitoring the operational performance of management and establishing committees and, together with Senate, joint committees, to ensure that the NWU achieves its purpose and values

- determining the language policy of the NWU, subject to the policy set by the Minister and with the concurrence of Senate
- establishing the structures for rendering student support services, after consultation with the Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC)
- requiring members to adhere to a code of conduct
- delegating the authority to appoint staff members, provided that no person is authorised to appoint someone reporting directly to him- or herself.²⁰⁰

At the first meeting of the NWU Council on 12 February 2004, the documentation on the merger and incorporation and the minutes of the Interim Council Elect were noted for the purpose of recording history.²⁰¹

During this first meeting, Council noted its role and mandate. Council elected Mr L Nyhonyha and Ms LK Sebego as the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and the members of the executive committee of Council.²⁰² The committees of Council were appointed at the Council meeting of 12 March 2004.²⁰³

Dr PS Molefe was appointed as Chancellor on 18 June 2004.²⁰⁴ Dr Molefe said he was humbled by this nomination: *“We are all part of a bigger family as citizens of this country and we all need to be part of the drive to take this country forward.”*²⁰⁵ During his inauguration on 14 April 2004, he said that the NWU *“should produce agents for change who work for gender equity, and the narrowing of the gap between rich and poor. This university must produce agents with a passion to contribute to a united, non-racial, non-sexist society which derives its strengths from the diversity of its people.”*²⁰⁶

Council also approved the Code of Conduct for Council members and decided to develop a full code of ethics, tabled at the meeting of 26 November 2004.²⁰⁷ During this meeting, Council resolved to arrange a workshop for members of Council and Senior Management for 14 and 15 January 2005 to start the process of developing a vision and mission for the NWU.²⁰⁸ Council approved the draft NWU vision, values and mission on 15 April 2005,²⁰⁹ and the final revised statement was approved on 10 June 2005.²¹⁰

4.15. Appointment of senior management

Council adopted the process to appoint a vice-chancellor on 12 March 2004,²¹¹ and on 7 May 2004, Dr T Eloff was appointed.²¹² Dr Eloff concluded his inauguration speech with the following statements:

- *“A merger is a journey, not an event...”*
- *Started strongly, but faced numerous challenges...*
- *A multi-million infrastructural upgrading and maintenance programme is underway on all the campuses, including IT and buildings, partially financed by the DoE.*
- *We are busy concluding a comprehensive vision and mission process, and will agree this at the June Council meeting.*
- *We are busy improving our quality systems and procedures – to improve our core business”*²¹³

Council approved the process to appoint the Senior Management team on the 18 June 2004.²¹⁴ The NWU was expected to be first of the newly merged institutions to appoint a vice-chancellor.²¹⁵ Four of the unsuccessful applicants for the position of vice-chancellor objected to this appointment and wanted to protect and enforce their rights through legal action.²¹⁶ These four academics were joined by the National Tertiary Education Staff Union (Ntesu) in this dispute.²¹⁷

On 27 August 2004, Council approved the appointments of the Senior Management team, with effect from 1 September 2004:

- Vice-principal – Dr MN Takalo²¹⁸
- Campus Rectors for Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle – Prof AL Combrink and Prof PJJ Prinsloo. (The position of Mafikeng Campus Rector was advertised externally, and Dr ND Kgwadi was appointed as Rector from 1 January 2005.)²¹⁹
- Institutional Registrar – Prof CFC van der Walt
- Institutional Director Finance – Prof IJ Rost
- Institutional Director Human Resources, Student Affairs and Innovation – Prof F van Niekerk
- Institutional Manager Corporate Communication – Ms S Letsoalo.²²⁰



Endnotes

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- 21 Mafikeng Campus archive, Consultative document for the UNW and PUCHE Councils (UNW-PUCHE version, 2002-09-18, Draft x4), pp 1-3
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- 26 Potchefstroom Campus archive, Letter to CFC van der Walt from HF van Rooy, 26 August 2002
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CHAPTER 5

Incorporation changes the face of the Vaal Triangle Campus

Incorporating students and staff from the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University¹ into the Vaal Triangle Campus of the new university was a complex and intricate process that was carefully planned and executed. The eventual result was a viable, multicultural and worthwhile place of learning for South Africa in general and the Vaal Triangle region in particular. Incorporating students and staff from the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University

5.1. Timeframes at a glance

The process of incorporating the Vista Sebokeng Campus began in earnest in March 2003 and was finally completed in December 2004.

March 2003: The Minister of Education announces the merger and incorporation process.

April 2003: The Incorporation Task Team of Vista and Vaal Triangle Campus (ITTVV) starts negotiations on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

July 2003: Negotiations commence with the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) for the joint use of Sebokeng Campus premises and buildings.

August 2003: The Incorporation Plan is ready for the Merger Unit in the office of the Minister.

October 2003: Plans and structures are finalised for the joint use of Sebokeng Campus up to December 2006.

November 2003: The Minister and the Joint Management Committee approve the final Incorporation Plan.

December 2003: Lecture halls, offices and infrastructure are prepared for separate use on the joint premises of Sebokeng Campus.

December 2003: Clarity is reached on each institution's responsibilities on Sebokeng Campus and for payment for services, such as security, garden and cleaning services.

December 2003: Clarity is obtained on the use of the library, library books and infrastructure by students of both institutions.

December 2003: A motivation is sent to the Minister for merger funds for new buildings and infrastructure on the Vaal Triangle Campus to accommodate staff and students from Vista.

2 January 2004: The Minister announces the formal incorporation in the Government Gazette.

January 2004: Staff from the Vaal Triangle Campus and the Vaal University of Technology settle in on the joint premises of Sebokeng Campus.

February 2004: Separate registration facilities are put in place for simultaneous registration of students from the two institutions.

February to July 2004: The task team deals with operational and infrastructure problems resulting from joint use by staff and students from the two independent institutions on one campus. It urges early relocation of staff and students on the Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus.

August 2004: A *Bosberaad* is held at Santawani Indaba. The then heads of operational departments set action plans to relocate staff and students from the Vista Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus by January 2005.

August 2004: Planning of phases one and two of the new academic buildings on the Vaal Triangle Campus is finalised and the tender process initiated. The Minister approves R14 million in funding for the building project.

- Phase one consists of an office block for:
 - School of Educational Science
 - School of Modelling Sciences
 - Information Technology Management
- Phase two entails:
 - New computer laboratories
 - Lecture halls and laboratories for Education

September 2004: The ITTVV approves the relocation of staff, students and movable assets from Vista Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus during December 2004.

September 2004: To alleviate the student accommodation problems on the Vaal Triangle Campus, the tender process is launched to purchase the former Iscor youth hostels (670 beds).

October 2004: The building project begins with ground works, mains water and electrical services installed on the building site.

October 2004: The purchase of the youth hostels is finalised. Negotiations are held with VUT to rent three blocks of youth hostels from the Vaal Triangle Campus.

October 2004: Negotiations and planning are under way to move the students residing in Siemenshof to the Iscor hostels.

November 2004: Existing seminar halls and larger offices on the Vaal Triangle Campus are partitioned to accommodate Vista staff members in the interim.

November 2004: Staff and office contents are relocated from Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus.

November 2004: Furniture, equipment and moveable assets are moved from Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus.

November 2004: Equipment, photocopiers, furniture and 45 000 library books are moved from Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus library. The library is reorganised to accommodate equipment and books from Sebokeng Campus.

November 2004: The tender process for phases one and two of the building project is concluded and the main contractor and professional team are appointed.

November 2004: Planning of lecture halls is done to accommodate students from Vista and the Vaal Triangle Campus.

November 2004: Students, furniture and equipment are relocated from Siemenshof to the Iscor hostels. The owner of Siemenshof is notified about the termination of the contract.

December 2004: To aid the final clearing of the Sebokeng Campus, all service contracts between the Vaal University of Technology and the Vaal Triangle Campus fall into abeyance. Financial obligations between the two parties are finalised, including municipal accounts, the Telkom account, service contracts, etc. Personnel and student cards are in place for Vista staff and students.

On 31 December 2004, everything is in place and the scene is set to establish the new Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University:

- All staff have been relocated to the campus and all students attend lectures on one and the same campus.

- Equipment, furniture and moveable assets are on one campus.
- Infrastructure is on one campus.
- Enough accommodation is available.
- The building project for the new offices and lecture halls is in hand.

5.2. The area known as the Vaal Triangle

The Vaal Triangle is a region consisting of various towns that flank the banks of the Vaal River. Structurally the towns north of the Vaal River are located in three municipal areas. Emfuleni includes the towns of Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong, Bophelong, Evaton, Roshnee, Rust-ter-Vaal, etc. Midvaal includes the towns of Meyerton and Residentia, and Lesedi includes Heidelberg.

Collectively these three local municipalities are known as the Sedibeng district, which falls within the province of Gauteng. Traditionally Heidelberg (Lesedi Local Municipality) was not included in the geographic area of the Vaal Triangle, unlike towns to the south of the Vaal River in the Metsimaholo municipal area, such as Sasolburg, Zamdela, Deneysville and Refenkgotso. Metsimaholo has traditionally been part of the Vaal Triangle region by virtue of its proximity and economic interdependence with the region.

The region is largely an industrial area with a population of about 1 068 279 people; the steel and petrochemical industries form the core of economic activity. It is serviced by an extensive infrastructure including a well-developed road and rail network, two airfields catering for smaller planes, private and state hospitals, hotels, guest houses and other forms of accommodation, and a wide variety of restaurants and shopping malls.²

5.3. The origin of regional collaboration between institutions of higher learning in the Vaal Triangle, 1995 – 2001³

A brief look at the history of inter-institutional collaboration in the region provides some valuable insight into the way the incorporation process was approached.

After 1994 the tertiary education needs of the Vaal Triangle region were serviced by the following institutions: two university campuses, namely the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE (informally known as Vaalpukke) and the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University; the Vaal Triangle Technikon; the Sebokeng Teachers' Training College; and the four Further Education and Training Colleges at Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging, Lekoa in Sebokeng and Sasolburg.⁴

Representatives of these tertiary institutions in the Vaal Triangle set up a forum in 1995 to discuss inter-institutional

cooperation in the region.⁵ This forum functioned as the Vaal Higher and Further Education Consortium (VHFEC) until 2005.⁶ The Forum attended to the following educational issues:

- Various models for cooperation in the region were developed for discussion and finalisation. The model of choice was a project-driven one that should be aligned to international best practice.
- A register of cooperative projects was also compiled.
- An audit of the programme mix of member institutions was conducted. This would enable the Forum to obtain an overview of the status of the delivery of higher education in the Vaal region. It could also facilitate planning *vis-à-vis* meeting the educational challenges by increasing the efficiency of using all resources for this industrial metropolitan area.
- The Forum also investigated the feasibility of a clearinghouse for tertiary education in the region. Such a clearinghouse could perform the following functions, among others:
 - Quality control over the offering of programmes
 - Channelling students to best meet the needs of the student and employers or entrepreneurs
 - Regulating the articulation of students between institutions.
- The models for cooperation and the clearinghouse were developed in consultation with Dr Harry Brinkman, an internationally renowned academic and authority on higher education management and governance, as well as Dr John Butler-Adam, Director of the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (ESATI), a consortium of higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal.⁷

Although the VHFEC started as a spontaneous movement in the region, various regional and national influences played a role in and gave momentum to its further development. Most notable in this regard were the Higher Education Act, the White Paper on Higher Education and the National Plan on Higher Education. The release of the National Plan on Higher Education on 5 March 2001 set a new framework for the VHFEC⁸ and highlighted issues that influenced regional cooperation:⁹

- The National Plan supported the viewpoint that to achieve the transformation goals

set out in the Education White Paper (July 1997), the higher education system had to be differentiated and diverse.¹⁰

- The VHFEC could obtain diversity in the system through institutional mission and programme differentiation based on the type and range of qualifications offered
- The National Plan proposed to continue to maintain, although in a loose form, the existing mission and programme differentiation between technikons and universities for at least the next five years.
- The National Plan also promoted the access goals and human resource priorities set out in the Education White Paper 3 (1997) and the Human Resource Development Strategy of the government.
- The National Plan proposed that the current programme profile would determine a new programme mix. The relevance of the institution's location, context and responsiveness to regional and national priorities was also at stake. The programme mix should enhance the Government's Human Resource Development Strategy, as well as the demonstrated capacity to add new programmes to the profile.
- The National Plan proposed a process for the redress of historically black institutions.¹¹
- The National Plan proposed a few mergers of institutions, such as the unbundling of Vista University and the incorporation of its constituent parts into the appropriate institutions within each region.
- The plan proposed the restructuring of the institutional landscape of higher education to create new institutional and organisational forms to address the racial fragmentation of the system, as well as administrative, human and financial capacity constraints. That restructuring had to be achieved through the following mechanisms:¹²
 - Institutional collaboration at regional level to sustain programme development, delivery and rationalisation of small and costly programmes.
 - Investigating the feasibility of a more rational arrangement for the consolidation of higher education provision, through the appropriate reduction of the number of institutions but not the number of delivery

sites on a regional basis. An initial analysis of the available data suggested that the number of institutions could be reduced

- A National Working Group had to be established by the Ministry of Education to undertake an investigation based on the principles and goals outlined in the Education White Paper 3 (July 1997) for the transformation of the higher education system.¹³

These issues set an urgent timeframe for the VHFEC and created new possibilities for the two university campuses in the Vaal Triangle due to the resolution to unbundle Vista University.¹⁴

5.4. Early deliberations between the Vaal Triangle satellite campus of the PU for CHE (Vaalpukke) and Vista University Sebokeng Campus

The Vaalpukke and Vista Sebokeng Campus had a long-standing collaborative relationship, over and above the work of the VHFEC. Staff members from both institutions had collaborated over the years and were involved in lecturing at both campuses at various stages. Collaboration in research started formally in 1997/98, when the three institutions of higher learning in the Vaal Triangle formed the Vaal Research Group. This research group then published several research reports on different aspects of the Vaal Triangle economy.

Meetings to investigate the possibilities of closer collaboration in the Vaal Triangle started long before the publication of the National Plan for Higher Education. The following meetings had been held between the staff members of the two university campuses in the Vaal Triangle:

- Because of the White Paper on Higher Education that asserted there should be mutual cooperation between universities on a regional basis, the two campuses agreed in October 1997 that a student could register for a BSc degree at one of the campuses (called the home university), and that the student would then receive credit for the subjects followed at the other university (called the guest university). The student would register for the subjects on a non-degree basis at the guest university and would abide by the rules and regulations of both universities.¹⁵
- Several follow-up meetings were scheduled between the Sebokeng Campus Principal of Vista and the Campus Vice-Rector responsible for the Vaal Triangle Campus of PU for CHE, to

set a framework for further discussions.

- Various meetings were scheduled between representatives of the different support and academic departments of the two campuses to discuss matters of common interest.
- Two strategic planning meetings on closer collaboration were conducted according to the Participan technique between staff members of the two campuses.
- Two consultative meetings were also scheduled with Dr Harry Brinkman, former Chairperson of the Management Committee of the Free University at Amsterdam, to develop a future vision for university campuses in the Vaal Triangle.¹⁶

During a strategic meeting held on 20 September 2000 at the Vaalpukke Campus, staff members of both campuses gave their views on cooperation.¹⁷ The strategic question posed to them was:¹⁸

What do you see as the result of the deliberations between the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE and Vista University Sebokeng Campus? / Where do we want to be?

Staff voted for two options, collaboration or the establishment of a single university campus in the Vaal Triangle region. The concept of collaboration received by far the most votes.

Collaboration (50 votes)¹⁹

- Share resources and expertise
- Cooperative initiatives for the region
- Research collaboration
- Effective cooperation
- Collaboration in a structured way
- No duplication on postgraduate level
- Closer collaboration in sharing expertise and resources
- Allow alternate registration in subjects
- Consolidated academic skills in humanities
- Dual registration for students at Vista/Vaal Triangle Campus
- Full recognition of subjects passed
- Sharing resources
- Joint science classes
- Sharing resources (intellectual and physical)
- Sharing of expertise

- Share infrastructure (lecturers, facilities, students, etc.)
- This collaboration must be more formal, not on an *ad hoc* basis.

One university campus in the Vaal Triangle (25 votes)

- One university campus including Vista (Sebokeng) but not excluding the Vaal Triangle Technikon
- One university campus for the Vaal
- High standards – more students (one of the best university campuses)
- Become one institution
- One selective university in the Vaal, incorporating the technikon
- Amalgamation of all tertiary institutions in the Vaal
- One multi-campus university
- One university campus, the Vaalpukke
- One university with two campuses, one head office and one satellite in one system
- One campus, one study centre
- No lowering of standards

The respondents were also asked how they thought collaboration in research and teaching should be achieved

Research

- Identify research focus areas (13 votes)
- Collaboration in terms of research (two votes)
- Identify and establish research projects to be done cooperatively (no votes)

The process

- Finding ways to complement each other/not oppose (16 votes)
- Extensive talks on department/school level (eight votes)
- Group discussions and plans (seven votes)
- Compare the bottom lines of the budgets of the two university campuses (four votes)
- Go into subject groups and decide what we have and what we want (three votes)
- Get the admin sorted out (three votes)
- Find out details of courses (two votes)

- Establish common ground and remove duplication (one vote)

Teaching

- Share expertise to enhance quality and quantity (seven votes)
- Share lecturers and facilities and try to cut costs (three votes)
- Cooperation and consultation between lecturers in subjects and departments (three votes)
- Joint registration, eg Geography (Vista) and Accountancy (Vaal) (one vote)²⁰

These kinds of deliberations and actions were seen in a totally different light, not to mention timeframe, when Prof Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, announced in March 2001 that Vista University would be unbundled and incorporated at different universities.²¹ In a letter dated 28 June 2001 to Dr SM Ngapi, the Chairperson of Vista University Council, Prof Asmal described his commitment to the implementation of the National Plan for Higher Education and its implications for the future of Vista University.²²

5.5. The fate of the Sebokeng Teachers Training College

Mr Lebelo Maloka, spokesperson of the Gauteng Department of Education, also announced during March 2001 that the Sebokeng Teachers' Training College would close its doors in 2003. He declared that the 47 lecturers would obtain other positions. Prospective students who wanted to become teachers could register at the then Vaal Triangle satellite campus of the PU for CHE and the Vista Campus in Sebokeng.²³

During 2002, the Council of the Sebokeng College of Education decided to transfer the College reserve fund of more than R1 million to the Vaalpukke as the Sebokeng Education Bursary Scheme. The aim of the bursary scheme has been to provide financial aid to deserving and financially needy students in the Vaal Triangle to allow them to obtain a qualification in education through studies at the Vaal Triangle Campus.²⁴

5.6. Clarification of the incorporation of Vista's contact campuses provided by the Minister of Education²⁵

On 28 June 2001, the Minister of Education, Prof Asmal, clarified how and where Vista's contact campuses would be incorporated into other higher education institutions:

- The seven contact campuses would continue as sites of delivery of higher education programmes. However, they would merge into appropriate higher educational institutions within each region.

- Restructuring was underpinned by the principle that the offering of higher education programmes would continue at all the current sites of delivery but within new institutional and organisational forms.
- The recommendations of the National Working Group should form the basis of the incorporation process.
- The first step in the incorporation process would be in-principle approval of the recommendations, which was due at the end of December 2001.
- The second step would be to develop detailed plans.
- The Minister would announce those plans after considering and approving the recommendations of the National Working Group.
- Vista University would continue its normal teaching and research activities, including the recruitment of new students for the 2002 academic year.
- The funding of the incorporation process would make provision for any differentiation in tuition and accommodation fees for existing students that resulted from incorporation.²⁶

5.7. Recommendations by a local task team from both campuses on the proposed incorporation strategy of the Minister, approved by both universities, 29 July 2001

A local task team was appointed to prepare a draft incorporation plan and the following recommendations were proposed to university authorities to activate the proposed incorporation process:

- An investigation should be conducted into the possible incorporation of Vista's Sebokeng Campus into the operations of Vaalpuke.
- A thorough analysis was needed of all relevant aspects regarding staff, students, finances and infrastructure to ensure compliance with the appropriate legislation. This was a prerequisite before a final decision by the relevant parties.
- The task team was responsible for determining all aspects of the incorporation, including programmes, staff required, facilities and funding.
- A meeting with the National Working Group had to be set up as soon as possible to determine

a timeframe and process for the incorporation plan.

- The task team should set up a draft incorporation plan within the framework of the deliberations with the National Working Group.²⁷

The task team responsible for the incorporation plan represented the Vaal Triangle Campus, Vista University and the VHFEC:

- from Vaalpuke: Prof PJJ Prinsloo (Campus Principal) and Prof AMC Theron (Dean)
- from Vista: Prof PS Seepe (Campus Principal) and Dr T Slabbert (supervisor of an M Com dissertation on the socio-economic impact of possible incorporation scenarios)
- from the VHFEC: Mr HA Stavast (Chairperson, VHFEC)

The Registrars of the Vaal Triangle Campus and Vista University would provide technical support, and the two Campus Principals, Prof Prinsloo and Prof Seepe, would jointly steer the process of incorporation.

5.8. Clarification on the position of Vista University by Prof CT Keto, Vice-Chancellor of Vista University, August 2001

Prof CT Keto, Vice-Chancellor of Vista University, sent out a communiqué after a meeting with the Ministerial National Working Group on the National Plan for Higher Education:

"As a follow-up to recent communiqués regarding institutional handling of the National Plan for Higher Education, I wish to update you on the interaction that the University Management and National Institutional Forum have engaged in with the National Working Group on 30 August 2001. At the meeting, which took place at the offices of the national Department of Education, Vista University was represented by the executive management including the Vice-Chancellor, Acting Deputy-Vice-Chancellor – Academic, and Chief University Administrator as well as all the campus principals, some central campus Directors and NIF Chairperson. The VUN-SRC was invited to be present but was not represented on the day. On the other hand, the National Working Group – which is chaired by Mr Saki Macozoma – was represented by Mr Macozoma and three other members, while an official from the Ministry was also present."

On behalf of Vista University, the Vice-Chancellor made a presentation to the Ministerial National Working Group, giving an overview of the status quo at the institution and detailing the two preferred scenarios for its repositioning into new South African institutions.

- Scenario one proposed the merging of the whole institution into the country's new distance learning institution, together with UNISA and Technikon South Africa (TSA).
- Scenario two proposed that individual Vista campuses be merged with regional public institutions of higher education.

Following the presentation, the Vista Campus Principals were invited to state the preferred campus options. Here are their positions, as confirmed with the Ministry's Secretariat:

- Soweto Campus – regional mergers with Wits, RAU and Wits Technikon had been explored, but the focus was now on discussions with Wits Technikon.
- Sebokeng Campus – a regional merger with the Vaal Triangle Technikon and the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE had been explored, but again, this had been narrowed down to engagement with the PU for CHE.
- Bloemfontein – a regional merger was being explored between Vista Free State (Bloemfontein and Welkom) and the University of the Free State and Free State Technikon.
- Welkom Campus – a regional merger with the University of the Free State and Free State Technikon was being discussed
- East Rand Campus – the focus was on a regional merger with the Kempton Park Campus of the Vaal Triangle Technikon and Germiston Technical College; discussions were also in progress with the Mpumalanga Working Group, which was charged with investigating the feasibility of setting up a provincial institute.
- Mamelodi Campus – a regional merger with the University of Pretoria was in the pipeline.
- Port Elizabeth Campus – initially, a regional merger with the University of Port Elizabeth and/or Port Elizabeth Technikon had been explored; however, the focus was now on discussions with the technikon.

- Vudec (the distance education operation of Vista University) – a national merger with TSA and UNISA was under discussion.

The Chairperson of Vista University National Institutional Forum (NIF) stated that as a body the NIF supported the unbundling of Vista into regional mergers. After further discussion and clarification-seeking questions, the Chairperson of the Working Group explained that Scenario One was not an option that it was considering as this scenario did not correspond with the group's terms of reference.

On the other hand, the Distance Learning National Working Group, chaired by Prof Franklin Sonn, could explore and consider this option. In conclusion, Prof Sonn closed the meeting by encouraging dialogue, debate and discussion at all levels within Vista, as well as with neighbouring institutions, on Scenario Two. He also stated that, as a body, the Working Group was not in a position to give directive(s) on how the process should unfold within the institution.

The Vice-Chancellor of Vista University concluded his communiqué by recognising that the university was a legal entity in terms of the Higher Education Act, meaning that the way forward for the institution would be in line with the stipulations of the Act.²⁸

5.9. A model for the incorporation of Vista (Sebokeng Campus) into the operations of Vaalpukke²⁹

After the publication of the National Plan for Higher Education in 2001, staff members of the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE and Vista (Sebokeng Campus) formed working committees on both campuses. Their role was to investigate the optimum way for collaboration that might finally lead to the incorporation of the two campuses.

The two committees had their first meeting on 26 October 2001. During that meeting, five task teams with two members from each institution were selected to gather information from both institutions:³⁰

Task team	Vista	PU for CHE
1 Academic matters	Prof BJJ Lombard	Prof AMC Theron, who would co-opt staff as the need arose
	Ms CT Mosabala	
2 Support staff	Mr A Mooi	Mr CW Vermeulen
	Mr R Matube	
3 Financial matters/physical infrastructure	Mr T Ka Plaatjie, who would co-opt staff as the need arose	Prof P Lucouw
		Mr CW Vermeulen
4 Student affairs	Mr N Molefe	Mr H.A. Stavast
	Ms MG Khasipe	
5 Leadership/issues/principles	Prof PS Seepe	Prof PJJ Prinsloo

The mandate of the task teams was formulated as follows:

- They would decide on the format of the contents of their deliberations.
- They would take guidance from the proposals in the Ministry's merger guidelines.³¹
- Responsibility to deliver reports rested with each committee on the following issues:
 - detailed descriptions of the current status of the two campuses
 - assessment of the current status of the two campuses
 - the possibility of improving operations resulting from the incorporation process
 - extensive consultation on campuses.

Several informal meetings were held from October 2001, but the deliberations stalled in January 2002 onwards due to the task teams' failure to obtain workable statistical data from the universities. Consequently the task teams became dormant, but this did not affect the work of the Incorporation Task Team. That Task Team continued to run at full steam, because one of the PU for CHE staff members had also been doing research work for an M Com dissertation with the title: *A socio-economic impact assessment of possible scenarios for the universities in the Vaal Triangle region*. Staff members from both institutions initiated this project, which was completed in November 2001.³²

The aim of this economic impact assessment was to determine the impact of different forms of collaboration or incorporation, and to find a solution that would meet the highest welfare of all stakeholders. The project ranked and gave priority to the most desirable actions. Next, the decision-makers would be informed about the costs and

benefits of the different scenarios for the incorporation. Following the completion of this survey, detailed action plans were developed for the incorporation plan.

In considering the best outcome for the restructuring of Sebokeng Campus, a further factor that had to be kept in mind was the distinction made in the National Plan for Higher Education between universities and technikons. The plan declared that this differentiation should be sustained for the following five years. In the light of the unbundling of Vista, the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE would be the only remaining university campus in the region. It was therefore the appropriate campus for the incorporation of Vista's Sebokeng Campus.

The Incorporation Task Team's starting point was to acknowledge the transformational guidelines outlined in the White Paper:

- *“Social and educational goals, in particular, the contribution of higher education to social and economic development, both regionally and nationally.*
- *Access and equity goals in relation to student and staff equity, as well as institutional redress.*
- *Quality and efficiency goals in terms of economies of scale and scope, both programme and infrastructural, as well as the spread and quality of programmes and graduation and retention rates.*
- *Institutional sustainability and viability goals in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure patterns and management and governance capacities.*
- *Institutional identity and culture goals in terms of overcoming the legacy of Apartheid.”*³³

5.10. The proposal of Minister Kader Asmal to incorporate Vista University Sebokeng Campus according to Article 24 of the Higher Education Amendment Act, 2002³⁴

Government Gazette, 24 June 2002³⁵

On 24 June 2002, Minister Asmal declared his proposal to form one single higher education institution in the North-West Province. This meant the PU for CHE would merge with the UNW. The PU for CHE's Vaal Triangle Campus in Vanderbijlpark would be part of the new university and would incorporate the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.³⁶

This announcement prompted the PU for CHE to deliberately reposition itself within the transforming higher education landscape. Its new direction was reflected in the PU for CHE's Vision of 2002 – 2007, which emphasised the entrepreneurial quality of this university. The PU for CHE declared its intention to be “an entrepreneurial university of high quality”.³⁷

Letters to Chairpersons of Council by Prof Kader Asmal, 9 December 2002

Prof Asmal wrote letters dated 9 December 2002 to Dr L Wessels, Chairperson of the PU for CHE Council, and Dr MR Kgaphola, Chairperson of the Vista University Council. He stated that his department was conducting the merger and incorporation process in terms of Section 23 and 24 of the Higher Education Act.³⁸ Minister Asmal explained that “the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of North-West will be merged to establish a single higher education institution and the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University will be incorporated into the merged institution”.³⁹

5.11. Ministerial guidelines for incorporations

The only legal requirement for incorporations was the effective date of incorporation itself. None of the legislative requirements and few of the activities associated with the interim phase for mergers applied to incorporations. Section 2 of the guidelines advised institutions to draw up a Memorandum of Agreement and establish a plan for the implementation of the incorporation.⁴⁰

The legal implications of the human resources aspects of incorporation were extensively outlined in the Higher Education Amendment Act, 2002.⁴¹ For the most part, human resource issues in incorporations were essentially the same as those for mergers. As in the case of a merger, the amended Higher Education Act proposed that on the date of incorporation “all rights and obligations” of the incorporated campus would devolve upon the receiving institution.

This meant that on the date of incorporation all staff of the incorporated campus would be assured of employment as per their existing contracts and would retain their existing conditions of service and benefits.

The implications of that proposal for the receiving institution were similar for mergers. Should the receiving institution consider it necessary to realign the staff complement on the incorporated campus for operational reasons, this would have to be within the parameters of the Labour Relations Act. That included exploring as a first option all employment alternatives such as re-deployment and re-skilling. In the event of any uncertainty on those matters, institutions were advised to consult with the Merger Unit in the office of the Minister of Education.⁴²

5.12. Proposed incorporation plan

5.12.1 A framework to measure the success of the proposed incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University⁴³

The Council of the PU for CHE had, on 27 June 2002, accepted a broad strategy to work on the proposed merger in response to the Government Gazettes of 21 and 24 June 2002. In addition, a framework to measure the success of the merger process was compiled.⁴⁴

In alignment with this, the management team of the Vaalpukke compiled a framework to measure the success of the incorporation process in the Vaal Triangle:⁴⁵

According to this framework, the incorporation of Vista University's Sebokeng Campus into the operations of the Vaal Triangle Campus would be structured and handled in a way that would:

- enhance effective governance and management
- enhance academic, research, administrative and quality standards, as befits a university campus of international repute
- ensure that the Vaal Triangle Campus would be capable of meeting all its financial obligations on time
- enable the incorporated campus to grow into an accessible and viable entity that attracts students from outside the region, and responds particularly to the needs of the region
- provide the necessary funding for infrastructure, human resources and operational funds
- allow the continuation of the best aspects of the existing multi-cultural institutional cultures and ethos, within the framework of the Constitution and its foundational values of human dignity, equality and freedom

- maintain existing support bases as a source for the recruitment of students after incorporation, and to form and strengthen the base for financing and research
- determine the pace of transformation.⁴⁶

5.12.2 Formal incorporation meetings between Vaalpuske and Vista

The first formal introductory meeting between Vista University and the Management Committee of Vaalpuske took place on 5 February 2003 to discuss the terms of reference of the incorporation process from a Vista perspective.⁴⁷

The Vista delegation consisted of Prof CT Keto (Vice-Chancellor), Prof TG Schultz (Merger Manager), Prof PS Seepe (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Dr T Slabbert (Acting Campus Principal) and Mr T Ka Plaatjie (Campus Registrar).

The Vaalpuske representatives were Prof PJJ Prinsloo (Vice-Rector), Prof AMC Theron (Dean), and Mr FA Visser (Chief Director).

Prof PJJ Prinsloo started off by explaining the background to the PUK-UNW merger process. He referred to the work of the Joint Operational Team (JOT) and the proposed compatibility study for the merger process. Prof Prinsloo then mentioned that a similar compatibility study would be necessary between the Vaal Triangle Campus and Vista University.

In reply, Prof TG Schultz stated that the two parties must manage the process and work towards developing a combined report for the Minister by June 2003. The institutions should do everything in their power to avoid a situation where the Minister would determine what they should do.

Prof Schultz went on to say that Vista would provide full statistics after an audit process, and stressed that the Council of Vista University was determined that the restructuring should succeed. To emphasise this, he referred to the words engraved on the Afrikaans language monument in the Paarl: "*Dit is ons erns*" [we are serious about it].

He spoke about the importance of attention to detail, and said a three-year rolling plan was vital for the success of the incorporation. A three-year management plan for facilities and infrastructure was also needed

Prof Schultz spoke at length about the concerns and needs of staff. The staff members of Vista were very uncertain and felt disempowered, he said, and it was important to treat them properly. He noted that employment conditions of staff were critical.

He emphasised the importance of a cooperative strategy towards staff allocation or application. A staff analysis would have to be done to determine suitability and adaptability.

Turning to student matters, Prof Schultz said government would provide additional support for students during the incorporation process. Student recruitment for 2004 would have to be done by determining adaptability and using a cooperative marketing strategy. In addition, a system would have to be put in place to accommodate Grade 12 learners who had not achieved university exemption. Capacity would also have to be created to improve access to higher education.

Outlining the incorporation process that was envisaged, Prof Schultz said the plan was to handle the incorporation process of all the Vista campuses simultaneously, and not campus-by-campus. Vista had set up a multi-level structure for the incorporation process, with Prof Schultz as the Merger Manager from the central campus, and institutional forums for staff and students.

Prof Seepe then expanded on Prof Schultz's comments. He began by saying that adjustment and integration should take place on three levels, namely the adjustment, sustainability and rationalisation of programmes, staff integration and the re-application of facilities and infrastructure. This would have to be submitted to the Minister for consideration.

Next, Prof Seepe outlined the importance of using effective mechanisms to deal with differences and conflict that might arise during negotiations. He said a code of conduct and a resolution of conflict procedure should be put in place to ensure transparency, responsiveness, equity, excellence, proper dissemination of information and adherence to the principles of affordability and business sense. It would also be important to define the concepts of redress, values and transformation, he said, adding that it was doubtful a report would be ready by June 2003. Turning to the practicalities of the incorporation, he said the operational work would be executed through a Campus Institutional Forum, entailing multilevel integration and powers of decision-making as basis for the incorporation.

Prof Keto then stated that communication to staff and students would be essential for instilling a sense of ownership in the process, and that the overall objective remained "*to improve the quality of higher education*".

Finally, Mr T Ka Plaatjie commented that more discussions needed to be held as there was still much uncertainty and this influenced productivity. He added that time scales had become very important, that redress and transformation had to be managed well, and that student organisations had to talk to each other. Another critical point was the

inaccessibility of the Vaal Triangle Campus to students as a result of its location.

To familiarise the Vista delegation with the campus, Mr Bertie Visser took Prof Schultz, Prof Keto and Dr Slabbert on a tour of its buildings and infrastructure⁴⁸.

Consultative meeting with Dr Bernadette Porter, Rector and Chief Executive, University of Surrey Roe Hampton, 6 February 2003⁴⁹

A group of 21 staff members from Vaalpukke and Vista University (Sebokeng Campus) were present during meeting with Dr Porter. She addressed the objectives of the Federal University of Surrey after a merger process.⁵⁰

Meeting between Dr T Eloff and Prof CT Keto, 12 March 2003⁵¹

This meeting decided to establish a new task team to facilitate the incorporation process in the Vaal Triangle..

The following task team members were nominated:

Vaal Triangle Campus	Vista Sebokeng Campus
Prof PJJ Prinsloo (Campus Vice-Rector)	Dr T Slabbert (Acting Campus Principal)
Prof AMC Theron (Dean)	Mr T Ka Plaatjie (Campus Registrar)
Mr FA Visser (Chief Director Support Services)	Ms CT Mosabala (Academic Programmes)
Mr P Malgas (Head PU/UNW Process Secretariat)	Mr V Ndaba (Library)

Both principals decided that the task team should determine the mandate of the task team and draw up a memorandum

of understanding for it. Prof TG Schultz undertook to provide a copy of a draft memorandum of understanding developed for the incorporation process in Port Elizabeth.

The task team had to work towards a deadline of 31 March 2003 to submit its first interim report, dealing with timeframes, work plans and the establishment of subcommittees to investigate issues such as human resources. This report would have to be sent to the two principals, Prof TG Schultz and the Joint Operations Team of the UNW and the PU for CHE.

First meeting of the new task team, 26 March 2003

This first meeting of the newly formed task team effectively restarted the discussions between the two university campuses in the Vaal Triangle after the first informal discussions during 2001.⁵² They developed a clear work plan for their deliberations⁵³, starting with the setting of objectives and deadlines through to identifying tasks, consulting with stakeholders, establishing a budget and monitoring the process to completion.⁵⁴

This new task team was fortunate in being able to rely on a long-standing relationship and collaboration to enhance the formal incorporation discussions between the two university campuses in the Vaal Triangle.⁵⁵

5.12.3 Implications of the proposed new institutional landscape for higher education provided by the Minister of Education, April 2003⁵⁶

Prof Asmal, the Minister of Education, proposed a new institutional landscape that provided the framework and mechanisms for the incorporation of the students and staff of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University into the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University.⁵⁷ The management teams and educational stakeholders of both campuses involved in this incorporation process unconditionally accepted the rationale and proposed modus operandi of the Ministry as the framework for the incorporation plan to establish a new Vaal Triangle Campus.⁵⁸ In the context of the envisaged new merged university, the agreement reached between the Councils of PU for CHE and the UNW in June 2003 formed the background of the incorporation plan.⁵⁹

The implication of this agreement for the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus was that it would no longer be a satellite campus but a fully-fledged campus of the new North-West University.⁶⁰ The incorporation proposals developed for the Vista Campus were aligned with the National Plan for Higher Education (March 2001)⁶¹ and a report by the Ministry of Education: *Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education* (June 2002).^{62 63}

The demographics of the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE and the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University were analysed to assess the staff and student profiles of the two university campuses at the time.⁶⁴

The Incorporation Task Team recommended that the managements of the PU for CHE and Vista ask the Minister to consider making the facilities and infrastructure of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University

temporarily available to the new university for at least four years. This proposal would enable the merged institution to accommodate the staff needed to service the pipeline students in the short term and give it time to develop the necessary infrastructure on the Vaal Triangle Campus.⁶⁵ This temporary arrangement was approved and utilised for only one year, until November 2004, when the students, staff and offices were relocated to the Vaal Triangle Campus.

5.12.4 Profile of the staff component, 2003⁶⁶

Campus	Academic staff	Support staff
Vaal Triangle Campus of PU for CHE	53	57
Sebokeng Campus of Vista University	26	25
Total	79	82
Grand total	161	

5.12.5 Profile of Vista Campus, 1999 – 2002⁶⁷

Head count totals: contact students

Head count	1999	2000	2001	2002
FTE undergraduates enrolled		696	618	559
FTE undergraduates passed		514	417	
Undergraduate heads	1 166	817	637	592
FTE postgraduates enrolled		15	12	10
Postgraduate heads	28	11	10	5

Vista University Sebokeng Campus: summary of specialised activities from 1998 – 2002⁶⁸

Year	Books	Articles		Conference papers		Master's degrees	PhD degrees
		Accredited journals	Non-accredited journals	International	National		
1998		1	2	2	3	2	3
1999		-	1	4	5	2	1
2000		1	8	2	5	6	5
2001		-	2	2	6	6	5
2002		1	3	4	6	5	1

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5.12.6 Profile of the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE⁷⁰

Since 1995, the Vaal Triangle Campus had been engaging in an ongoing transformation process to increase its fitness for the transforming higher education landscape.

Student and staff practices and values had been reviewed,

rethought and revised, employment equity targets had been set and reached, and a transformation officer had been active on campus for at least three years.

Student numbers had been on the increase since 2000 as a result of a recruitment campaign in all communities, support for previously disadvantaged Grade 12 learners and the retraining of underqualified educators.

This had gone hand in hand with a sharp focus on quality for all academic programmes and support services and a moderate increase in postgraduate and research outputs. Now, by joining forces, the Vaal Triangle Campus and

Vista Sebokeng Campus aspired to establish a viable, multi-cultural and worthwhile place of higher learning in the Vaal Triangle region. That was the ultimate horizon for fitness in the new South Africa.⁷¹

Statistical profile of Vaal Triangle Campus, 2001 – 2010⁷²

Head count totals: contact students

Head count	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	% annual growth: 2001 to 2005
First-time entering undergraduates	163	280	323	503	669	676	1 000	1 100	1 210	1 331	32.6%
Undergraduate diplomas	22	86	274	161	361	329	329	329	329	329	75.0%
Undergraduate degrees	753	924	1124	1 833	2 131	2 196	2 536	2 196	2 196	2 196	23.1%
Total undergraduate	775	1010	1398	1 994	2 492	2 525	2 865	2 525	2 525	2 525	26.3%
Postgraduate diplomas	35	31	323	485	48	49	49	49	49	49	6.5%
Postgraduate bachelors	75	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Honours	153	180	223	307	401	445	445	445	445	445	21.3%
Master's	262	278	140	134	156	216	216	216	216	216	-9.9%
PhD's	23	29	39	58	77	92	92	92	92	92	27.3%
Total postgraduate	548	557	725	984	682	802	802	802	802	802	4.5%
Occasional students	0	0	0	30	30	41	41	41	41	41	
Total enrolment	1 323	1567	2123	3 008	3 204	3 368	3 708	3 368	3 368	3 368	19.4%

Summary of specialised activities from 1998 – 2002⁷³

Year	Text books	Articles		Conference papers		Master's	PhD degrees	Research and project reports	Internal reports and projects
		Accredited journals	Non-accredited journals	International	National				
1998	3	13	5	19	20	12	5	1	1
1999	6	28	21	33	26	13	8	14	13
2000	18	27	12	33	26	20	6	6	16
2001	9	19	1	31	42	17	-	5	5
2002	5	10	1	27	24	19	2	2	15

5.12.7 The formal incorporation process

From August 2003, the Incorporation Task Team (ITTV) held frequent meetings to finalise the incorporation report to the Minister. Profs PJJ Prinsloo and NP Maake jointly chaired this task team, which developed several working documents up to the finalisation of the incorporation plan in November 2003. Ms Susan van der Walt, an engineer, was employed to implement the incorporation plan.

The incorporation vision that the task team set for the new Vaal Triangle Campus of the NWU was to:⁷⁵

- establish an incorporated university campus in the Vaal Triangle through the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University into the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE. This campus would have the same identity and character as the newly merged institution resulting from the merger of PU for CHE and the UNW. Its vision would also be aligned with that of the new university.
- ensure that the incorporated university campus in the Vaal Triangle would not ignore the geographical, historical and other factors associated with the Vista Sebokeng Campus.
- support the newly merged institution in promoting the following social and educational goals on access and equity (for students and staff, as well as institutional redress):⁷⁶
 - quality and efficiency of programmes and infrastructure (in terms of economies of scale and scope, the spread and quality of programmes and graduation and retention rates)
 - institutional sustainability and viability (in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure patterns, and management and governance capacities)
 - institutional identity and culture (in terms of overcoming the legacy of Apartheid).

The mission of the incorporated university campus in the Vaal Triangle would also be geared towards efficiency, effectiveness and good governance. According to the Minister of Education (30 May 2002), the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the national education system in its form at the time were such that it could not meet the demands placed on it. He identified the following points relating to the overall quantity and quality of graduate and research outputs:

- the quality of teaching
- management, leadership, and governance failures

- lack of representative staff profiles
- institutional cultures that had not transcended the racial divide of the past
- the increased competition between institutions⁷⁷

5.12.8 Description of facilities at the two campuses

The Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE was established in 1963 in the Vaal Triangle, at the request of leaders in many fields, especially industry, financial institutions and the local community. This campus would now be enhanced through the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.

In 2003, before the incorporation, the campus had five academic buildings, 113 offices, 48 lecture halls and seminar rooms, 2 385 seats for students and residential accommodation for 385 students.

As for the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University, the following academic facilities were earmarked for transfer to the Vaal Triangle Technikon, which was to become the Vaal University of Technology: 14 lecture halls and seminar rooms, two study halls, three geography halls, 2 070 seats for students and 96 offices. There were no student residences.

It was clear that it would not be possible to physically accommodate either the staff or the students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University on the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE.

Campus Management saw this as a challenge and not an obstacle, and turned the situation into a success story that benefited the staff and students of Vista and the Vaal Triangle Campus.

The facilities of the Sebokeng Campus were duly transferred to the newly formed Vaal University of Technology (VUT), the former Vaal Triangle Technikon. However, the Minister granted the VUT and the Vaal Triangle Campus the right of simultaneous use of the Sebokeng Campus for three years up to December 2006. The relocation of the staff, students and moveable assets from the Sebokeng Campus was completed two years earlier, in December 2004.

On 1 January 2005, the new NWU Vaal Triangle Campus was established and all staff and students from the Sebokeng Campus had been relocated to the Vaal Triangle Campus. The transfer took place under difficult circumstances that were fortunately only temporary and have since been resolved⁷⁸

5.12.9 The incorporation strategy ⁷⁹

The Incorporation Task Team compiled an incorporation plan in alignment with the PUK-UNW merger committees, namely the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) and the Joint Operational Team (JOT). Once they had approved the proposed plan, it would be submitted to the Ministry of Education.

By October 2003, the Incorporation Task Team had met many incorporation milestones:

- positive interaction between the VTC, Vista Sebokeng Campus and Vista Central Office
- an accepted incorporation plan
- a pipeline student system for 2004-2006 for existing Vista students
- one set of admission requirements, dovetailing with those of the North-West University
- an agreed upon Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) for the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus
- A functional language policy
- shared use of the Vista Sebokeng Campus (as contractually agreed to with the VUT) for at least three years
- Together with the Incorporation Task Team, the Campus Principal and staff of Vista Sebokeng Campus had identified the practical issues around shared use of the facilities.⁸⁰

There were also various other indicators that the incorporation plans were proceeding smoothly.

- Increased student numbers for 2004 suggested community support for the incorporation process.
- All Sebokeng student and staff information necessary for smooth incorporation was in hand.
- A strong focus on quality had taken root for all academic programmes and support services.
- A project manager had been appointed to facilitate incorporation, which would be implemented on 1 January 2004.
- An operational plan was in place for staff, students, information technology, academic administration and the PQM.

5.12.10 A monitoring system was in place for the incorporation process

The incorporation process was not without its challenges, especially in terms of facilities, capital expenditure and operational expenditure.

In the case of facilities, the task team requested an administration building to accommodate Vista support staff. It also requested that an existing building be remodelled and refurbished to meet the campus's academic needs and that new residences be erected to accommodate 200 more students. In addition, the team requested that two new academic buildings be constructed to accommodate more lecture halls, offices for Vista academic staff, computer and technology laboratories, and library facilities. These additions would require capital expenditure for building work, transport for Sebokeng students and adaptations to the Sebokeng Campus IT system.

Operational costs would also have to be incurred to allow for the transfer of liabilities, management of Vista student debt, budget shortfall for 2004 to 2006 (because of lower Vista FTEs), maintenance of the Sebokeng Campus facilities being shared and short-term insurance for the Sebokeng Campus.

In addition, a shortfall in staff expenditure was expected as a result of staff loans, a shortfall in the pension fund, discrepancies in service conditions and accumulated staff leave, as well as to make provision for possible severance packages.

All of this added up to a projected total incorporation cost of R52 064 316, and this was the amount requested from the Minister. A breakdown of this incorporation cost shows that R44,2 million was for renovation of facilities and R7,8 million was for operational costs.

5.12.11 Comparison of functions and structures of Student Affairs Vista Sebokeng Campus and Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE

One of the difficult issues to resolve was the incorporation of students on both sides who were politically active and assertive of their rights and privileges.

This detailed description of the status back in 2003 provides some insight into the issues at hand ⁸¹

No	Function	Vista	PU for CHE
1. Student Affairs			
1.1	Student leadership	Elected student leadership supported by executive committees of affiliated student bodies: SASCO, PASMA and AZASCO.	1. Elected student leadership supported by executive committees of affiliated student bodies. 2. All student leaders, elected and from affiliated bodies, have representation on the Student Parliament, which acts as a discussion and recommendation forum.
1.1.1	Composition	Elected SRC of 11 persons, Chairperson and 10 other portfolios: Deputy Chair, General Secretary, Finance, Projects and Community Liaison, Sports, Art and Culture, Academic Matters and Transformation, Constitution and Legal Affairs, Communications and Marketing, Gender.	1. Elected SRC of eight members (Chairperson and seven other portfolios): Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Treasurer constitute the executive committee. Other portfolios: Academics, Sports, Culture, Public Relations. After election, the Council of the university appoints the SRC. 2. Six elected Residence Committees of four members each, and one of six members. 3. Total number of elected student leaders: 38.
1.1.2	Election	Democratic election according to the VU SRC constitution: affiliated organisations campaign for the SRC elections.	Democratic election according to negotiated constitution during August each year.
1.1.3	Term of office	One calendar year - ordinarily from January to December. Elections were held in September.	One calendar year: September to August of the following year. Members may be re-elected.
1.1.4	Training	The new SRC chairperson meets with the outgoing SRC to arrange the process of handing over SRC administration. Training camp for incoming SRC is arranged by the Department of Student Affairs.	Three-day leadership training camp after election, follow-up during the course of the term by Director: Student Affairs.
1.1.5	Role and powers	The SRC shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Represent the student body. ▪ Determine own portfolios. ▪ Appoint committees, project and task teams when necessary for the performance of its functions. ▪ Draft, amend or repeal rules and regulations in respect of powers and duties and the functioning in general of the SRC. ▪ Apply and arrange funds allocated to SRC in accordance with the approved budget. ▪ Give recognition to, or withdraw recognition of, organisations in accordance with the Vista University SRC constitution. ▪ Issue publications. ▪ Affiliate to any organisation or association outside Vista University after obtaining a mandate from the student body. ▪ Veto any resolution, decision or action by any student governance substructure. ▪ Implement policy for the student body. ▪ Dismiss a person appointed to serve on a committee, project team and/or task team of the SRC. ▪ Exercise all powers allowed under the Vista University SRC constitution. 	1. SRC is the highest authority in the student body, representing students at all levels of university governance, including Council, Senate, Institutional Forum, etc. 2. The SRC (and student life) is subject to the prescriptions of the Constitution of the SRC of the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE and its addenda (ie Rules of Procedure). 3. Important partner in Campus Management. 4. Looks after interests of students in general. Plays advocacy role. 5. Takes charge of student activities during welcoming of first-year students and students in general during the course of year with the guidance of the Director: Student Affairs.

No	Function	Vista	PU for CHE
1. Student Affairs continued			
1.1.6	Leadership bursaries/ honoraria	Rebates of 75% of tuition fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SRC budget: R93 988,00 ▪ Budget for Residence Committees: R188 511 ▪ Total: R282 499,00 per annum (2002/2003)
1.2	Organised student life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sports: (soccer, netball, softball, volleyball, table tennis) ▪ Cultural activities, such as choristers ▪ Student Christian Organisation. ▪ Academic societies: Black Management Forum, Public Administration Students Society, Tshwaraganang Community Development, Peer Counsellors, Commercial and Management Student Committee. ▪ Social forums - gumbas, cultural activities, Rastafarian Society, Poetry Club. 	<p>1. Residence committees are responsible for social, recreational, cultural and sports activities of students in residence context under supervision of the SRC and members of staff. Plays an important role in familiarising first-year students with the campus environment during the reception and introduction programme under supervision of the SRC and the Director: Student Affairs.</p> <p>2. Various affiliated bodies, including Black Management Forum, Students' Christian Forum, Commercial Students' Association (COSA), South African Students Voluntary Organisation (SASVO), SASCO, Vaalpuke Psychology Association (VPA), Education Faculty Club (EFC), BIBS, etc.</p>
1.3	Transformation	Driven by various structures under the aegis of the Campus Institutional Forum (CIF), in conjunction with Campus Management. Overall direction mapped by the Merger Officer, Prof Schultz, at Central Campus, Pretoria.	Transformation is an ongoing, deliberate initiative directed by various policies and driven by various structures. A transformation officer acts as the contact point for transformation activities and issues.
1.3.1	Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transformation ▪ Transparency ▪ Afro-orientation ▪ Responsive curriculum ▪ Transformative curriculum ▪ Inclusivity ▪ Non-sexism ▪ Language diversity 	The university adheres to the Constitution as well as all legislation and policy documents of the RSA, for instance the Higher Education Act, White and Green Papers, etc. Its Statutes are binding on the university. Flowing from these documents are various policy documents pertaining to equity, language of tuition, human rights and diversity, etc. These policies are reflected in the vision and mission statements and the principles of the university and the Vaal Triangle Campus.
1.3.2	Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institutional Forum ▪ Campus Institutional Forums ▪ Merger vision ▪ Transformation agenda ▪ Various campus committees ▪ Campus Management Committee ▪ Governance ▪ Budget ▪ Student activities ▪ Disciplinary matters 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transformation Officer (Vaal Triangle Campus (VTC) position) 2. Institutional Culture Committee (VTC structure) 3. Language subcommittee 4. Diversity subcommittee 5. Christian character subcommittee 6. Language ombudsperson (VTC position) 7. Human rights ombudsperson (VTC position) 8. Institutional Forum (one forum for whole University)
1.4	Sports	Soccer, netball, softball, volleyball, table tennis, aerobics. The position of Sports, Art and Culture Officer is vacant at present. The SRC Sports Officer arranges recreational sports activities. Aerobics club.	Soccer, rugby, cricket, netball, hockey, volleyball, archery, rowing (canoeing). Some clubs are open clubs accepting members other than students and/or staff. Sports are organised from the sports office under the supervision of the sports officer, with the assistance of the SRC and Residence Committee sports portfolio holders. Together with club managements these individuals form the Sports Council. The position of sports officer is currently vacant.
1.4.1	Competitive	Sebokeng competitions Schools competitions Local matches	Teams compete in various local and provincial leagues. Individuals in archery and rowing compete nationally and even internationally.

No	Function	Vista	PU for CHE
1. Student Affairs continued			
1.4.3	Funding	Funding from university budget	Sports activities are partially funded by the university on an annual budget basis.
1.5	Culture	Overseen by Director: Student Affairs and Campus Registrar	Support from Director: Student Affairs for student-driven cultural activities
1.6	Fees	Determined by Council	Annual fees are decided on and approved by Council
1.6.1	Tuition	R1 000 and 30% of outstanding fees as initial payment at registration fees determined by Council Fees structure as at 2003 average. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BA: R5,200 ▪ B Com: R6,000 ▪ BA Ed: R6,000 ▪ HDE: R8,000 ▪ Honours: R4 720 	1. Minimum payable at registration (includes registration fee and first payment on tuition fees): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2002: Residence students: R5,400 Day and part-time students: R2,895 ▪ 2003: Residence students: R5,900 Day and part time students: R3,185 2. Estimated annual tuition fees (total includes first payment on tuition fees) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2002 BA: R8,430 B Com: R8,990 B Com (info systems / accounting): R9,200 BSc : R10,780 Education: R8,680 Honours: R6,065 ▪ 2003 BA: R9,060 B Com: R9,660 B Com (info systems / accounting): R9,890 BSc: R11,590 Education: R9,330 Honours: R6,520
1.6.2	Accommodation	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2002: R6,000 ▪ 2003: R6,500 (on campus) ▪ R5,500 (Siemenshof)
1.7	Financial aid	NSFAS bursaries and loans administered according to NSFAS requirements. Vista bursaries for first-year Science, Law and Commerce students Ad hoc funding Council bursaries: allocated by NSFAS	NSFAS and Sizanani students' fund administered according to the prescriptions of NSFAS. The PU for CHE was granted a five-star rating for its administration of the NSFAS funds.
1.8	Student development	Positions vacant: Student counsellor, SRC administrator, sports, art and culture officer Academic development (AD) practitioner Student development, staff development, curriculum development Support with regard to reading and writing for academic purposes, test and exam preparation, study methods, etc. Student assistants programme Tutorials Supplemental instruction Computer literacy courses Job seeking skills: eg compiling a CV, interview skills Financial Aid Office	Professional support (registered psychologist) for students pertaining to choice of career, course selection, study methods, reading skills, skills development (communication skills, conflict resolution, team work, job hunting skills, leadership, entrepreneurship, etc.), career development On-campus personnel agency Limited psychotherapeutic services for personal, social and relationship problems Learning facilitators Academic development Reading laboratory Student Wellness Programme directed by student affairs looking after general student wellness, including Aids campaign and counselling

No	Function	Vista	PU for CHE
2. Corporate liaison			
2.1	Student recruitment	Recruitment takes place locally and nationally.	Students are actively recruited locally and nationally.
2.1.1	Management and execution	School visits Exhibitions Press Brochures Electronic adverts Career exhibitions	Team of recruiters engaging in a variety of recruitment activities: school visits; open days on campus, career exhibitions, and public relations exercises, supported by advertisements in newspapers. Rigorous follow-up programmes during the course of the year. The recruitment programme is centrally managed from Potchefstroom.
2.1.2	Funding	Campus budget for recruitment initiatives and HQ support	Recruitment programme funded from annual budget
2.2	Media liaison	Good relations with media	Good relations with all media (local and national) is jealously protected and actively promoted
2.2.1	Management and execution	Via Campus Principal	All media releases are centrally handled from the central media office (Potchefstroom).
2.2.2	Funding	Central Campus	Media programme funded from annual budget
2.3	Fundraising	Fundraising Officer Central Campus. Local fundraising on a limited scale.	Good relations with all public and private sector (local, national and international) is jealously protected and actively promoted Fundraising is centrally coordinated from the fundraising office (Potchefstroom)
2.4	Publications	Campus newsletter	Preparation and finalising of flyers, pamphlets, posters, brochures, etc. Initial text done in departments. Final copy and corporate identity casting done centrally.

Assessment

The above table and the description of the various functions relative to the two campuses shows that there were certain obvious differences in the scope and mode of service delivery, policies, vision and mission. On the other hand, there were certain commonalities that could form the foundation for continued discussion. Furthermore, there were activities where the two campuses could supplement each other and had the potential to benefit all students.⁸²

5.12.12 Final incorporation report to the Minister of Education, 13 November 2003

The implementation request to the Minister of Education to conclude the incorporation process was handled by the two Vice-Chancellors of the merging universities.⁸³ Dr T Eloff and Dr NM Takalo co-signed a letter on 13 November 2003 in which they included the final incorporation report and a request to the Minister for assistance to conclude the incorporation process.

They mentioned that the report clearly stated that the Incorporation Task Team - consisting of members of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University and the Vaal Triangle Campus - could only conclude the incorporation process if the following requests were granted:

- The Vaal Triangle Campus needed to use a part of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University for three to four years for staff offices and student lecture halls.
- The Vista students at the time needed to be facilitated as pipeline students.
- Pipeline students needed to complete their studies at the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.
- Financial support was needed for re-capitalisation and reimbursement of expenditures.

The main reason for these requests was that all role players supported the decision to centralise the incorporated university services on one campus in the Vaal Triangle. That would make it necessary to accommodate pipeline students and to extend the facilities on the Vaal Triangle Campus for offices and lecture halls.

The Government Gazette dated 21 June 2002 stated that the Vaal Triangle Technikon would be retained as a separate institution and that it would take ownership of the infrastructure and facilities of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University. By agreement, the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus would be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle Campus of the new university to be established through the proposed merger of PU for CHE and the UNW.

This announcement gave rise to two difficulties. One was that the VUT wanted to occupy the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University from 1 January 2004. The other was that the Vaal Triangle Campus was already full to capacity, due to unprecedented growth in student numbers during the previous three years. To accommodate the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University, new infrastructure was needed on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

One of the implications of the incorporation was that the VUT would receive a legacy consisting of facilities and infrastructures to the value of R42,000,000.00, without any responsibility towards the students and staff of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.

5.13. An expedient transfer of staff and students

A smooth transfer of students and staff of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University to the Vaal Triangle Campus was in everyone's interests. The less disruption there was to the academic progress of the students, the better.

The Vaal Triangle Campus was fully committed to the success of the incorporation. At the same time, it realised that the incorporation posed serious implications for its financial viability.

After more than 10 years of relentless, dedicated work, the Vaal Triangle Campus was heading towards breaking even in terms of the budget for 2004.

That included the full repayment of a loan of R13,500,000.00 for new student residences. Bear in mind that 90% of the residence students on the campus came from the black community as subsidised students.

Incorporating the Sebokeng Campus students without enhancing the infrastructure of the Vaal Triangle Campus would put the campus in financial jeopardy. The provision of new buildings would escalate the total estimated cost of that endeavour to an amount of R90,192,419.00. The campus would seek approval for a long-term loan to the amount of R33,402,371.00, but this left a shortfall of R56,790,048.00 to replace the buildings on the Vista Campus.

5.14. Overview of the total incorporation cost payable by the Department of Education

Operational budget

A shortfall for 2004 was forecast as a result of the difference between the subsidy income of students and expenditure on staff.	R3,525,053.00
Maintenance costs for the partial retention of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University for the following three to four years	R1,500,000.00
Short-term insurance costs for the Sebokeng Campus	R50,000.00
Transport costs for the new students from Zone 10 in Sebokeng to the Vaal Triangle Campus	R517,000.00
Costs for the expansion of IT systems to accommodate the Sebokeng Campus	R2,457,300.00
Total operational cost	R8,049,353.00

Capital budget requirements

Capital funds would be needed to provide certain facilities to accommodate the staff from the Sebokeng Campus and new students:	
An academic building with computer laboratories, technology laboratories and library facilities	R27,112,104.00
An academic building with lecture halls, seminar rooms and offices, as well as specific facilities for teacher training	R17,102,859.00
Total capital budget	R44,214,963.00
Total incorporation cost payable by the Department of Education	R52,264,316.00

Long-term development

Over and above the capital budget needed for facilities for Sebokeng Campus staff and students, the Vaal Triangle Campus would need to undertake long-term developmental work to position itself for the future. For this, the campus would seek Council approval for a long-term loan.

This long-term development work would entail:

Constructing an administration building to support the newly incorporated campus's support staff	R8,390,034.00
Building an additional student residence to accommodate students	R18,400,000.00
The remodelling and refurbishment of one academic building	R4,912,337.00
Facilities to accommodate non-academic student activities	R1,700,000.00
Total long-term loan	R33,402,371.00

Providing for the shortfall in operational cost

A shortfall of R4,744,850.00 in operational cost was forecast for 2005 and R8,259,830.00 for 2006.⁸⁴ To accommodate the shortfalls, the Vaal Triangle Campus undertook to initiate the following action steps in accordance with the National Plan:

- increase access to the campus and increase student numbers by running successful student recruitment campaigns and offering foundation courses for students without university exemption
- promote equity of access that reflects the demographic composition of the South African society.⁸⁵

5.15. The final incorporation framework and action plan developed by the Incorporation Task Team

The incorporation vision and mission for the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus of North-West University⁸⁶

The implication of the agreement between the Councils of the PU for CHE and UNW was that the Vaal Triangle Campus would no longer be a satellite campus; in the new institution, it would enjoy the same status as other campuses.⁸⁷ As such, the campus would position itself to play a strategic role in regional development.⁸⁸ Staff and students of the Vaal Triangle Campus determined the vision and mission of the campus at a later stage, after the official merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW in 2004.⁸⁹

Access and equity⁹⁰

Since the infrastructure and facilities of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University were being transferred to the Vaal Triangle Technikon, there was an urgent need to extend the following facilities at the Vaal Triangle Campus to accommodate staff and students from Sebokeng:⁹¹

- An administration building to support the newly incorporated campus's support staff.
- An academic building to accommodate more computer laboratories, technology laboratories and library facilities. This building would support the vision of the Minister and the Mathematics, Science and Technology strategy of the Gauteng Department of Education for a society that is numerate and mathematically, scientifically and technologically literate.
- An academic building to accommodate more lecture halls, seminar rooms and offices, as well as specific facilities for teacher training. The reason for this request was that the Vaal Triangle Campus would be the only teacher training institution in the whole region.
- A new residence to accommodate an additional 200 students, given that existing residences on the campus could only accommodate 400 students.
- The remodelling and refurbishment of one of the existing academic buildings as a student centre.

Transport of students from Sebokeng Township to the Vaal Triangle Campus⁹²

There was an urgent need for a bus to transport students from the taxi terminal in Zone 10 Sebokeng because most students did not have their own transport. The cost of the bus was estimated at R517 000:

- Capital cost: R320,000.00
- Running cost: R197,000.00

The recommendation was that the new management of North-West University should address the transportation issue of students from previously disadvantaged communities.⁹³

Maintenance of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University⁹⁴

A technical survey conducted by the Director of Technical Services of the PU for CHE indicated that the cost of maintaining the buildings of the Sebokeng Campus would amount to R1,3 million.

The new management of North-West University and the Vaal Triangle Technikon, as the new owner of the Sebokeng Campus, would have to address this matter because Vista students would still utilise some facilities.⁹⁵

Student numbers and admission requirements for new students⁹⁶

The admission requirements for all new students wanting to register at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the new North-West University would be matriculation exemption as approved by the Matriculation Board and the specific M-score indicated for each field of study.

Admission of candidates with conditional exemption would be subject to admission tests so that those who had potential to succeed in the main programmes would not be automatically directed to foundation programmes, in order to enhance access for students to study.⁹⁷

The challenge of pipeline students⁹⁸ was resolved through the proposal that the Vista students would become pipeline students in 2004 and would continue their studies at the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.⁹⁹

Similarly, the completion of studies¹⁰⁰ by the pipeline students was resolved as follows: Pipeline students had to be able to complete their current studies at the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University premises due to the shortage of facilities at the Vaal Triangle Campus.¹⁰¹

The fee structure for Vista students, with an inflation adjustment, would be applicable only to the Vista pipeline students.¹⁰²

On the issue of equity of outcomes, the Vaal Triangle Campus of NWU would develop academic development strategies to address high attrition and failure rates, especially among previously disadvantaged students.¹⁰³

A start was made in developing the basic infrastructure needed to make the campus accessible to disabled students and visitors.¹⁰⁴

Language policy¹⁰⁵

The functional language plan that had been in place at the Vaal Triangle Campus before 2004 was revised and adopted for the newly incorporated campus. This language plan was in accordance with the language policy and implementation strategy of the North-West University and the Language Policy for Higher Education.

The existing language practice of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University would apply for as long as the Sebokeng Campus continued to facilitate pipeline students.¹⁰⁶

Quality and efficiency¹⁰⁷

The new institution would strive to utilise limited resources effectively and efficiently by practising good governance and management, putting the physical infrastructure, facilities and human resources to good use and improving administrative and financial efficiency. It would also enhance administrative and management capacity by consolidating personnel, especially at middle management level, and rationalising programmes where there was duplication and overlap.

Stakeholders of the Vaal Triangle Campus would determine the exact nature of those strategies in 2004.¹⁰⁸

Meeting the needs of the country and society¹⁰⁹

The needs of South Africa in general and the social, economic and cultural needs of the Vaal Triangle community in particular, were paramount in the process for determining the incorporation plan. The envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus would be mindful of this endeavour at all times and strive to add value by:

- contributing to the development of a critical mass of (especially black) intellectuals and researchers
- enhancing the productivity of the education system through efficiently meeting the teaching, skills development and research needs of the country
- being responsive to and contributing towards the human resource and knowledge needs of the country
- equipping all graduates with the skills and competencies necessary to function in a modern society, in particular computer literacy, information management, communication and analytical skills
- being actively involved in the training of all, socially, economically and culturally, with the emphasis on primary and secondary school needs in alignment with educational programmes.¹¹⁰

Academic quality¹¹¹

Academic quality would continue to be a priority, and the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus would strive to uphold rigorous standards of academic quality, ensure better student-staff ratios and promote diversity of cultures and socio-economic backgrounds to enrich the educational experience of both staff and students.¹¹²

Balance in enrolments ¹¹³

Given the limited programmes offered at the pre-incorporation Vaal Triangle Campus, the new institution would contribute to the best of its ability towards the goal of shifting the balance from the humanities to business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology. If it were possible to increase the repertoire of programmes offered, an enrolment balance might have been more feasible. ¹¹⁴

Research ¹¹⁵

To stimulate research at the restructured Vaal Triangle Campus, the plan was to identify researchers at the Vista Sebokeng Campus and align their work within the relevant focus areas. They would then become part of a larger group of researchers in an existing system with well-established quality and administrative processes. ¹¹⁶

PQM ¹¹⁷

New modules and programmes needed to be established for the Vaal Triangle Campus of NWU. Planning for new programmes that would be offered to meet the needs of the Vaal Triangle region and the country would take place in 2004.

A new development that had to be prioritised was the creation of foundation programmes. These would help to broaden access and entry to the university, and to create a support base for those students who lacked sufficient preparation for tertiary studies. This would be in line with proposals in the National Plan for Higher Education for operational matters. ¹¹⁸

Institutional identity and culture

Staff and students of the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus of NWU would determine the institutional identity in alignment with the Institutional Forum. ¹¹⁹

Transformation ¹²⁰

The National Plan identified five policy goals and strategic objectives for the transformation and reconstruction of the higher education system, and these would serve as a conceptual framework for the ongoing transformation process at the Vaal Triangle Campus of NWU. (Refer to paragraph 2.5.3.6 for more details.)

The staff and students of the campus would therefore revise the transformation plan to emphasise the five policy goals and strategic objectives of the National Plan for Higher Education. The transformation plan would be finalised in 2004. ¹²¹

Institutional sustainability and viability ¹²²

The envisaged campus management and organisational structures were proposed in the incorporation report. These included a draft management structure for the Vaal Triangle Campus during the transition period, ¹²³ draft organisational structures for academic staff ¹²⁴ and

support services, ¹²⁵ and a draft management structure for the North-West University Sebokeng Campus during the interim period. ¹²⁶

Functions and structures of Student Affairs

The relevant staff and student bodies of the incorporated Vaal Triangle Campus would determine the best practices for the structure and functions of Student Affairs during 2004. ¹²⁷ The marketing of prospective students was a combined effort between marketing teams of the two incorporating campuses.

Moveable assets

The Minister outlined the plans for the transfer of the infrastructure and facilities of the Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Technikon in his report of June 2002. However, moveable Vista assets would be transferred to the Vaal Triangle Campus to ensure continuity of the learning process of the Vista students and administrative work of the staff. These moveable assets included all computer hardware and software, furniture in offices and lecture rooms and all library assets. ¹²⁸

Information technology ¹²⁹

An extensive analysis was conducted to identify the needs of the IT division at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the new university. The cost was estimated at R2,457,300.00. ¹³⁰

Financial matters ¹³¹

The incorporation budget consisted of the following budget items: ¹³²

Item	Amount
Facilities	R75,917,334.00 ¹³³
A bus to transport students from Sebokeng	R320,000.00
▪ Capital cost	R197,000.00 ¹³⁴
▪ Running cost	
IT cost	R2,457,300.00 ¹³⁵
Short-term insurance	R50,000.00 ¹³⁶
Maintenance of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University	R1,300,000.00 ¹³⁷
Shortfall in the Vista budget for 2004	R3,525,053.00 ¹³⁸
TOTAL	R83,766,687.00

A financial forecast was conducted to ensure the financial viability of the Vaal Triangle Campus. The forecast included the cost and income of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University. The financial statements showed that the Vaal Triangle Campus would not be able to accommodate the financial burden of the incorporation process. The management of the North-West University would have to address that matter to ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the campus. ¹³⁹

5.16. Comments on the incorporation endeavour

5.16.1 Comments of the Campus Institutional Forum of Vista Sebokeng Campus on the proposed Incorporation Plan ¹⁴⁰

The Campus Institutional Forum of Vista Sebokeng issued the following statement on the proposed incorporation.

Introduction

“The transformation of higher education in our country has played a major role and continues to improve the lives of the people in this country. The challenge of transformation is not really financial or organisational but cultural. Universities would need to transform a rigid set of habits, thoughts and arrangements currently incapable of responding to change either rapidly or radically enough. True participation by key players (stakeholders) in the design and implementation of the transformation process is essential. In the case of a university, it is vital to give special attention to all structural formations on campus. The use of an external group provides credibility to the transformation process. It is not only helpful but also sometimes essential when putting controversial issues on the table.

“Many observers focus on immediate challenges such as the rapidly growing costs of quality education and research during a period of limited resources, the erosion of public trust and confidence in higher education, or the deterioration in the relationship between research universities and the national government. However, our institutions would be affected more profoundly by powerful societal changes driving transformation: the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of our people; the growing interdependence of nations; and the degree to which knowledge itself has become the key driving force in determining economic prosperity, national security, and social well-being.

“One frequently thinks of the primary missions of the university in terms of teaching, research and service. However, these roles could also be fundamental as simply the 21st century manifestations of the more fundamental roles of creating, preserving, integrating, transmitting, and applying knowledge. In addition, while it is clear that these fundamental university roles have not changed over time, the way in which these missions have been realised has changed dramatically.

“We therefore welcome the invitation as the Campus Institutional Forum and as a stakeholder representative to make our input on the executive summary (of the incorporation report).

“While we considered the executive summary of the incorporation report as a positive document towards the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University into North-West University, we are also faced with the

following major transformation challenges.

Name

“The name of the envisaged campus in the Vaal of North-West University must be in line with what the region is called As opposed to Vaal Triangle Campus, we propose the Emfuleni Campus. This however would need more transformation debates.

Conditions of service

“The summary seems to be silent or does not propose anything on the conditions under which the current Vista staff was employed It was not possible to amend such conditions without full participation of unions, and after a thorough study of the transition stage, which one may suggest only five years after the incorporation.

Satellite campus

“The summary refers to satellite campuses; while at the same it suggests that such satellite campuses would enjoy autonomy, this needs to be clarified if we are in a state of federal affairs or not. The issue of one university Council is also questioned

Transport for students

“It was suggested in the summary that there would be one means of transport for students from Sebokeng Zone 10 to the campus. The forum was not opposed to this but rather questions the conclusion that was arrived at, to single out Sebokeng as the pick-up point while Sedibeng is such a big region with different destinations. We therefore propose that there must be different pick-up point throughout the region at different pick-up times. A further proposal was that there must be a transport subsidy or an allowance for staff members.

Communication

“This includes the telephone communication for staff members who would need to communicate during working hours, the IT system to register students and the email usage. This cannot be our problem as there was a financial outcry; we say that the Council of the North-West University must find a way of getting financial assistance to this problem maybe from the Ministry.

Language Policy

“The issue of the language policy was suggested to be left to discussions by stakeholders, even after the facilitation of the pipeline students of the Sebokeng Campus.

Consistency of the plan

“It was felt that the plan was not consistent when dealing with certain institutions; this needs to be further discussed

Conclusion

“Experience demonstrates that organisational transformation is not only possible but also even predictable to a

degree. The revolutionary process starts with an analysis of the external environment and the recognition that radical change is the organisation's best response to the challenges it faces. The early stages are sometimes turbulent marked by conflict, denial and resistance but gradually leaders and members of the organisation begin to develop a shared vision of what their institution should become and turn their attention to the transformation process. In the final stages, grassroots incentives and disincentives are put into place, creating internal market forces that drive institutional change. Methods are also developed that measure the success of the transformation process. Ideally, the process never ends.

"The necessary transformation should go far beyond simply restructuring finances to face the brave new world of limited resources. Rather, they should encompass every aspect of our institution, including:

- *human resources*
- *the mission of the university*
- *financial restructuring*
- *organisation and governance*
- *general characteristics of the university*
- *intellectual transformation*
- *relations with external constituencies*
- *cultural change*

"Universities, like most large, complex and hierarchical organisations, tend to become bureaucratic, conservative and resistant to change. Over time, we have become encrusted with policies, procedures, committees and organisational layers that tend to discourage risk-taking and creativity. We must take decisive action to streamline processes, procedures and organisational structures to enable our institutions to better adapt to a rapidly changing world." ¹⁴¹

5.16.2 Report on a climate assessment of the former incorporated Vista staff into the VTC, May – June 2009 ¹⁴²

The following report provides the perception of staff members from grassroots level five years after the incorporation and shows the level of integration on campus.

Number of participants

Thirty-one persons who had been working at Vista at the time of the acquisition were still employed by North-West University when the report was drafted. Only two staff members (6%) did not participate. A total of 29 (94%) participated

Description of participants

Of the 29 participants, 10 (35%) held academic positions and 19 (65%) held non-academic positions.

Years of service at Vista at the time of the acquisition:

Less than two years:	0
Three to five years:	5 (17%)
Six to 10 years:	10 (35%)
More than 11 years:	14 (48%)

Current ages of participants:

35 or younger:	1 (3%)
36 – 45:	13 (45%)
46 – 55:	10 (35%)
56+:	5 (17%)

Most of the former Vista staff had long service: 83% had more than five years of service and 80% are in the 36 to 55 year age group. That already gave an indication that an incorporation was likely to be difficult. One could expect that most of the staff members were settled in their jobs at the time of the incorporation and still had many years of work ahead of them.

Findings

General impression

The following table summarises findings, giving an overview of the magnitude of the adjustment that former Vista staff had made.

	Academics	Non-academics	Total
Well-integrated	4	7	11 (38%)
Neutral	4	9	13 (45%)
Unhappy	2	3	5 (17%)

More than 80% of the group were at least fairly well settled in, while some were very happy. Less than 20% described themselves as unhappy.

Verbatim comments

The following comments of participants give an idea of the typical main issues and of the differences in perception:

- “Wonde van die ‘forced removal’ het geheel. Ek het huis toe gekom.” (“Wounds from the ‘forced removal’ have healed I have come home.”)
- “If meetings are in Afrikaans, we are marginalised in terms of partaking.”
- “NWU is doing well in terms of management, not in terms of transformation.”
- “We need a strong Black union to drive the transformation process.”
- “I am disgruntled. The mindset of people should change. Unions are not the answer.”
- “People who speak their minds are not welcome. They are looking for conformists.”
- “Mense vergeet die moraal by Vista was teen die einde baie laag; dit was die laaste jare verkeerd bestuur.” (People forget that morale at Vista was very low at the end; there was poor management in the last few years.)
- “We need a platform to interact, share views.”
- “Baie eks-Vista mense sit en niks doen. Dit skep ’n kanker.” (“Many former Vista people sit and do nothing. It creates a cancer.”)
- “Our supervisor talks to us regularly, treats us with respect.”
- “Prof Piet het die samesmelting reg hanteer: onrassisties en oop.” (“Prof Piet handled the incorporation well: non-racist and open.”)

- “Ek wil meer navorsing doen. Die dubbele fokus pas my.” (“I want to do more research. The dual focus suits me.”)
- “Effort in teaching is not acknowledged”.
- “Ek is aan die begin deurgekyk, daarna aanvaar. Die PUK het hard probeer. Die funksies wat Bertie gereël het, was manmoedige pogings om die samesmelting glad te laat verloop.” (“I was overlooked at the beginning, then accepted The PUK tried hard. The functions that Bertie organised were manful attempts to make the incorporation run smoothly.”)
- “I feel honoured to be a part of this institution.”

These comments provide a general idea about the apparent situation of former Vista staff. Full transcripts of interviews were made, but the identity of participants was not divulged. Despite the wide variety of feelings and perceptions, it was clear that some general trends emerged over time.

Conclusions

The following main issues emerged; they were raised by many participants and seen as potentially causing problems. Of course these are people’s perceptions and thus not necessarily “real”. However, people tend to act on their perceptions, on what is real to them.

Some of the typical issues often coming up in surveys of this nature, such as poor communication, were not raised as serious issues.

■ Beginning was difficult

Almost without exception, the initial phase was very difficult. Many people did not have clearly defined jobs and some did not have offices. These problems were resolved. All had offices shortly after the incorporation and most had their tasks specified. Many academics in particular felt in the early stages that their expertise was not acknowledged. A few still feel that way.

Academics initially found the students very different. They had to adjust to the expectations of white students and most reported that students at NWU were much more focused on academic work than those at Vista were.

- **Most at least settled in, many very happy**

The vast majority of former Vista staff members are now settled in. Very few, about 17%, would go back to Vista if that were an option. Many staff members, 38%, reported that they were very happy at the NWU and believed that they had better opportunities and lives at the NWU.

Almost all described their work at the NWU as somewhat different as at Vista. Most had a larger variety of tasks at Vista, while at NWU their work was more specialised with larger volumes. Non-academic staff in particular expressed a need for more job-related training.

- **No looming crisis, some issues**

Although there were clearly some issues and some unhappiness among staff, it was not a looming crisis. Most staff members were definitely not desperately unhappy, because the vast majority have at least accepted the change.

- **Direct manager/supervisor: huge role**

Direct managers/supervisors played a huge role in how people settled in. In a few cases, some people reporting to the same manager were settled in and some not, thus indicating that the direct manager was not the only factor. Even some of those saying they were unhappy indicated that “bigger” issues made them unhappy, not their direct working environment.

- **Language not a serious problem**

Language was not a serious emotional issue for any of the participants. All understood and supported the dual language policy of NWU. Many who did not fully master Afrikaans appreciated the practical arrangements made to accommodate them, for instance getting other lecturers for Afrikaans classes. Many said that their Afrikaans had improved and they saw that as a personal advantage. Some felt that they could not fully participate at meetings when it was conducted in Afrikaans. Even if they generally understood what was said, they felt that they might miss some subtle nuances and then did not have the confidence to fully participate.

- **Some suspiciousness**

Most experienced a trusting relationship with their new employer and most presumed a fair amount of goodwill. Suspiciousness reported by some referred mostly to appointments and promotions, particularly persons who had applied unsuccessfully for other positions at the NWU. In some cases, they thought less experienced, less qualified persons were getting positions they had

applied for, and they did not understand the reasons for the appointments.

Some individuals also reported suspicion about reporting structures, access to equipment and services (such as photocopy machines and printing) and task allocation (such as being assigned to teach only junior students). These were isolated cases and those who reported that said they were not sure whether or not it was because they were former Vista staff.

- **Some individuals not happy**

However, a small number, five people (17%), indicated that they were not happy. The main reasons for the unhappiness were social integration (mentioned by two people) (not feeling part of NWU and no strong social ties to other staff); not feeling appreciated (two people); lack of meaningful work (three); lack of transformation (two) and smaller irritations (one) (such as access to equipment and services). Some cited more than one reason.

- **No strong racial divide, although some**

Those unhappy staff members were black and white people, although more black people expressed unhappiness than whites. In addition, more white people than black people felt well integrated

A number felt that the staff, particularly senior staff, should reflect the racial composition of the campus. They see progress and feel strongly that transformation does not mean firing competent whites, but that the process was moving too slowly at that stage.

Though many missed the “*family feeling*” of Vista, they accepted it because of being part of a bigger university. In general, relations between race groups were seen as good, both between members of staff and staff and students.

- **General issues**

The following were then the main general issues that emerged:

- **Transparency in appointments and promotions**

Some unhappiness about appointments and promotions was raised, particularly among some who applied for other positions and did not understand why they were not successful.

- **Transformation (and role of merger/incorporation)**

Some saw the purpose of the incorporation as to further transform at NWU. They saw the lack of a “*black-oriented*” trade union as a problem as they saw such a union as the vehicle to push transformation forward. The dilemma they saw

was that the low numbers of black staff inhibit the formation of such a union and as long as such a union did not exist, the situation was perpetuated

- **Concerns/unhappiness about benefits and new employment contracts**

A few raised individual concerns about their benefits, mostly around the medical aid, after the merger.

- **Mixed views about Prof NP Maake, former Vista Campus Principal, and other staff members leaving**

Some held the view that Prof Maake and others left because they were badly treated; some held the opposite view, stating that they left for their own reasons and that the NWU went out of their way to accommodate them.

- **Interaction with Senior Management**

Many, academic staff in particular, expressed the desire to have more interaction, both formally and informally, with Senior Management to exchange ideas and discuss issues.

- **Reaction to presumed higher salaries**

Some said that they still suffered due to harsh remarks by colleagues and managers/supervisors regarding the presumed higher salaries that former Vista staff earned. One person described it as an “*open secret*”; everyone seemed to have insight into the salaries of former Vista staff, despite the fact that it were supposed to be confidential.

- **Gap between intent of senior and operational management**

Most said that they supported and understood the intent of Senior Management, but that often those intentions were not being implemented as envisaged by Senior Management.

- **Non-academic issues**

The following issues pertained particularly to non-academic staff.

- **Lack of job-related training**

Many said that they had received more job-related training at Vista. Their jobs at NWU were more specialised and they strongly felt the need for job-specific training. Some also mentioned literacy training and further studies.

- **Lack of promotion opportunities**

Most felt that they were appointed to jobs with no hope of promotion.

- **A “black” trade union**

Academic staff did not express the need for a union, but many non-academic staff and in this instance black persons, did express the need for a “*black*” trade union (they were aware of the implication of freedom of association, which meant that a union was non-racial, but meant a more black-oriented union; the current Staff Association was seen as more white-oriented). They needed a union to look after their interests and to push transformation forward.

- **Academic issues**

Dual strategic intent translated into single strategic intent

Academics felt that at Vista, the emphasis was on good quality teaching. At NWU, a dual focus, research and teaching, was stated but all agreed that the real emphasis was on research. Good teaching did not receive the same recognition. That emphasis suited some and not others.

Recommendations

- **No drastic actions**

As there was no looming crisis, most former Vista staff were fairly well settled in, and given the fact that it was five years after the incorporation, no drastic actions were recommended

- **Basic personal development plans for non-academic staff**

Managers/supervisors were encouraged to compile a basic personal development plan for every non-academic staff member. That would entail a regular (annual) discussion with every person to discuss training which would assist the person to do his/her job better.

- **Clarify agreements on conditions of service**

Conditions of service after the incorporation were negotiated or consulted with represented bodies at the time. It appeared that the problem was mainly one of a lack of information on what had been agreed. The solution was to communicate the agreement to those interested and to clarify the procedure to raise individual problems.

- **“Black” trade union dilemma**

Mainly non-academic staff expressed the need for a black-oriented trade union. The nature of the relationship between any management and a union is such that management could not really organise or technically even encourage a trade union; apart from legal and agreement problems, such actions would make a trade union suspect to members. It remains the responsibility of employees to organise and affiliate themselves as they choose.

- **Greater transparency on appointments and promotions in terms of criteria and process**

From management's point of view, the process was already fair, open and transparent. It came up too strongly during interviews to ignore, however. Even more openness on the selection process and criteria was called for. Procedures should be adhered to and unsuccessful internal candidates should receive clear feedback and perhaps some guidelines to prepare themselves for future positions.

- **Scientific management by walking around (MBWA) by senior managers**

Many staff members expressed the need to have more informal contact with Senior Management. A planned, structured and well-prepared management by walking around schedule was proposed for Senior Management. An annual visit to every department or school was suggested

- **Structured occasional contact with senior managers**

Apart from informal contact, many, particularly academic staff, expressed the need to exchange ideas on a more

formal platform. Whereas management could not organise a trade union, nothing stopped them from organising a discussion forum.

- **Department managers to manage**

The solution was to deal with issues at a departmental level. Managers needed to take note of, for instance, the fact that Afrikaans could inhibit participation of English-speaking staff during meetings even if they had a basic understanding. They should be sensitive and ensure other staff members refrained from hurtful comments about presumed salary differences. It was proposed that each manager should receive brief feedback on specific issues in their departments.¹⁴³

5.17. Conclusion on the completed incorporation process

The majority of staff and students of the Vaal Triangle Campus were relatively happy and satisfied to be associated with the Vaal Triangle Campus of North-West University. Thanks to a broad moderate movement and propensity, the campus could blossom year after year from 2004.¹⁴⁴



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CHAPTER 6

Laying the building blocks of the new university

Strong foundations are the cornerstone of any sustainable venture. In the first four years of the NWU's life, meticulous attention to detail saw this unitary, multi-campus university taking concrete shape.

6. The NWU's foundation phase, 2004 - 2007

6.1. The merger and incorporation implementation phase of NWU

6.1.1 Joint Management Committee prepares for a smooth transition

The two merging universities agreed in September 2003 to form a Joint Management Committee to start implementing the agreements reached by the two Councils and to assist the Interim Council Elect in preparing for a smooth transition.

Following student protests and complaints from the Staff Association on the Mafikeng Campus, the UNW in November 2003 provided details from a report on consultations about the merger with the PU for CHE.

Also in November, the Vaal Triangle Campus reported to the PU for CHE management on boundary conditions for the incorporation of Vista University's Sebokeng Campus.

The Joint Management Committee consisted of the two former universities' Senior Management teams, co-chaired by the two former Vice-Chancellors. They were appointed by the Interim Council Elect on 5 December 2003, their role being to serve as the Interim Management of the new university.

An era came to an end on 27 November 2003 when the PU for CHE Council adopted an epilogue, declaring the ending of the existence of the university. (Refer to paragraph 3.2 for more details.)

On 6 January 2004, the first Interim Management meeting took place in Potchefstroom.

6.1.2 The official founding of North-West University (NWU): constituting the Council ¹

Following the agreements reached by the two Councils, a letter was written on 21 July 2003 to the Minister of Education informing him that the new university would be named the North-West University and would have four campuses. The Minister was also informed about the address of the NWU, the preferred merger date of 1 January 2004, and the composition of the Interim Council.

It had already been agreed with Government that, although the formation of the Interim Council of the new university was due on 1 January 2004, several preparatory meetings of an "Interim Council Elect" could meet late in 2003. Up to 10 members of the existing Councils could constitute the Interim Council Elect and the two current Chairpersons of Council could co-chair it. From 1 January 2004 until the establishment of a permanent Council, an Interim Council of nine members was established

In addition to other statutory functions, the Interim Council Elect would:

- appoint the Interim Management, drawn from the members of the existing managements, whose term would start on 1 January 2004
- recommend the draft Statute to the new Council
- formalise matters as required by the Higher Education Act, the Standard Institutional Statute and agreements reached in 2003
- schedule the constituting meeting of the new Council, to be held on 16 January 2004
- determine the agenda for the first meeting of Council.

To ensure a smooth transition during 2004, it would be crucial to establish a stable environment for the institution to continue with its core business of teaching and learning, research and the implementation of expertise (including community engagement). This meant the sooner the new university's Council, Senate and Senior Management were in place, the better.

6.1.3 A smooth transition of governance and management ²

The Interim Management met for the first time on 6 January 2004 to constitute the Interim Management and to manage the implementation of the items resolved by the Interim Council Elect on 5 December 2003 to ensure the legality of the founding processes.³

Having met and made key decisions in 2003,⁴ the Interim Council held its first (and last) formal meeting on 9 January 2004. At this meeting, it approved various operational matters, the name North-West University (with hyphen) and the new logo.⁵

While these arrangements were unfolding, there was a constant flow of newsletters to keep the university's staff informed. On 13 January 2004, Dr Eloff sent a letter to all colleagues to communicate the founding arrangements of the new university.⁶ Next, an extraordinary meeting of the Senate was held on 21 January to determine Senate's role.⁷ Immediately afterwards, an Interim Management *Bosberaad* was held from 21 to 23 January 2004 to operationalise the proposed institutional operating plan for approval by the Interim Council.⁸ The second meeting of the Interim Council was held on 31 January 2004 to pave the way for the new, permanent Council.⁹

Ms Nasima Badsha, Deputy Director-General: Higher Education, requested Dr Eloff on 10 February 2004 to submit a report on the progress of the merger and incorporation process for the NWU.¹⁰ A report was duly compiled to explain the whole planning process.¹¹ On 13 February, a meeting with the Minister took place on the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus and the progress made with the merger and incorporation.¹²

The first meeting of the newly appointed Council was convened on 12 February 2004 and the 18 new Council members were welcomed by the Interim Council Elect.¹³ The members elected Mr Litha Nyhonyha, CEO of NBC Holdings, as chairperson,¹⁴ and Mrs Lydia Sebege, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Works and Roads in the North West Province, as deputy chairperson.¹⁵ Council noted that in terms of the Higher Education Act, its responsibilities were to:¹⁶

- govern the institution, subject to the Act and the institutional Statute, which includes drawing up strategic plans, preparing budgets, drafting policies, and determining statutes and rules, in line with the King Report II on Corporate Governance
- determine the language policy of the university, subject to the Minister's language policy and with the concurrence of the Senate
- provide for a suitable structure to advise on the policy for student support services, after consultation with the Student Representative Council.¹⁷

At this historic first meeting of the Council of the NWU, the following decisions of the Interim Council Elect were ratified:

- The NWU would be a unitary multi-campus university with an effective and decentralised, non-federal management system. In practice, this proposal meant that the business units of the university would be the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle Campuses, and that an Institutional Office would be established.

- The NWU would have one Institutional Senate (with Campus Senate Committees), one Institutional Forum and one Institutional Student Representative Council (with Campus SRCs).
- The NWU would have a single set of values, policies, systems and standards, as well as one vision and mission, coordinated from the Institutional Office.
- The language policy of the NWU, in line with Government policy, would be multilingual and functional in character, and would promote access, integration and a sense of belonging, while redressing the language imbalances of the past.
- The NWU would develop its own corporate brand and a unique institutional culture and ethos. This would be based on the unitary nature and value system of the university, while leaving room for differentiation in campus cultures and ethos.
- The values contained in the Constitution were the root of the value system and practices of the NWU:
 - to promote unity in diversity at all levels of the university
 - to promote tolerance and respect for all perspectives and belief systems within the institution
 - to ensure a suitable environment for teaching and learning, research and implementation of expertise (including community engagement).¹⁸

The staff newsletter, *Fokus/Focus/Tsepa* of February 2004, reflected on these developments and called it history in the making.¹⁹ In another letter to staff, Dr Eloff, as Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, provided more detail about the progress of establishing the new university.²⁰

During the Council meeting of 12 March 2004, Council identified six priority areas, namely transformation, excellence (including effective governance), language, a common understanding of unity and diversity, access and the quality-driven growth of the university.²¹

On 16 March 2004, Dr Eloff sent a letter to staff members in three languages to inform them about the latest developments.²² During the Interim Management meeting on 24 March, finer details of the institutional policy and strategy were discussed and a proposal of Ms Letsoalo on celebrating a decade of democracy was accepted.²³

On 30 March 2004, all staff members were informed that consultants of Human Capital Corporation, a division of Deloitte and Touche, had done a remuneration analysis between the PU for CHE, UNW and Vista. The results indicated that some job grades, especially in the academic ranks, were below the market norms, while other job grades, especially in the lower support staff grades, were higher than the market norm. There were also disparities between the average remuneration of staff members in the former institutions. Dr Eloff remarked that management was committed to eliminating these disparities.²⁴

Council appointed Dr Eloff as the first Vice-Chancellor in May 2004 and then appointed the Senior Management in September 2004. This set the scene for the establishment of the Institutional Office and the development and implementation of the NWU's governance and management structures. The process of reviewing and merging policies, processes and procedures also started, guided and coordinated by Institutional Management.

A laborious process lay ahead. On the one hand, the university had to focus on achieving merger-related objectives; on the other hand, its core business had to be maintained and improved. It was foreseen that it would take the university a good three years to make substantial progress with these tasks.

Adding to the challenge was the complexity of the university's operations as a unitary multi-campus structure with an Institutional Office and three business units, the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses. Not to be overlooked was the incorporation of the staff and students of the former Sebokeng Campus of Vista University into the Vaal Triangle Campus. What's more, the position of the Mankwe Campus of the former University of North-West had to be thoroughly investigated and analysed.

Understandably, a daunting workload awaited the Council at its first meeting. One of its first tasks would be to consider various important governance and managerial proposals on which consensus had been reached.

One proposal awaiting Council's attention was the composition of the Institutional Office that would support the Vice-Chancellor. The thinking was that the Institutional Office should be as lean as possible so that the emphasis would be on the core business units, namely the academic campuses. Accordingly, the proposal was that the Vice-Chancellor would be supported by at least one Deputy Vice-Chancellor, an Institutional Registrar who would also be the Secretary of Council, and Institutional Directors of strategic support services.

Council also needed to consider the proposal that each campus would have a Principal, a Registrar and a Man-

agement Committee, with the Principal reporting to the Vice-Chancellor.

Another crucial matter was the university's language policy. The idea was that Council, in conjunction with the Senate, should develop a language policy that would be flexible, functional and promote multilingualism. Its purpose would be to promote access, integration and a sense of belonging, and redress the language imbalances of the past.

The university's finances were a major priority. For the year 2004, each campus would carry on with its own budgeting process, with a joint Budget Committee ensuring that these were at least break-even budgets and that 2.5% of the total subsidy income and tuition fees for 2004 would be reserved for the strategic positioning.

As far as the incorporation of the students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University was concerned, the plan was that first-year students would register at the Vaal Triangle Campus in 2004; similarly, the pipeline students would move to this campus.

6.1.4 Some major stumbling blocks²⁵

Two processes had to be dealt with urgently ahead of merger day on 1 January 2004 because of their potential negative impact. These were the drafting of the new Statute and the negotiations on new conditions of service for staff.

The Higher Education Act had been amended to provide for the automatic transfer of existing staff service contracts from the "ex-employer" to the "new employer" on the date of the merger. As a result, all existing conditions of service, rights and duties of the ex-employer would remain in force and should be transferred to the new employer, as if these were conditions of service, rights and duties between the employees and the new employer.

The Joint Operations Team (JOT) had appointed a Human Resources Task Team to analyse the prevailing situation, identify best practices, differences and gaps between the two institutions, and make recommendations to ensure that the merger did not disadvantage employees. After the merger, any new changes to service conditions would be made in accordance with labour laws and the Higher Education Act as amended.

Two members of the Staff Association at UNW were full members of the Human Resources Task Team, which had no union representatives from PU for CHE.

After the task team had formulated a set of draft conditions of service for the merged institution, the Office of the Vice-Chancellor made sure that the Staff Association had the opportunity to debate them fully. Using funds from the Merger Account, the Vice-Chancellor's

office sponsored a *Bosberaad* for the Staff Association Executive to discuss the draft conditions of service and transitional arrangements, and also to discuss these with the unions at the former PU for CHE. In their letter of thanks, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Staff Association indicated that “lots of amendments were proposed” to the draft conditions of service and the transitional arrangements.

On 10 November 2003, copies of the draft conditions of service and the proposed transitional arrangements were formally sent to the Staff Association, together with an invitation to a joint meeting between both managements and all unions of the two universities on 19 November 2003.

On 11 November 2003, the Staff Association sent email messages to all members inviting input and comments. A day later, the Staff Association wrote to both the Vice-Chancellor and the Chairperson of the Interim Council and stated that the proposed meeting of 19 November 2003 had no “*legal standing*”, and that they consequently refused to attend that meeting.

On 24 November 2003, the Staff Association hosted a meeting with unions of PU for CHE to discuss the draft conditions of service. After a further series of complicated negotiations, the draft conditions of service were developed for implementation on 1 January 2004.

Meanwhile, work on the drafting of the new Statute was already in progress. As early as April 2003, Council had appointed a task team composed of Prof CFC van der Walt (Registrar, PU for CHE) and Mr LM (Shakes) Hlabatau (NWU Council member),²⁶ to do the drafting. On 25 June 2003 the Institutional Forum, Alumni Association, Senate and SRC at both institutions were informed of the Statute drafting process and invited to give inputs by 15 August 2003.

On 22 September Prof van der Walt wrote to the Vice-Chancellor of UNW to report that he had handed a copy of the draft Statute to Mr Hlabatau on 12 September and had sent a copy via email to him on 15 September.

On 25 September, the Vice-Chancellor of UNW, Dr Takalo, met Mr Hlabatau, who agreed to coordinate consultations on the draft Statute at UNW. Copies of the draft Statute were widely circulated, and feedback was received from Senate, the SRC, Institutional Forum and a number of individuals between 3 and 29 October 2003.

By 11 October, the Vice-Chancellor of UNW became aware that the UNW’s submissions on the draft Statute had not been shared with the PU for CHE. Mr Hlabatau, for reasons not known, was not contactable. Dr Takalo then requested the Dean of Law, Mr Robert Kettles, to coordinate the consolidation of the UNW submissions.

On 17 October, a draft Statute served before the Interim Council Elect and consensus was not reached. A new draft was circulated to members on 28 October for discussion on 30 October. At the meeting of 30 October, the Interim Council Elect agreed that the new draft would simultaneously be sent (informally) to Ms Sanette Boshoff at the Department of Education for initial comments, and to members of the Interim Council Elect for further discussion on 14 November.

At that meeting, the members agreed to send the draft Statute back to all stakeholders for further comment ahead of the meetings of the Councils of 27 and 28 November 2003 to approve the document.²⁷

6.2. Strategic positioning and the organisational life at NWU after the merger and incorporation on 1 January 2004

As Dr Theuns Eloff later explained to the Ministerial Task Team in October 2008, the founding of the NWU was based on the following three overall strategies.²⁸

- The first strategy, as the Councils of the former universities had agreed, was to limit uncertainty and anxiety by keeping the interim period, including the Interim Council’s term of office, as short as possible.
- Secondly, the overarching strategic objective during the first couple of years of the NWU’s life was to consolidate and increase the momentum of the merger and incorporation integration process.²⁹ The aim was to ensure that the core business did not deteriorate but improved in a sustainable manner.
- The third strategy was to set the institution on a path of sustainable transformation, including through the process of employment equity. The thinking was that this strategy would bear fruit after about 10 years (using international experience with mergers as the benchmark).³⁰

In a nutshell, the NWU’s strategy was to maintain and improve its core business while pursuing sustainable transformation. This necessitated a balance between efficiency and experience on the one hand, and equity and development on the other. A balance would also be maintained between the essential unity of the new university and the necessary diversity of its campuses, programmes and campus cultures.

To quote Dr Eloff: “*While other merged institutions started off by focusing on transformation, changing symbols and logos and moving faculties, the NWU’s approach was rather to stabilise and improve its core business -- mainly teaching and research -- and then to focus on transformation: We went this route because during mergers people become*

uncertain about their jobs and they stop being productive and, in some cases, leave, while students vote with their feet if quality deteriorates. Our strategy was to maintain and improve our core business, while pursuing sustainable transformation ... In terms of equity among campuses, we decided that the campuses did not have to be the same but we worked on upgrading facilities to offer students a quality experience: a student centre was built at the Mafikeng Campus and we are in the process of planning one for the Vaal Campus. Furthermore, our residences are being built to the same specifications.”³¹

The implementation of the merger and incorporation process essentially revolved around the following issues:

- applying the principles of unity and diversity, equity and efficiency, with a pace of “*haste and patience*”
- develop a Statute “*to promote unity in diversity by inculcating tolerance and respect for all perspectives and belief systems, thus ensuring a suitable environment for education, learning, and research and community service*”
- establish a unitary institution with decentralised business units, but one Council, one Senate, one Statute, and a single set of policies, systems and standards
- establish three campuses equal in status, diversity of programmes, campus cultures, languages, but with one overall corporate identity
- establish an institutional management, including three Campus Rectors, to oversee the institution.³²

Circumstances on the ground hindered the application of these overall strategies.

The first challenge was resistance to change and high levels of mistrust among staff members on all campuses. Resistance to change was also observed among some students. Small groups of students on both sides of the political spectrum vigorously voiced their contrasting views on what they foresaw for the character of NWU. A group of “*Concerned and Affected Students*”, staged violent protests, which led to the closure of the Mafikeng Campus.³³

- Constituencies had to be managed carefully through regular communication and two “*golden rules*” were adopted by institutional management for the merger process:
- keeping a balance between the essential unity of the new university and the necessary diversity within campus cultures and programmes

- limiting uncertainty, especially by finalising governance and management structures, without rushing issues that could develop organically, such as the acceptance of an inclusive, permanent logo and a branding strategy.³⁴

In addition to regular communication, the university implemented a process of redress and quality improvement. Nevertheless, some staff on the Mafikeng Campus made allegations about “*Potchefication*”, arguing that policies and procedures from the previous PU for CHE were forced on the Mafikeng Campus. This was countered by ensuring that all three campuses had equal input into new policies and procedures.

However, the better-resourced Potchefstroom Campus was often the only one to give input and so allegations of Potchification only disappeared later when progress was made on the Mafikeng Campus by means of budget allocations and managerial strategies.

*Another challenge was to agree on a management model for this multi-campus university, especially considering the geographical distances between campuses and the campuses’ contrasting historical backgrounds.*³⁵ The strategy for addressing this challenge was to seek and reach consensus on a management model. The result was the NWU’s unique management model, which has stood the test of time. This model consists of an institutional (head) office in Potchefstroom (headed by a Vice-Chancellor) and three equal campuses, each headed by a Campus Rector accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for everything happening on that campus.

In terms of its unitary characteristics, the university was planned with one Council, one Senate, one Vice-Chancellor and one set of values, policies and procedures. A number of functions were centralised (eg finances, human resources and information technology) at the Institutional Office and overseen by an Institutional Management team, which included the Campus Rectors.

A third set of challenges had to do with the name, seat and language of the university. A compromise was achieved through the name “North-West University” (NWU), with its seat (and the Institutional Office) in Potchefstroom but not part of the Potchefstroom campus. It was unanimously agreed that the NWU would practice “*functional multilingualism*”, with Afrikaans, English and Setswana being used. Simultaneous interpretation of Afrikaans lectures would be used to enhance access on the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, and the latter offered parallel and dual-medium lectures. The NWU was the first South African university officially to write its name in three languages.³⁶

6.3. Year-by-year account of progress and setbacks

6.4. The year 2004

On 12 January 2004 Ms Cathy Thompson reported in the *Citizen* newspaper that the two merging universities had successfully overcome various obstacles in establishing the merged NWU: *“Both expect to start the academic year with a bigger student intake and comparatively fewer serious problems than some other South African universities. Many other tertiary institutions are facing dwindling enrolment. Last year there were vociferous protests, mostly from alumni, over the perceived loss of Potchefstroom University’s identity as a Christian Afrikaner university. At the University of North West campus in Mafikeng, final-year examinations were disrupted by students unhappy at aspects of the merger. But the two universities were among the first in the country to set the merger process in motion and, under the leadership of Potchefstroom’s Dr Theuns Eloff and Dr Ngoato Takalo in Mafikeng, it has proceeded at a steady pace.”*³⁷

6.4.1 Milestones that shaped the new institution³⁸

The NWU experienced the following milestones and celebrated the following achievements to create a sense of permanency:

- The new Council and other structures such as the Institutional Senate were constituted in terms of the Standard Institutional Statute on 12 February 2004.
- The interim subcommittees of Council were established during the second meeting of Council on 12 March 2004.³⁹
- The appointment of Institutional Office bearers and Campus Managements paved the way for an inclusive and consultative visioning process.⁴⁰
- The appointment of Dr Eloff as Vice-Chancellor of the NWU on 7 May 2004 after an open process managed by Council.⁴¹ The NWU was the first of the merging institutions to announce its permanent Vice-Chancellor.⁴² From the outset, Dr Eloff made sure that staff and students of the new university were kept well informed. On 19 May, two weeks after his appointment, he sent the first of his regular communiqués to staff and students, which dealt with the daily organisational issues.⁴³
- Council resolved on 18 June 2004 by majority vote to appoint Dr Popo Molefe, Premier of the North-West Province from 1999 to 2004, as the first Chancellor of NWU.⁴⁴ Later, when he completed his term of office as Premier, the NWU honoured Dr Popo Molefe with a special award for his exceptional contribution as Premier and his contribution to nation building.⁴⁵
- During June 2004, Council approved the process for appointing the senior management team.⁴⁶
- The Institutional Management, including Campus Rectors, were appointed on 27 August 2004.⁴⁷
- Essential new policies, such as service conditions, general academic rules and the admissions policy, were approved early on.
- Council adopted the draft NWU Statute.⁴⁸
- During March 2004 the Institutional Office investigated the feasibility of a simultaneous interpreting service (involving the simultaneous translation of lectures from Afrikaans into English).⁴⁹ From 19 April 2004, students at the Potchefstroom Campus were able to receive lectures in English through this translation service.⁵⁰
- There was student unrest during April and May 2004 at the Mafikeng Campus,⁵¹ due to problems with accommodation and NSFAS funding, and a motion of no confidence in the SRC.⁵² All parties signed a memorandum of agreement to reopen the campus on 14 May. Dr Takalo, the Campus Rector, called this memorandum a breakthrough for all parties and an indication of good things to come.⁵³
- The academic staff at the Mafikeng Campus went on strike during May and called for the immediate suspension of the institution’s management. They accused management of a lack of transparency and consultation, intimidation and preferential treatment, and handed a memorandum to the Provincial Education Department.⁵⁴
- The Mafikeng Campus was closed because of this unrest,⁵⁵ and students were asked to vacate their residences.⁵⁶ The staff members returned to work on 11 May 2004,⁵⁷ but according to the Staff Association, the series of meetings held with management to bring normality to the campus was a waste of time.⁵⁸ The Mafikeng Campus reopened on 14 May to resume lectures.⁵⁹

- Almost 5 000 students on the Potchefstroom Campus participated in a values-walk to demonstrate their view of the campus as a values-driven place.⁶⁰
- During the May graduation ceremonies, Mr Jacob Nxadi, a former garden worker at the Vaal Triangle Campus, received an honours degree in Public Management after completing his studies part time. He was consequently promoted to the position of Risk Manager at the Vaal Triangle Campus.⁶¹
- The external auditors issued the NWU with an unqualified audit report for 2004; the university achieved a modest surplus of R14.68 million that year.⁶²
- The NWU was ranked as the sixth biggest university in the country.⁶³
- Council members received copies of the publication,⁶⁴ *Effective Governance: a guide for council members of universities and technikons*, published by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation.⁶⁵
- During the first round of the National Innovation Competition run by the Innovation Fund of the Department of Science and Technology in 2004, the NWU was announced the Most Progressive, Technologically Innovative University in South Africa.⁶⁶ Apart from being the overall winner, an NWU team of young inventors was placed second in the student category.⁶⁷
- Dr NM Takalo, the Vice-Principal, was appointed as a voting member of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Board in 2004.⁶⁸
- The process of finding a university anthem started in June 2004 and concept compositions were played to a panel during November 2004.
- During September 2004, the NWU officially celebrated 10 years of democracy with a publication entitled *A Celebration of Democracy – North-West University*.⁶⁹ Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said during the event: “*Democracy is, at its heart, about giving each and every citizen the power to make important decisions about their lives.*”⁷⁰

The overarching strategic objective for 2004 was to finalise structures for staff and students and increase the momentum of the merger-integration process. The aim was to achieve a sense of permanency through the effective functioning of structures and the smooth continuation of the core business, and to start aligning or

establishing policies, processes and systems.⁷¹

6.4.2 Access and student support, 2004⁷²

In 2004, the campuses of the new North-West University were, by agreement, still operating under the admission requirements of the merging partners. Nevertheless, a uniform approach to the recognition of prior learning was applied on all campuses, as agreed to in a draft policy by the Joint Senate Committee in the pre-merger phase. As far as Senate’s discretionary admission was concerned, the university would migrate to a common approach for all campuses.

The two merging partners each brought worthwhile student support programmes to the table in 2004.

The Work Study Programme at the Mafikeng Campus (involving more than 300 students in 2003) gave students from disadvantaged communities an opportunity, through internal and external internships and mentoring, to develop into professional graduates able to compete with other university graduates in South Africa in the labour market and the economy. The programme prepared graduates to enter society, take up leadership roles locally, nationally and globally, and explore education and career opportunities through mentorship and entrepreneurial programmes.

At the Potchefstroom Campus, the programme in Academic Literacy had been running for four years. All new entrants (at first-year level) wrote a compulsory test to determine their level of academic and language proficiency, and those who did not perform optimally were required to take a structured remedial course. Up until 2004, the so-called ELSA test was used for this purpose, and as from 2005, the Test for Academic Literacy (TAL test) was used, following the practice at the universities of Pretoria, Free State and Stellenbosch.

The trend had been that 30-35% of first-year students took the remedial module. In 2003, there were about 950 students (853 for the Afrikaans and 97 for the English module). Students who had completed these modules were generally highly appreciative of the skills they had acquired.⁷³

In another important development for the new university’s academic framework for students, the NWU Council approved the General Admissions Policy, the timetable for 2005, the Student Disciplinary Rules and the Institutional SRC Constitution.⁷⁴

6.4.3 Senate, faculties, schools and departments of the new university, 2004

The first Senate of the NWU was formed in terms of the Higher Education Act and the Standard Institutional Statute, 2002.⁷⁶ It consisted of 243 members (181 from



▲ Senate constituted in accordance with the new NWU Statute, 31 January 2006⁷⁵

the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses and 62 from the Mafikeng and Mankwe Campuses. The Vice-Chancellor was the *ex officio* Chairperson of the Senate.

In 2004, the Senate held ordinary meetings on 9 June and 24 November, and special meetings on 21 January, 26 April and 17 August. The average attendance of Senate meetings was 59.5% (144 members).

The process of realigning academic structures across the campuses was coupled with a review of the full range of academic programmes. That process had

already started at the time of the merger through shared programmes, modules and study guides, but a lot still had to be done to comply with the merger and national programme requirements by 2006. True to the premise that structure follows strategy, and mindful of the need to maintain stability and momentum in the core business, the academic structures that had been in place on the campuses in 2003 were retained with some minor adjustments. Consequently, the university had 14 faculties in 2004, distributed over the various campuses as follows:

Campus	Faculties	Schools/departments	Centres	Research focus areas
Potchefstroom	Arts	Schools for: Philosophy Communication Studies Music Social and Governmental Studies Languages	ATKV Centre for Creative Writing Centre for Faith and Scholarships Centre for Text Technology (CTeXt)	Languages and Literature in the South African Context
	Natural Sciences	Schools for: Chemistry and Biochemistry Physics Environmental Sciences and Development Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Computer, Statistical and Mathematical Sciences	Centres for: Business Mathematics and Informatics Genomic Research Environmental Management	Business Mathematics and Informatics Environmental Sciences and Management Space Physics Separation Science and Technology
	Theology	Schools for: Biblical Studies and Bible Languages Ecclesiastical Studies		Reformed Theology and the Development of the SA Society

Campus	Faculties	Schools/departments	Centres	Research focus areas
	Education Sciences	Postgraduate School of Education Potchefstroom College of Education Schools for: Education and Training Teacher Training: Nature-orientated School Subjects Teacher Training: Human-orientated School Subjects	Centre for Creativity Training Centre for Education in Traffic Safety (CENETS) Teacher Centre	Teaching-Learning Organisations
	Economic and Management Sciences	Potchefstroom Business School Schools for: Economics, Risk Management and International Trade Entrepreneurship, Marketing and Tourism Management Human Resources Accounting Sciences		Decision-making and Management for Economic Development
	Law		Community Law Centre	Development in the South African Constitutional State
	Engineering	Schools for: Chemical and Mineral Engineering Electrical and Electronic Engineering Mechanical and Materials Engineering		Energy Systems
	Health Sciences	Schools for: Biokinetics, Recreation and Sport Sciences Pharmacy Physiology, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences School of Psycho-Social Behavioural Sciences School of Nursing	Centre for Quality Assurance of Medicines (CENQAM)	Preventative and Therapeutic Interventions Drug Research and Development Sustainable Social Development
Vaal Triangle	Faculty of the Vaal Triangle	Schools for: Economics and Management Sciences Basic Sciences Behavioural Sciences Modelling Sciences Education Sciences Languages		
Mafikeng	Agriculture, Science and Technology	Departments of: Agriculture Economics Animal Health Animal Production Biological Science Chemistry Crop Science Geography and Environmental Science Mathematical Science Physics Nursing Science		

Campus	Faculties	Schools/departments	Centres	Research focus areas
	Human and Social Studies	Departments of: Afrikaans Communications Developmental Studies English History Political Science Psychology Setswana Social work Sociology		
	Education	Departments of: Adult Education Educational Planning and Administration Foundations of Education Professional Studies and Internship Teaching and Curriculum		
	Commerce and Administration	Departments of: Accounting Economics Industrial Psychology Information Systems Management Public Administration Statistics Graduate School of Business and Government Leadership Multa Division		
	Law	Departments of: Criminal and Procedure Law Mercantile Law Public Law and Legal Philosophy Private and Customary Law Law Clinic		
	Centres and research units		Centre for Applied Radiation and Science Technology International Institute for Symmetry Analysis and Mathematical Modelling Population Training and Research Unit Programme for Theoretical Astrophysics Management Studies Arid Zone Studies in the North-West Province International Studies School Improvement and Effectiveness	
Mankwe		Departments of: Education and Professional Studies Human and Social Sciences Natural Science, Commerce and Administration		

6.4.4 Aligning the Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM), 2004

Building on the preparatory work done by a Joint Senate Committee Task Team before the merger, the university submitted a report to the Department of Education on the progress of programme consolidation and alignment in the Department's seven priority academic areas. These were Communication and Media Studies, Education, Health Sciences, Language and Literary Studies, Law, Public Administration and Social Services, and Visual and Performing Arts.

Once the Institutional Management had been appointed, the university went ahead with the planning of the processes necessary to evaluate, align and rationalise the PQM. This process gathered momentum in 2005.

6.4.5 Full accreditation for two MBA programmes, 2004

The Faculties of Economic and Management Sciences (Potchefstroom) and Commerce and Administration (Mafikeng) obtained full accreditation for their MBA programmes. This followed the HEQC's granting of conditional accreditation in both instances.

The Potchefstroom Business School's MBA programme, presented at the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses and focusing on the private sector, obtained full accreditation in 2004 after the HEQC was satisfied that the previously set conditions had been met.

The MBA at the Mafikeng Campus, focusing on the public sector, was granted full accreditation in 2005 after an HEQC site visit.

Given that the NWU was offering two fully accredited MBA programmes, the necessary steps were initiated to avoid unacceptable duplication.⁷⁷

6.4.6 Innovations in the field of teaching-learning, 2004

The development of processes for externally evaluating teaching-learning programmes was accelerated. A number of programmes were evaluated as part of the development process, as required by the HEQC. This process included making the evaluation results publicly available, adding to its transparency.

The university implemented simultaneous interpreting services to deal effectively and efficiently with multilingual and multicultural groups in inclusive teaching-learning settings. The further implementation of this initiative was guided by the eventual institutional language policy of the university.

6.4.7 The HEQC's Quality Systems Restructuring Project

The HEQC had initiated a multi-dimensional project to ensure that merged institutions dealt appropriately with quality assurance. Therefore, the HEQC visited the NWU in 2004 to ensure that quality issues were explicitly inserted into the institutional planning of the merged university.⁷⁸

6.4.8 The development of benchmarks to position the merged NWU

In November 2005, Dr Maarten Venter presented a benchmark exercise on the NWU's performance in teaching-learning and research to the Senior Management team. Using the 2002 – 2004 data, he compared the performance of 22 South African universities.⁷⁹ Dr Venter looked at six categories of information: permanent academic staff, student enrolments, student graduations, NRF-rated staff and accredited publications, as well as the universities' audited financial statements for 2002 and 2003.⁸⁰

The following rankings show the year-on-year performance of the 22 universities over three years across the six categories.

1. Teaching-learning

- The graduation rate of 2004 showed that the NWU, with a rate of 24%, was in fifth position out of the top 10 universities in this category. The leader was Rhodes (28%), followed by the University of Stellenbosch, UCT and NMMU (all at 25%).

University	Dipl.	Bachelor	Hons+ M	PhD	Ranking
Rhodes	8	6	1	1	1
US	1	9	2	2	2
UCT	2	8	4	4	3
NMMU	10	7	7	7	4
NWU	6	12	14	14	5
UP	5	11	10	10	6
UFS	7	15	8	8	7
UJ	12	10	3	3	8
Pentech	13	1	20	20	9
KZN	4	13	11	11	10

- The number of students per academic staff member in 2004 put NWU in fifth position out of the top 10 universities in this category.

University	Dipl.	Bachelor	Hons+ M	PhD	Ranking
UNISA	3	1	1	9	1
TUT	1	14	14	18	2
CUT	5	15	19	14	3
VUT	2	22	21	20	4
NWU	10	5	3	5	5
Zululand	15	2	2	8	6
UJ	8	8	5	10	7
Pentech	6	20	18	19	8
DIT	4	21	22	21	9
NMMU	9	10	9	13	10

- The number of graduates per academic staff member in 2004 put NWU in first place among the top 10 institutions.

University	Dipl.	Bachelor	Hons+ M	PhD	Ranking
NWU	4	3	2	6	1
TUT	1	2	21	17	2
NMMU	6	4	11	12	3
UNISA	10	1	5	10	4
UJ	9	7	4	7	5
Pentech	2	11	18	21	6
CUT	5	6	19	14	7
UFS	11	13	1	8	8
VUT	3	21	22	19	9
DIT	7	20	20	20	10

2. Research

- Based on the number of NRF-rated academic staff members in 2004, the NWU came in ninth out of the top 10 institutions.

University	2002	2003	2004
UCT	1	1	1
US	2	2	2
Rhodes	5	5	3
Wits	3	3	4
UFS	4	4	5
UWC	6	6	6
UP	8	8	7
KZN	7	7	8
NWU	9	10	9
NMMU	10	9	10

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This benchmark study was the first in a series of performance measurements that NWU Management commissioned to obtain clarity on the university's teaching-learning and research performance. The information was invaluable during the merger and incorporation implementation process.

6.4.9 Taking stock during September 2004

Dr Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, reflected on an eventful 2004 and informed staff members and students about the university's progress and challenges.⁸²

The milestones:

- The NWU Council was functional.
- Fundamental policy decisions had been taken.
- Negotiations on basic conditions of employment had advanced well.
- The alignment and integration of systems and procedures was progressing well.
- The NWU had received R13 million from the Department of Education to upgrade its IT capacity, along with R14 million for buildings at the Vaal Triangle Campus and R6,4 million over three years for foundation programmes at the Mafikeng Campus.

- The R48 million provision made in the financial statements of the former UNW provided capital for a large-scale maintenance plan for the Mafikeng Campus.
- Council ratified an offer made by the Council Executive in March 2004 to obtain a property in the Vaal Triangle as an investment opportunity for student residences.⁸³
- On 7 May 2004 Council also approved the purchase of *The Cottages*, Erf 1424, and Mahikeng Township as additional student residences for R4,3 million.⁸⁴
- All three campuses had improved their research outputs.
- Three focus areas for research and postgraduate education underwent an international peer review.
- The core business remained stable.⁸⁵

The operational challenges, on the other hand, were to:

- fill a number of key staff vacancies
- establish the Institutional SRC
- resolve the future of the Mankwe Campus
- Secure the Minister of Education's approval of the NWU Statute submitted to the Ministry in March 2004
- gain Council's approval of the proposed budget for 2005
- finalise the office space of the Institutional Office
- enhance training and capacity building for the different layers of management
- submit the Institutional Plan to the Department of Education
- finalise the allocation of first-year students to the campuses in alignment with the capping policy of the Department of Education.

Dr Eloff issued an “*appeal to all staff and students to join hands with the top management team and to give them your full support in the difficult task that lies ahead.*”⁸⁶

6.5. The year 2005⁸⁷

6.5.1 Achievements during the 2005 integration phase⁸⁸

An analysis of the 2005 higher education statistics shows that the NWU had a small but growing place in the higher education landscape in terms of student enrolment, graduates, research, subsidy funding and budget.⁸⁹

	Combined totals for the higher education sector	NWU share of the totals for the sector
Student enrolment	553 839	39 600 = 5.40%
Research articles	7 230	320 = 4.40%
Number of graduates	120 053	7 700 = 6.40%
Government subsidy	R10,0 billion	5.25%
Institutional budgets	R24,5 billion	4.60%

The NWU celebrated the following achievements in 2005:

- A composition called “*Bless O Lord Bless our Mother*” by Prof Awie van Wyk with lyrics in English, Afrikaans and Tswana was accepted as the university anthem during May.⁹⁰
- The NWU Centre for text technology (CTexT) pulled together a team of 30 academics and developers from the University of Pretoria and Unisa and launched spelling checkers for documents written in Tswana, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and Afrikaans.⁹¹
- Council led and finalised the visioning process.
- A common set of academic rules and admission requirements was implemented with a phase-in approach at the beginning of the year.
- The NWU Statute was published in the Government Gazette in August.⁹²
- Campus Managements were appointed and operational.
- A number of policies, especially HR policies, were implemented. A list of 11 policies was submitted to Council in April 2005.⁹³
- The Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) was established.
- The process of incorporating Vista Sebokeng staff and students into the Vaal Triangle Campus was completed.
- The Institutional Office became operational.

- An agreement was reached with the provincial government on the future of the Mankwe Campus. (Refer to section 6.5.3 for details of this agreement.)
- Good progress was made with institutional planning, with the emphasis on transformation and employment equity.
- A macro maintenance plan was implemented on all campuses.
- A university-wide culture and climate survey was conducted
- The NWU received an award for the most progressively and technologically innovative university.
- There was no student unrest in 2005.⁹⁴
- Management prepared the Institutional Plan for 2006-2008 in the format prescribed by the Department of Education and tabled it to Council on 10 June 2005.⁹⁵ At a special meeting towards the end of August, Council resolved to amend the plan by revising certain principles and introducing shorter timeframes.⁹⁶ On 23 September 2005, Council appointed a Joint Council and Senate Task Team, with Mr Eric Mafuna as facilitator, to deal with this matter and to develop a comprehensive academic transformation plan for the NWU.⁹⁷
- On 18 November 2005 Council deliberated on the report titled *Institutional Transformation Framework and Guidelines* presented by the Joint Council and Senate Task Team and decided on a two-stage transformation of North-West University:
 - **Stage 1** – Comprising the framework
 - **Stage 2** – Involving the drafting of detailed aspects of the transformation processes, eg the technical, structural and behavioural transformation agenda.
- Council decided to monitor the progress of transformation at three-year intervals, eg 2008, 2011 and 2014.⁹⁸
- The criteria for recognition as a donor of NWU were tabled at the Council meeting of 23 September 2005.⁹⁹
- The simultaneous interpreting service was extended to 150 lectures per week.¹⁰⁰
- The Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Centre within the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology (FAST) at the Mafikeng

Campus collaborated with the National Department of Science and Technology, the University of Limpopo, the University of Venda and the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) in 2005 to establish a new Bachelor of Indigenous System (B.KIS) degree.¹⁰¹

6.5.2 Concerns raised and addressed

The Staff Association wrote letters to the Minister with allegations concerning the Mafikeng Campus and Council tasked management to prepare a detailed report.¹⁰³ The Executive Committee of Council reported on 15 April 2005 that there was not a single matter that needed investigation. The reason was that most of the matters raised by the Staff Association had originated before the merger date and had been addressed during the transitional period in 2004, when all possible actions were taken to stabilise the Mafikeng Campus. Council approved the recommendations made by its Executive Committee.¹⁰⁴

In 2005, the focus was on completing the merger integration and incorporation, improving the quality and output of the core business, looking after staff development and especially performance management, and finalising a vision and mission statement.¹⁰⁵ On 17 March 2005, the NWU's first corporate brochure was published,¹⁰⁶ describing the progress made in establishing the NWU:

“The new North-West University embarked on a historic and exciting journey at the beginning of 2004. The management believes that, one year after the merger and incorporation, the process resulting in the establishment of the North-West University has been extremely successful.”

Several reasons for this observation were given.

Firstly, of all merging universities, the NWU was the first to establish a permanent Council, appoint a Vice-Chancellor and Senior Management, adopt basic policies, such as general academic rules, and draft a Statute. (The final Statute was eventually published in the Government Gazette on 8 August 2005.)¹⁰⁷

A second major achievement was that the first Council, under the leadership of Chairperson Litha Nyhonyha, had created a governance framework accommodating the goals of the merger and incorporation set by the Minister.

Thirdly, the management, staff and students of the NWU had rolled up their sleeves and were working together to make the new university (and the merger) a success. Led by the Institutional Management, there was a remarkable unity of purpose and commitment among the Senior Management team spread across the campuses.



▲ Institutional SRC, 10 November 2005¹⁰²

Despite the inevitable uncertainty that accompanies change, the core business of the university was progressing rapidly and an air of stability prevailed on the campuses. Lectures had commenced at the beginning of the year without any disruptions, and indications were that after growth of 25% in research outputs for 2003, there would again be an increase in the number of published articles and patents in 2004.

In another encouraging sign, the focus on implementing the university's expertise was driven by an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit that would deliver excellent service to clients while generating funds for the university and adding value to the communities surrounding its campuses.¹⁰⁸

During this period of uncertainty, Council members presented various alternative strategies and visions. During May 2005, in a presentation to Council, Council member Gulam-Husien Mayet, for example, revealed his 20-year vision of the NWU, based on the work of Frantz Fanon, whose works are influential in the fields of post-colonial studies, critical theory and Marxism:¹⁰⁹

- “2005 to 2010: *I assume that we will have the present Council and management leadership and therefore we will continue to have a dialectically opposite vision of the future. I therefore felt pessimistic about transformation in the next five years.*
- 2010 to 2015: *A new Council will be in place and a new top management will be possible as the existing tenure of both Council and management will be completed. This opens the possibility of change.*
- 2015 to 2025: *Our environment will be continuously unstable, diverse and unpredictable. We will find ourselves in rapidly*

*changing economic and political conditions. We therefore need high levels of flexibility and adaptability to cope and will need to be less bureaucratic and more decentralized”.*¹¹⁰

6.5.3 Determining the future of the Mankwe Campus, 2005¹¹¹

Mankwe Campus had been a topic of considerable, often heated, debate both during and after the merger and incorporation process. A firm decision on its future was clearly in the interests of the new university's stability.

On 18 June 2004, the NWU Council approved the recommendations from an Investigating Task Team and resolved that members of the Task team should enter into discussions with all relevant parties to review alternatives for the future of the Mankwe Campus.¹¹²

On 8 October 2004, Council decided that Institutional Management should set up formal structures and processes for the affected staff members.¹¹³ Mankwe students responded by embarking on protest action over the future educational purpose and destination of the campus.¹¹⁴

On 26 November, a Network Task Team from the Council's external members was set up to liaise with the local community. One of the outcomes was that students enrolled at Mankwe for 2005 could continue their studies at any of the NWU campuses, subject to relevant requirements.¹¹⁵

Progress reports were tabled at the Council meeting of 15 April 2005.¹¹⁶ On 10 June, Council resolved to transfer the land and buildings of the Mankwe Campus back to the Provincial Department of Education, owing to the lack of educational and financial viability.¹¹⁷

Council decided on 23 September 2005 that the Joint Council and Senate Task Team should determine the financial, academic and moral cost of the possible decisions on Mankwe, within their scheduled discussions about the 2006-2008 Institutional Plan.¹¹⁸

By the end of 2005, an agreement had been reached with the provincial Department of Education on the future of the Mankwe Campus. In terms of this agreement, the Department would take over a sizeable portion of the campus for Further Education in Training (FET) courses that would meet the needs of the communities around Mankwe. The NWU agreed to retain a visible higher education presence at Mankwe by using it as a delivery site for selected programmes. These would have to be financially and academically viable, while meeting the needs of the greater Mogwase/Bojanala region.¹¹⁹

All students involved voluntarily relocated to the

Mafikeng Campus, while the majority of the 16 staff members were given new positions on the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses.

In addition, the Joint Operational Team would engage with stakeholders in the area during 2006, including the Moses Kotane Municipality and Orbit College, to determine the educational and skills needs of the region. Based on this, programmes would be designed either as university or FET offerings, or a combination of both. Furthermore, the outcome of consultations, along with the educational and financial viability of any programmes designed, would determine the future of Mankwe after 2007.¹²⁰

6.5.4 Incorporation of Vista staff and students

With the incorporation of Vista staff and students complete, there were no interruptions to the core business of teaching-learning and research at the Vaal Triangle Campus. Most of the staff from the former Vista Campus in Sebokeng were absorbed into the system and expressed satisfaction with their new environment. A few staff members who were not fully accommodated were placed on skills development programmes, which were due to be operational by March 2006. All documentation on incorporation and skills development was archived and filed according to the university systems.

6.5.5 Throughput rate of first-year students, 2005

The throughput rate of first-year students for the first semester of 2005 averaged 79%, with the breakdown per campus as follows:

- Mafikeng Campus, including Mankwe: 69%
- Potchefstroom Campus: 82%
- Vaal Triangle Campus: 77%

The unified North-West University had a sizeable student body, spread over the three campuses, some of which lacked sufficient high-level academic staff and had inadequate academic support facilities. This contributed to disparities in throughput and retention rates, especially among first-year students.

Overcoming this legacy by standardising academic support services, harmonising quality assurance processes and achieving a more balanced skills profile was a key challenge for the NWU in 2005. A related challenge was to strengthen synergies between the Institutional Management and the three campuses, with the aim of encouraging collaboration, avoiding fragmentation and ensuring consistency in academic programme development and support.

6.5.6 Preparing for the new enrolment planning policy

Although the Minister of Education had put a hold on the implementation of the capping of the student numbers until June 2006, “funding capping” remained a reality. Since this had implications for the university budget, the NWU imposed a self-capping strategy in 2005 for the intake of first-year students for 2006. This was in line with the Minister’s request to universities to manage their student enrolment responsibly.

The self-capping strategy for 2006 would see the NWU admitting 1 100 new entrants at the Mafikeng Campus, 3 100 at the Potchefstroom Campus, and 900 at the Vaal Triangle Campus.

6.5.7 The founding of the Institutional Quality Office, 2005

In order to enhance the quality assurance of the NWU’s academic programmes and supporting structures, based on the Institutional Quality Policy that developed in conjunction with the HEQC, the Institutional Quality Office was founded in 2005.

As a matter of urgency, the Quality Office engaged in negotiations with the Campus Rectors on the nomination and appointment of quality coordinators for each campus, in line with the Quality Policy. Their role would be to liaise with the Quality Office and the Campus Vice-Rectors of each campus.

Another priority was the development of an Institutional Quality Manual, as well as quality guides for each academic support department, based on a prescribed format. With a few exceptions, all departments on the Potchefstroom Campus developed quality guides in 2005, and on the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle Campuses in 2006.

During 2005, the Quality Office made good progress in overseeing the internal and external evaluation of academic programmes. The Quality Office took the first steps during 2005 towards preparing for the HEQC institutional audit of the NWU’s academic programmes scheduled for 2009. The Quality Office compiled a budget for the exercise and established a core steering team with clear terms of reference. The budget and working methodology were approved by Institutional Management, paving the way for the audit preparations to commence in the 2006 academic year.

6.5.8 Academic staff and Academic Support

With academic activities spread over three campuses, a high level of coordination was called for to ensure that all

students would have access to the same level of quality support services. This in turn necessitated streamlined relationships between Institutional Management and the three campuses, as well as among the campuses themselves. The Institutional Academic and Support (ADS) office was established to play this coordinating role.

At the Mafikeng Campus, a need was identified for additional academic staff, particularly professors and staff with doctoral qualifications, across all faculties. This need was partly addressed in the 2006 budget, based on planning done during 2005.

During 2005, the university made good progress in developing policies and programmes for institutional and academic development. The Institutional Short Course Policy was finalised and accepted by Senate in August 2005 and the Institutional Course for New Lecturers (ICNL) was launched in September.

A feather in the NWU's cap was the selection of the B Pharm Honours (Pharmacology) programme from the Potchefstroom Campus as a case study for the development of good practice guidelines and criteria for the HEQC.

6.5.9 Programme alignment

All changes to existing programmes in 2005, as well as applications for new programmes, were handled by the newly constituted Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS). This Committee established internal processes to approve changes to existing programmes, and approved new academic programmes for submission to external bodies such as the Department of Education, the HEQC and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Planning for the academic programme alignment process was completed in 2005 for implementation in 2006. This was a crucial building block in compiling a new PQM for the University.

6.5.10 Student support

An institutional policy on accommodating students with disabilities was prepared, responsibilities were allocated and procedures for cooperation between the various stakeholder support services were developed and operationalised. The Student Counselling Service on the Potchefstroom Campus would coordinate all matters pertaining to students with disabilities. On the Mafikeng Campus, a Braille machine had been integrated with the computer network and the library. The same facility was envisaged for the other campuses. Ongoing attention was necessary to improve access to buildings for students with limited mobility.

In 2005, the former PU for CHE's so-called VEL system for academic peer mentoring was expanded to include at-risk modules at all levels on the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses. Plans were made to expand the system to the Mafikeng Campus during 2006.

6.5.11 Property and building priorities for 2005

Council resolved that Dr ND Kgwadi and Prof IJ Rost be appointed to represent the Council of NWU's shareholding in Molopo Sun (Pty) Limited at general and annual general meetings of the company and to act in the best interest of Council.¹²¹ Council also accepted the donation of the fixed property as described in "*Sertifikaat van Dorpstitel*", no T 71/1981, dated 25 March 1981, and approved the donation of two hectares of land to the North West province, providing the transfer was for the provincial government's account.¹²²

On 26 November 2004, Council approved the following building priorities for 2005 on condition that funding was secured:

- Institutional Office: R10 million
- Mafikeng Campus: R8,5 million
- Potchefstroom Campus: R14,5million
- Vaal Triangle Campus: R24 million¹²³

6.5.12 Relationship between Council and Institutional Management

The planned construction of 22 new student residential units on the Mafikeng Campus for R5 million caused some tension between Council and the Institutional Management. The difference of opinion arose after Prof Rost proposed that the university build the student residences on an *owner-builder* basis as this would result in cost savings, among other advantages for the university.

A heated debate between management and Council ensued. Council expressed its dissatisfaction with elements of the plan, saying that the "*owner-builder*" method was tantamount to the splitting of tenders and that construction of the residential units had already started – without Council having approved the project. Management retorted that Council should refrain from making "*sweeping statements*", and Council countered by saying it was well within its rights to "*ask questions*".

At this point, the members of management and the secretariat who were attending the meeting were recused, and Council continued the debate in-camera. During the in-camera discussion Council agreed that some members felt the Vice-Chancellor had responded disrespectfully, while other members felt that he had the right to raise issues. Council further felt that this showed a lack of trust within the Council.



▲ Mrs Naledi Grace Mandisa Pandor, Minister of Education, 2004 - 2009 ¹²⁶

The Vice-Chancellor stated that his intention was not to be disrespectful or to “talk down” to Council and he unreservedly apologised Mr L Nyhonyha, the Chairperson of Council, stated that all members and management must show mutual respect and remember the overall goal of taking the NWU forward. He also asked Council members to show support and encouragement to management when needed¹²⁴

In the end, Council approved the building project but requested the Audit Committee to clarify the procurement issues.

6.6. The year 2006 ¹²⁵

6.6.1 The role of Council

Early in 2006, there was lingering tension in the relationship between the Council of the NWU and its Senate, indicating some confusion over roles and responsibilities. This was evident during a Senate meeting on 2 March 2006, which prompted the Executive Committee of Council to request Mr Eric Mafuna to assist in resolving the resulting friction between Council and Senate.

Council received the report of Mr Mafuna on 22 June 2006, and noted his proposal that the Executive Committee of Council engage the Executive Committee of Senate to develop a joint solution that focused on the way forward.

Council also noted a letter from Education Minister Mrs Naledi Pandor on 5 May 2006 to all chairpersons of Councils, expressing her concern about the confusion in the respective roles and responsibilities of some councils and managements because it affected the efficient functioning of universities.

According to the Minister, councils had to focus on the throughput rate, research outputs, monitoring of management performance, and areas of transformation.

Councils should not get involved in the management of institutions. The Chairperson of Council had met with the Minister and Mr OJJ Tabane attended a ministerial workshop on this matter to find solutions. ¹²⁷

6.6.2 Highlights and low points of the year

Anarchy broke out at the Mafikeng Campus in March 2006 when students of the South African Students Congress (Sasco) and the ANC Youth League burnt tyres at the campus gate. The protest was against the ruling by the university not to register students who could not afford to pay tuition fees. ¹²⁸

Police arrested seven students and 15 other students were suspended from studies for trying to prevent staff from entering the campus, despite a court interdict to stop the disruption. ¹²⁹ As a result, the Campus Management met with Mr Johannes Tselapedi, the provincial Education MEC, to resolve the dispute over unpaid student fees and to bring the protest to a halt. Calm was restored after this meeting. ¹³⁰

That was arguably the low point of 2006 for the NWU. One of the highlights was a surge in research output: the NWU delivered almost 33% of the national output for the year. ¹³¹

6.6.3 The Senate reconstituted ¹³²

On 24 March 2006, Council approved the procedures for implementing the Statute; this entailed the reconfiguration of Senate, which approves all academic programmes and academic work. ¹³³ On 8 August 2006, the NWU made the Minister of Education’s deadline for implementing the new NWU Statute, including all unitary and integrated structures. ¹³⁴

The new NWU Senate was constituted on 10 May 2006 in terms of the NWU Statute as gazetted on 8 August 2005. ¹³⁵ Its membership, in line with section 12(1) of the Statute, comprised the following representatives:

- The Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson)
- The Vice-Principal
- The Campus Rectors
- The Institutional Registrar
- Executive Director: Research and Innovation
- The Deans of all Faculties
- Academic staff elected by academic staff in the faculties (33 in total)
- Non-academic staff elected by non-academic staff (two in total)
- Students designated by the Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC)

- Chairperson of Council or delegate, and one other Council member elected by Council
- Managers responsible for research, academic support and library and information services
- Academic staff members co-opted upon the advice of the Senate Standing Committees with special regard to race and gender.

Four types of Senate Standing Committees were formed, namely a Campus Senate Committee per campus, the Institutional Committee for Research and Innovation (ICRI), the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) and the Institutional Admissions Committee.¹³⁶

Senate also established an *ad hoc* Language Task Team and appointed members to a Joint Transformation Task Team that worked with Council on the Institutional Plan. Two task teams were formed to develop policies on the appointment of senior managers and the granting of honorary awards.

The main responsibility and objectives of Senate for the year were to govern the academic business through activities such as developing uniform admission requirements, monitoring the progress of the academic alignment process, adopting an overarching language plan and implementation framework and developing the policy on honorary awards in terms of the Higher Education Act and the Statute. It also advised Council, as the overall governing body, on strategic issues such as the Institutional Plan, the development of policies and rules, and the appointment of senior managers.

Senate, through its Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS), also contributed to academic programme alignment. For this purpose, ICAS established four academic committees encompassing all the NWU's learning fields and faculties. Furthermore, Senate assisted in maintaining high standards for teaching learning and research, in accordance with the statement in the Merger Guidelines that it "*is vitally important that (merging) institutions protect the academic integrity of their operations during the period of change*".¹³⁷

6.6.4 Teaching-learning highlights, 2006

The NWU's enrolment and registration processes for 2006 were generally successful and effective, with student numbers growing according to plan and policies in place to promote alignment in academic programmes and quality management. The university recorded moderate growth in the number of first-year students, owing mainly to the "*cap*" of 5 100 placed on the 2006 intake. Although first-year registrations were slightly lower than expected on all campuses, the quality of students was generally higher. In August 2006, Senate established

an Institutional Admissions Committee whose mandate was to ensure that admissions complied with legislative requirements, were aligned and supported the NWU's vision, values, mission and Institutional Plan.¹³⁸

As part of a strategy to enhance the NWU's international standing, the university explored collaborative partnerships with leading international universities. During 2006, a memorandum of understanding was signed with London South Bank University, paving the way for academic, curriculum and administrative cooperation, along with joint events and conferences and cultural exchange.

The NWU believes strongly in producing well-rounded graduates who excel in all areas of life, not just academically. This was the thinking behind the launch of the High Performance Institute on the Potchefstroom Campus and preparations for the opening of the Soccer Institute at the Mafikeng Campus. National and international sporting achievements included the selection of seven NWU athletes in the South African Commonwealth team. They won two of five gold medals awarded to South Africa and one silver medal.

Council adopted the new M-score dispensation in line with the new National Senior Certificate and Department of Education-gazetted minimum requirements for admission to diploma and general degree studies. This in turn implied institutional agreement on the number and achievement levels at which Grade 12 subjects were counted, and was aligned to sectoral guidelines agreed by Higher Education South Africa.

As one of the teaching-learning priorities of 2006 was to achieve higher throughput rates among first and second-year students, the NWU gave special attention to developing a more effective system for determining throughput rates. Rates were carefully monitored and, after the June examinations, steps taken to act on problem modules that were identified. An additional 250 facilitators were appointed for the distance education programme of the Potchefstroom Campus, a development that was expected to result in meaningful throughput improvements among off-campus students.

Other interventions designed to support higher throughput were the fast-tracked programme to upgrade the academic qualifications of teaching staff and the enhancements made to the teaching excellence awards. These interventions would bear fruit in future; the 2006 undergraduate throughput rate remained stable at 1, 65, compared to 1, 45 in 2005.¹³⁹

Council also accepted the establishment of schools at the Mafikeng Campus and that failure to do this restructuring immediately would disadvantage that campus. The Mafikeng Campus management should issue a statement to clarify any misunderstanding.¹⁴⁰

6.6.5 Academic alignment

By 2006, only one merger-related structural element was still outstanding: the question of academic programme alignment across the campuses. The ideal was that a degree of the NWU would, by 2010, have the same value in the market place, regardless of which campus it came from. From mid-2006 onwards, the newly constituted Senate approved a number of policies to guide the academic alignment process. One of the mechanisms approved was the establishment of “*academic programme alignment clusters*” to focus on the coordination, alignment and rationalisation of academic programmes. Good progress was made during the latter part of 2006, especially in Law and Education.

6.6.6 Quality assurance processes

Quality assurance took precedence at the NWU in 2006 as preparations for the 2009 HEQC quality audit gained momentum. The aim was to ensure that quality assurance of academic and support functions became embedded in the organisation, not just for the immediate future but also in the long term.

A sound planning and policy framework was seen as the cornerstone of sustainable quality assurance. The Quality Plan developed in the previous year was taken a step further early in 2006 when Senate approved it. This was followed by a review of the Quality Policy.

All campuses appointed quality coordinators who, among other things, assisted in facilitating the internal programme evaluations. Recognising the importance of quality-related issues, the Potchefstroom Campus went a step further by appointing a quality manager for each faculty. To enhance quality assurance of support services, the Quality Office held discussions with key NWU support service managers on the redevelopment and upgrading of the support services quality manual. This would pave the way for closer alignment in the processes and procedures followed by the campuses, whose support services would also engage in a self-evaluation exercise in 2007.

6.6.7 Academic development and support

The institutional and campus Academic Development and Support (ADS) offices held a joint planning meeting in February 2006 to ensure that they addressed the institutional priorities listed in the Institutional Plan (IP) on all the campuses. Planning and coordinating the work of institutional and campus ADS units in this manner could potentially accelerate the achievement of the ADS goals set in the IP.

The activities of the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) increased during 2006, due to the implementation of the ICAS policy and procedures

across all campuses. ICAS received a total of 141 academic programme applications and 229 short course applications. The high number of short course applications was related to the approval of the NWU’s short course policy and procedures in 2005 and subsequent implementation during 2006.

6.6.8 Academic staff development, 2006

Two main development activities were completed in 2006. These were the launch of an Institutional Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA) for academic staff and the presentation of the revised institutional course for new lecturers, after its pilot presentation in September 2005.

The ITEA award was a mechanism to acknowledge and encourage lecturers who had improved their teaching skills and demonstrated teaching practices that adhered to sound outcomes-based teaching principles. Senate approved the policy and procedures for ITEA in May 2006. Candidates who were in the top category of the prestigious ITEA award received an amount of R18,000.00, while those who attain between 75% and 79% of the criteria receive R12,000.00. Successful candidates received their awards at a function hosted by the Vice-Principal and the Vice-Chancellor. The ITEA replaced the former VERKA awards presented at the Potchefstroom Campus before the merger. The new awards were open to academic staff at all three campuses and symbolised the progress being made at the NWU in achieving integration.

The new compulsory Institutional Course for New Lecturers was piloted in September 2005, implemented in January 2006 and approved by Senate in May 2006. A total of 54 staff members attended course during the first year. Briefly, the course introduced staff to best practices and new trends in higher education and contributed to the success of the merger by providing opportunities for staff from all campuses to share their experiences with each other. After completing it, new lecturers should be well-equipped to create effective learning environments, conduct reliable assessments, understand the research structures at the NWU, know where to find support services for teaching learning and research, and grasp foundational and ethical issues in science.

6.6.9 Student academic development

The focus of student academic development in 2006 was on the implementation of Supplemental Instruction (SI) across all campuses. SI was an international academic development and support programme that had been introduced on more than 700 campuses in America, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia and South Africa. Research had shown that students who participate typically achieve better academic results

than their non-participating peers do. Since improved student throughput was a strategic imperative of the NWU, the implementation of the SI programme on all campuses was a priority in 2006.

Senate approved the broad policy and procedures for implementing SI in May 2006. Student facilitators were then trained and student academic developers in campus ADS units were assisted in implementing the programme on their campuses. During 2006, a total of 486 SI facilitators were trained and almost 40 000 students were assisted in 288 different modules where SI was provided

The Institutional Office undertook quality assurance activities to ensure a standardised approach to the programme across the three campuses.

During 2006, R500 000 was allocated for state-of-the-art teaching-learning technologies on all campuses to support quality teaching. To ensure equitable distribution of funding an institutional project team was constituted to conduct a campus audit on the status of classrooms. The audit showed that classrooms on the Mafikeng Campus needed the most urgent attention, as none had permanently installed multimedia technology. Some 31 classrooms on that campus were earmarked for immediate upgrading.

6.6.10 Changes in academic structures

The realignment of academic structures across the three campuses was coupled with a review of the NWU's range of academic programmes. On the Mafikeng Campus, good progress was made with the establishment of schools and the appointment of School Directors. In all, the NWU had 14 faculties in 2006, distributed as follows:

- Five faculties, 14 schools, one Community Law Centre and one centre of expertise at the Mafikeng Campus. The five faculties were Agriculture, Science and Technology, Human and Social Sciences, Education, Commerce and Administration and Law.
- Eight faculties, 32 schools, 21 centres of expertise, four institutes and 14 research focus areas at the Potchefstroom Campus. The eight faculties were Arts, Natural Sciences, Theology, Educational Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Law, Engineering, and Health Sciences.
- One faculty, known as the Vaal Triangle Faculty, and six schools at the Vaal Triangle Campus. The six schools were Economic Sciences; Basic Sciences; Behavioural Sciences;

Modelling Sciences; Educational Sciences, and Languages.

6.6.11 Admissions Policy

The NWU's uniform admissions policy, which used an M-score that was adopted in 2004, was applied in 2005 and 2006 (with provision for phasing-in the raised requirements at the Mafikeng Campus) and would also be used in 2007 and 2008. Then, in 2009, it would make way for the Admission Points Score (APS) that the Institutional Admissions Committee had reached consensus on in November 2006. The adoption of the new APS model corresponded with the new National Senior Certificate and the Department of Education's minimum requirements for admission to diploma and degree studies.

Additionally, to meet the legislative and policy requirements of the Department of Education, the admissions model was aligned with the higher education sectorial approach brokered by Higher Education South Africa (HESA). Senate and Council approved the proposed model with APS scores and requirements for admission to generic qualifications in November 2006. The admission requirements for 2009 were published in terms of Section 37 of the Higher Education Act.¹⁴¹

6.6.12 Students enrolled in 2006

Students enrolled in 2006

	Mafikeng	Potchefstroom	Vaal Triangle	Total
First years	1130	4111	671	5912
Seniors	7357	22766	2701	32824
Total	8487	26877	3372	38736

Racial and gender composition of the students body in 2006

The table below shows the racial and gender composition of the NWU student body over each of the five years to 2006.

Year		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Race	White	10300	11446	12745	13422	14292
	African	20131	21713	25894	23907	22436
	Coloured	791	1052	1269	1207	1220
	Asian	283	325	324	338	616
	Unknown	1611	1860	1038	221	172
Gender	Male	12856	14199	15792	15097	14773
	Female	20260	22197	25478	23998	23963
Total		33116	36396	41270	39095	38736

*2006 as per 2nd HEMIS 2006 submission

6.6.13 Success rates, 2006

The ratio between the number of undergraduate students and the total Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) was stabilised during 2006, in both the contact and the distance categories. The table below illustrates this trend:¹⁴²

Key ratios of FTE to head count enrolments – contact	Contact	
	2005	2006
FTE undergrads as % of undergrad heads	82%	86%
FTE postgrad < masters as % of postgrad heads < masters	94%	83%
FTE intermed postgrad as % of masters heads	30%	39%
FTE higher postgrad as % of doctoral heads	68%	58%
Total FTE as % of total heads	78%	81%

Key ratios of FTE to head count enrolments – distance	Distance	
	2005	2006
FTE undergrads as % of undergrad heads	32%	51%
FTE postgrad < masters as % of postgrad heads < masters	76%	32%
FTE intermed postgrad as % of masters heads	38%	52%
FTE higher postgrad as % of doctoral heads	78%	75%
Total FTE as % of total heads	45%	45%

*2006 as at 1 May 2007 (as per 2nd HEMIS submission 2006)

The rationalisation of programmes and modules was an ongoing process. In 2006, special attention was given to the handling of term/quarterly modules with a view to the smooth implementation of the new academic year structure.

The throughput rate was monitored carefully, with the emphasis on modules where problematic results were achieved in the June and November examinations. This intervention would also help to optimise the FTE head count ratio. To improve the throughput rate of off-campus students, an additional 250 facilitators were appointed at the various facilitation centres of the Potchefstroom Campus distance education programme.

Academic staff members who needed to upgrade their qualifications were assisted through the performance agreement system, which enabled them to take leave.

At the Vaal Triangle Campus, various interventions were initiated to improve the undergraduate teaching-learning targets. Pass norms were managed per module, high-risk modules were identified and plans put in place to improve them, learning facilitators were appointed in high-risk modules, and at-risk students received additional academic support.

The NWU produced the following graduates for 2006 per ceremony date after complying with the examination requirements of 2006) up to 1 May 2007.

Mafikeng Campus	September 2006	766
	March 2007	2
	April/May 2007	1390
Total		2158
Potchefstroom Campus	September 2006	1260
	March 2007	3797
	April/May 2007	1821
Total		6878
Vaal Triangle Campus	September 2006	102
	March 2007	1
	April/May 2007	682
Total		785
Grand Total		9821

Degrees and diplomas	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
First degree	2115	2281	3293	3235	3722
Diplomas	3276	3237	4431	2448	3545
Honours	607	920	1179	1281	1679
Masters	571	606	628	700	765
PhDs	59	92	84	85	110
Total	6628	7136	9615	7746	9821

6.6.14 Progress with the transformation agenda and core business, 2006¹⁴³

In moving towards becoming an effective, transformed and balanced tuition-research university, the NWU celebrated the following achievements in 2006:

- The Institutional Plan for 2006–2008 was adopted in March 2006.¹⁴⁴
- Council established the Transformation Oversight Committee (TOC) and Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee in June.
- The NWU Statute was implemented by August.
- An integrated student administration system was implemented on all campuses.
- Senate approved policies to guide the programme alignment process.
- One integrated system was implemented for financial and human resource management (Oracle ERP).
- The Institutional Quality office made progress with preparations for the HEQC audit.

- Council approved 10 new policies, including the ISRC Constitution and language policy, and a number of integrating polices were implemented.
- School Directors were appointed at the Mafikeng Campus.
- Institutional Management was restructured to accommodate changes in the Human Capital portfolio.
- A brand audit was conducted to fulfil the requirements of the market.
- A system of performance agreements for all academic staff was established.
- The university won the PWC award as the best-governed university in South Africa (joint first position).
- The NWU achieved joint second-best position in the country for the graduation rate for undergraduates, joint best for master's and fourth best for PhDs.
- Total research output was the sixth best in South Africa.

6.6.15 Other developments of 2006 were:

- Student unrest occurred at Mafikeng Campus in March 2006 on issues of fees and NSFAS funding.
- The Staff Association at the Mafikeng Campus embarked on unprotected industrial action in August 2006.
- The Rules for the establishment of the Board of Donors were approved in line with the Statute.¹⁴⁵
- Council approved the Institutional Almanac for 2007.¹⁴⁶
- During a meeting between the Mayor of the Moses Kotane Municipality, representatives of Mafikeng Campus and the Orbit College, the Mayor undertook to conduct an analysis of educational needs for the surrounding areas of the Mankwe Campus.¹⁴⁷
- Committees of Council were reconstituted in compliance with the new Statute.¹⁴⁸ This saw Dr LK Sebege being elected as the second Chairperson of Council and Mr PJ van der Walt as Deputy Chairperson of Council. Mr PJW Buys and Mr OJJ Tabane were elected as members of the Executive Committee of Council by majority vote.¹⁴⁹
- Council approved the Institutional Plan 2007–

2009¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵¹ and the Institutional Language Policy.¹⁵²

- The title change for Institutional Management positions from Institutional Director to Executive Directors was approved¹⁵³
- During 2006, there was strong emphasis on sensitising staff and students towards human rights issues through initiatives such as human rights training for student leaders at the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses.¹⁵⁴
- The NWU introduced a holistic HIV/AIDS programme that involved students, staff and communities. It was based on the newly approved HIV/AIDS policy and incorporated awareness, prevention, community outreach and the offering of accredited training programmes.¹⁵⁵

6.6.16 Institutional Plan (IP) for the period 2006-2008

Council finally approved the draft Institutional Plan, 2006-2008, on 24 March 2006.¹⁵⁶ This first IP focused on the overall strategy to move from a tuition-based university with focused research to become an effective and transformed balanced tuition and research university. To achieve these strategies, the NWU in 2006 specifically focused on transformation, quality and efficiency, and relevance and impact as overarching strategies. The Institutional Operating Plans incorporated specific strategies to transform continually in terms of positioning, unity, equity and redress, as well as academic profile.¹⁵⁷

The Minister of Education scrutinised the Institutional Plan and was “satisfied with the steps being taken by the university to ensure viable and sustainable outcomes for the new institution”.¹⁵⁸

6.6.17 Building priorities, 2006

Council approved the 2006 building priorities on 18 November 2005.¹⁵⁹

Building priorities	2006
Mafikeng	R13,700,000
Potchefstroom	R11,975,000
Vaal Triangle	R 4,300,000
	R29,975,000
Financing	
NWU	R25,780,000
Reserves	R14,480,000
Internal loan	R11,300,000
External	R 4,195,000
Projects	R 995,000
Fundraising	R 3,200,000
	R29,975,000

Council also approved the tender of R12,5 million for the Emfuleni Conference Centre in Vanderbijlpark,¹⁶⁰ and approved the offer received to sell Molopo Sun Student Residences for R18,5 million.¹⁶¹

6.7. The year 2007¹⁶²

“The real function of universities is to play a central role in the development of society and to equip young people to become responsible leaders. The NWU has risen to these challenges by adopting the strategic priorities of South Africa in terms of the skills needed.”

- Dr PS Molefe, Chancellor, 2007¹⁶³

6.7.1 NWU in relation to the South African higher education sector

South Africa had 23 higher education institutions, consisting of 11 universities, six universities of technology and six comprehensive universities. In a comparison of academic, research and financial indicators, the NWU performed well against its peers and in some categories was ranked among the top universities in the country.

Based on 2007 audited figures, the NWU was the fourth largest university overall. Its 44 726 registered students in that year represented 5.8% of all students (761 087) in the sector.

The NWU was in the top three for master's and PhD enrolments in 2007. As a whole, the sector enrolled 41 172 master's students and 10 051 PhD students. The NWU's share was 2 629 master's students (6.3%) and 827 PhD students (8.2%).

Collectively, the 23 higher education institutions delivered 126 887 graduates and diplomates in 2007, mostly in the Humanities (40%), Science, Engineering and Technology (38%) and Business (22%). The NWU's contribution was 11 345 graduates and diplomates, representing 8.9% of the sector.

When it came to undergraduate graduation rates, the NWU performed extremely well. Whereas the national average in 2007 was an undergraduate graduation rate of 0.15, the NWU's rate was 0.24 – the third best in the sector. Its dropout rate for first-year students was below 10%, compared to the estimated dropout rate of between 20% and 30% in the sector.

In 2007, the NWU's master's graduation rate was 0.24, which was the third best in the sector, while its PhD graduation rate, 0.15, was the fifth best.

In terms of the number of master's degrees conferred in 2007, the total sector tally was 7 828 master's degrees and 1 329 PhDs. The NWU contributed 618 master's degrees (7.8% of all master's degrees conferred in the sector) and 124 PhDs (9.3%).

Staffing in the sector as a whole in 2007 comprised 15 589 academic staff, 22 224 administrative employees and 5 904 service staff members. The NWU was employing 889 academic staff (5.7% of the sector), 1 375 administrative staff (6.2%) and 475 service staff (8%).¹⁶⁴

6.7.2 Highlights of the year

The Mafikeng Campus launched the North-West University Soccer Institute (NWUSI) during April with Sir Dave Richards, the chairperson of the English Premier Soccer League, as guest of honour. With the 2010 World Cup around the corner, the aim was to utilise soccer as a catalyst for educational and community development. The English Premier Soccer League contributed £300 000 (about R4,2 million) for three years to fund scholarships for students at the institute. Mr Nikiwe Manqo, the provincial Social Development MEC, commended this initiative for contributing to development in the province.¹⁶⁵

Mr André Mellet, a lecturer in Economic Sciences at the Vaal Triangle Campus, won the prestigious Economist of the Year award and received a prize of R100 000.¹⁶⁶

Dr Theuns Eloff, the NWU Vice-Chancellor, was elected unopposed as chairperson of Higher Education South Africa (HESA), the association of vice-chancellors.¹⁶⁷

The NWU Enrolment Plan until 2010 was accepted by the Minister.¹⁶⁸

6.7.3 Senate

Various election processes took place during 2007 to fill the vacancies in Senate, as well as to elect Senate's designates to Council in accordance with the Statute.

By 2007, the number of Senate committees had grown to nine, the newest additions being the Institutional Research Support Commission, the Research Ethics Committee and the Higher Degrees Committee.¹⁶⁹

Senate also established a task team on Shared Disciplines to determine principles and guidelines for subject-related applications from faculties. These include proposals to offer subject matter that could duplicate what other faculties are already offering.

In addition, a task team was established to develop processes and procedures for preventing academic misconduct and dishonesty. As a result, a policy on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty or misconduct was developed and approved. These developments arose from academic irregularities that occurred on all three campuses of the NWU in 2007.

On 18 June 2007, the Senate Executive Committee and Council adopted the admissions model with APS scores and requirements for admission to specific qualifications.¹⁷⁰

Students enrolled, 2007

Students enrolled in 2007

	Mafikeng	Potch	Vaal Triangle	Total
First years	1340	4048	650	6038
Seniors	7362	28675	2675	38712
Total	8702	32723	3325	44750

Racial and gender composition of the student body in 2007

Year		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Race	White	10300	11446	12745	13422	14288	16745
	African	20131	21713	25894	23907	22411	25923
	Coloured	791	1052	1269	1207	1220	1361
	Asian	283	325	324	338	616	704
	Unknown	1611	1860	1038	221	173	17
Gender	Male	12856	14199	15792	15097	14766	16134
	Female	20260	22197	25478	23998	23942	28616
Total		33116	36396	41270	39095	38708	44750

Registration by qualification type, 2007

2007 Qualification type	Attendance mode			
	Distance	Contact	Distance TFT*	Grand total
General Academic First Bachelors degree	3	10101		10104
Doctoral degree	20	806		826
Honours degree	83	2081	3456	5620
Master's degree	60	2569		2629
Postgraduate Bachelors degree		1	1	2
Postgraduate diploma		305	29	334
Undergraduate diploma (1&2yr)	1	2105	10732	12838
Undergraduate diploma (3yr)		668	3072	3740
Professional First Bachelors degree (4yr)	112	6564	249	6925
Professional First Bachelors degree (3yr)	291	1251		1542
Occasional student	2	187	1	190
Grand total	572	2638	17540	44750

2007 as at 1 May 2008 (as per 2nd HEMIS submission 2007) *TFT stands for 'Teacher Further Training' and describes the distance of flexi programmes of the NWU for teachers already in the employ of the various provincial education departments

Troughput rate of contact undergraduate students*	Heads 2007	Graduates 2007	Troughput rate 2007	Troughput rate 2006	Troughput rate 2005
1st certificates and diplomas of 2 years or less	2105	1024	49%	59%	8%
1st diplomas and bachelors degrees 3 years	12020	2452	20%	21%	24%
Professional 1st bachelors degree: 4 years and more	6564	1171	18%	18%	17%

* The definition of 'throughput rate' is the total number of graduates divided by total number of enrolments in a specific year

Troughput rate of distance undergraduate students	Heads 2007	Graduates 2007	Troughput rate 2007	Troughput rate 2006	Troughput rate 2005
1st certificates and diplomas of 2 years or less	10733	3432	32%	26%	18%
1st diplomas and bachelors degrees 3 years	3366	516	15%	15%	10%
Professional 1st bachelors degree: 4 years and more	361	95	26%	27%	11%

6.7.4 Throughput rate initiatives¹⁷²

On the Potchefstroom Campus, all Deans were required to provide norms for pass rates in the faculties, and these were used to determine which groups needed to engage in Supplemental Instruction. Upgrading of staff qualifications received special attention during 2007.

On the Vaal Triangle Campus in 2007, a total of 33 Supplemental Instruction (SI) facilitators assisted in the implementation of SI in 51 modules in seven programmes. SI was deployed in 21% of at-risk modules (defined as modules with a pass rate of less than 50%). These SI sessions were attended by 12 290 students.

On the Mafikeng Campus, the Academic Development Centre (ADC) implemented the Supplemental Instruction (SI) programme as a means of improving throughput in at-risk modules. Several workshops were also conducted for groups of students and individual consultations held on study strategies and research proposal writing.

6.7.6 Graduates for 2007¹⁷³

Campus	Ceremony	Total
Mafikeng Campus	September 2007	556
	March 2008	1821
Total		2377
Potchefstroom Campus	September 2007	2497
	April/May 2008	1041
	March 2008	4646
Total		8184
Vaal Triangle Campus	September 2007	112
	April/May 2008	673
Total		785
Grand total		11346
<i>2007* as at 1 May 2008 (as per 2nd HEMIS submission 2007)</i>		

Degrees and diplomas conferred at the NWU since 2002

Degrees and diplomas conferred	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
First degree	2115	2281	3293	3235	3722	3646
Diplomas	3276	3237	4431	2448	3545	5267
Honours	607	920	1179	1281	1679	1691
Master's	571	606	628	700	765	618
PhDs	59	92	84	85	110	124
Total	6628	7136	9615	7749	9821	11346

In addition, the electronic learning system e-Fundi was implemented as another strategy to improve throughput and five modules were piloted in 2007. This project assists students to access learning materials and complete learning activities online.

6.7.5 Graduation rates for 2007

- A record of 11 346 degrees, diplomas and certificates were awarded:
 - Certificates and diplomas: 5 267 (46.4%).
 - Bachelors and Honours: 5 337 (47%).
 - Masters (618) and PhDs (124): 842 (7.6%).
- The graduation rate, at 25.3%, was again very good. (In 2006, it was the second best in the country.)
 - Undergraduate rate 25.3%.

6.7.7 NWU position in comparison to top South African universities, 2007

6.7.7.1. Overall position

	NWU	UCT	US	UP	Wits	KZN	UNISA	UJ	CPU
Total student enrolment	4	13	12	3	8	6	1	5	7
Total enrolment (contact)	6	11	9	3	7	4	23	2	5
Total enrolment (distance)	2			3		4	1		
Academic staff numbers	5	5	7	1	4	2	3	8	11
Support staff numbers	5	3	4	5	7	2	1	9	12
%SET students (FTE contact)	10	9	7	2	6	4	23	5	3
% Business (FTE contact)	10	12	9	4	13	7	23	2	5
% Education (FTE contact)	2	16	12	5	9	8	23	4	7
% Other Humanities (FTE contact)	5	7	8	3	9	2	23	4	14
Master's enrolled	7	6	4	1	2	5	3	7	15
PhDs enrolled	6	3	5	1	4	2	7	8	20
Staff: contact student ratio	6	2	5	2	4	1		8	7
% postgraduate students (contact)	23.45	27.82	34.83	27.68	31.39	23.35	24.68	14.43	4.37

6.7.7.2. Degrees awarded, 2007 ¹⁷⁴

	NWU	UCT	US	UP	Wits	KZN	UNISA	UJ	CPU
Total number of degrees awarded	2	10	9	3	8	6	1	5	7
Total SET degrees awarded	10	9	7	1	5	6	16	4	3
Total business degrees awarded	9	11	10	5	12	6	1	2	4
Undergraduate degrees awarded	5	7	8	2	6	3	1	4	11
Postgraduate below master's	3	8	4	2	9	7	1	5	20
Master's awarded	6	4	3	1	2	5	7	9	20
PhDs awarded	5	4	3	2	1	6	15	8	20
Contact undergraduate success rate	8	1	4	7	8	6	n/a	11	11
Graduation rate undergraduate	3	5	10	9	10	9	23	8	3
Graduation rate Master's	3	2	4	6	4	11	15	9	19
Graduation rate PhDs	5	6	3	11	2	17	16	6	11
% NRF-rated staff	10.7	31.3	28.4	13.7	18	9.8	6.2	7.8	1.6
Position in sector	6	1	2	5	4	7	10	8	-
Article equivalents published	378	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Innovation (DST competition)	1	2	3	4	-	-	-	-	-

6.7.8 Teaching-learning ¹⁷⁵

The total student head count of the NWU was 44 750 (37% distance) for 2007, making the NWU the fifth largest university in South Africa by head count. The growth was mainly due to an increase of active distance teacher further training students (employed teachers), with 17 540 such students enrolled (37%). The undergraduate success rate increased to 79.5% (78.5% in 2006), including more than 16 000 distance students (mainly in education).

Some of the initiatives taken to positively influence this rate were the introduction of Supplemental Instruction (SI) on all campuses, and the compulsory Institutional Course for New Lecturers (ICNL), and the continuation of Internal Programme Evaluation (IPE).

What also assisted students was the R150 million in financial aid that the NWU managed to provide for undergraduate and postgraduate students in 2007. This included R50 million from NSFAS and more than R45 million from the university's own funds.

Meanwhile, a sound foundation had been laid for academic programme alignment. About 22% of undergraduate and 2.9% of postgraduate programmes had been aligned and included in the academic calendars for 2008.

The campuses continued to reap the fruits of access programmes such as the Ikateleng programme, aimed at delivering better prepared first-year students. The Whole School Development Programme had made substantial progress in 10 schools around Mahikeng, and funding for work in five more schools around Lichtenburg had been secured. In addition, at the request of the national Department of Education, the NWU adopted seven Dinaledi schools for learners with special needs – four in and around Potchefstroom and three in the Mahikeng area. Overall, the foundation programmes on the Mafikeng Campus assisted students in achieving a very high pass rate.

The harmonisation of admission requirements had almost been completed and as of January 2008, the NWU would have the same admission requirements in almost all faculties on its campuses.

In total, a record of 11 346 degrees and diplomas were awarded in 2007, of which 618 were master's degrees and 124 PhDs. The graduation rate for undergraduate degrees and diplomas for 2007 was an excellent 25.3%, up from 24% in 2004. All three campuses fared well in this regard, with Mafikeng at 29.3%, Vaal Triangle at 24.2% and Potchefstroom at 24.9%.

The NWU Career Centre was established and would be operational in the 2008 academic year.

More than 3 700 SI sessions were offered to students on all three NWU campuses in at-risk modules. Science and Commerce Foundation programmes were incorporated into BSc and BCom degrees to establish extended degree programmes.

6.7.9 Academic policy alignment

Great care was taken to ensure that academic alignment, a necessity after the merger in 2004, was based on a sound policy framework. During 2007, the NWU made significant progress in preparing aligned academic policies and taking them to the Senate for approval. Policies that received Senate approval in 2007 were those for Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Moderation, and Recognition of Prior Learning, as well as the Study Guide policy. In addition, Senate approved the guidelines for the writing of study guides and the second version of the academic programme alignment manual.

Academic programme alignment

During 2007, the purpose of academic programme alignment was to rationalise overlapping or redundant offerings. There was also a strong focus on implementing the policy and procedures set by ICAS. This resulted in the submission of 63 academic programme applications to ICAS, as well as 76 applications for short courses. As at 1 January 2007, the start of the academic year, the NWU was offering a total of 705 programmes, of which 355 were undergraduate offerings and 350 postgraduate offerings. By the end of the year, 22% of the undergraduate programmes and 2.9% of postgraduate programmes had gone through the alignment process, as the following table shows:

Academic Programme Alignment Score Card		
Alignment action taken	Undergraduate programmes	Postgraduate programmes
Number of programmes aligned	34	2
Number of programmes phased out	44	8
Number of programmes aligned and rationalised	78	10

6.7.10 Academic staff development

The two main academic staff development activities of 2007 were the consolidation of the Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA) on all three campuses and the ongoing presentation of the Institutional Course for New Lecturers (ICNL), introduced in 2006. All the NWU's academic staff were eligible for the new ITEA awards, which were designed to encourage lecturers to develop their teaching skills and demonstrate that their teaching practices were based on sound outcomes-based teach-

ing principles, resulting in effective learning. The ITEA selection process, approved by Senate in the previous year, entailed the observation of three contact sessions by an evaluation panel, student feedback on teaching, proof of innovative strategies and approaches to teaching-learning and the evaluation of a teaching portfolio.

The consolidated awards were presented on all three campuses for the first time. The presentation of the first ITEA awards to academics from the Mafikeng Campus for 2007 was a milestone for the campus.

6.7.11 Academic development for students

Throughout the year, the NWU continued implementing SI across all campuses. A dedicated SI manager was appointed in September to oversee the institution-wide implementation, which involved more than 140 facilitators and over 3 700 SI sessions.

The table below provides SI implementation statistics at all three NWU campuses during 2007.¹⁷⁶

Campus	Modules implementing SI	Faculties/schools/programmes participating	SI facilitators	SI sessions facilitated	Number of students attending	% Risk Modules on K drive in which SI was deployed	Remuneration paid out to SI facilitators in 2007
Mafikeng	34	4	20	See note	See note	12.2%	n/a
Potchefstroom	72	7	96	2499	24990	2.3%	R92 734.46
Vaal Triangle	51	7	33	1229	12290	21.3%	R45 999.40
Total	157	18	149	3728	37280	35.8%	R138 733.86

Other highlights of academic student support services in 2007:

- The ongoing upgrading of classrooms on all three campuses. By 2007, 135 classrooms had been upgraded and another 46 identified for upgrading. The budget allocated for the programme amounted to R3 million.
- Prof Nan Yeld from the University of Cape Town conducted an external review of the NWU's alignment of student support services across the campuses.
- R3 million was allocated from strategic funds for the implementation of a study guide development and production process on the Mafikeng Campus.

6.7.12 Science and commerce foundation programmes

The 2007 academic year was the first year of operation of the extended BSc and BCom degree programmes, which include science and commerce foundation programmes. The admission requirements previously used were adapted to include an M score of four and an average of 40% in Standardised Assessment Tests for Access and Placement (SATAP).

The following information reflects the statistics for 2007:

Stream	Number recommended for admission	Registered number	Highest M Score	Highest SATAP average
Commerce (BCom-e)	282	220	21	83
Science (BSc-e)	180	101	19	64

Over and above the foundation programmes, the NWU continued to participate in the Sediba Project and the Education Quality Improvement Partnership Programme (EQUIP). For the Sediba Project, which develops the skills of mathematics, science and technology teachers, the overall pass rate among the 43 participating educators was 89%. Five of the 40 educators passed with distinctions. EQUIP is a holistic school development programme focusing on leadership, management and governance of learning at selected high schools in the North-West Province. Among participating schools, there was an encouraging improvement in the 2007 matric results compared to 2006.¹⁷⁷

6.7.13 Human capital development

The NWU began to position itself as an employer of choice during 2007 by restructuring its human resources operations. The aim was to achieve greater focus on value-adding activities such as remuneration strategy, talent, diversity and performance management, employment equity, human rights, employee wellness, HIV/AIDS programmes, as well as leadership and management development.

This restructuring resulted in the establishment of the Human Capital Development Directorate, bringing together under one roof all human resource functions and activities at the NWU.¹⁷⁸

Demographic composition of staff component

Race group	2006	2007
African	1 644	1 866
Coloured	112	141
Indian	40	44
White	3 138	3 159
Unknown	1	0
TOTAL	4 935	5 210

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6.7.14 Transforming for greater unity¹⁸⁰

According to the NWU's 2007 annual report, the stability and success of the university as a merged institution was already widely acknowledged in the tertiary education sector. The average graduation rate was holding steady at 25.3%, there was no student unrest at any of the campuses,¹⁸¹ and good progress had been made in bringing facilities on the campuses up to par. Building projects (including upgrading and macro-maintenance) to the order of R80 million were completed, including projects valued at R45,2 million on the Mafikeng Campus.

In short, the NWU had continued to strengthen its core business while undertaking transformation in a planned, sustainable manner, and therefore celebrated the following achievements and events during 2007¹⁸²:

Governance and accountability milestones

- The NWU received the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers' Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance as the Best Corporate Governed University in South Africa during 2007. Dr LK Sebege, Chairperson of Council, remarked that in the area of corporate governance, the NWU had become a leader in the tertiary education sector: its ranking had improved from fourth to joint first position in the PwC awards.^{183 184}
- During November 2007, the NWU mission and mission elements were thoroughly revised and goals were set in the 2008–2010 Institutional Plan towards becoming a balanced teaching-learning and research university, and implementing expertise in an innovative way.¹⁸⁵
- The development of a code of ethics and conduct revolved around the four “do” (action) values of integrity, commitment, accountability

and respect. The practical demonstration of the “do” values would become part of individual performance agreements and reward processes of the NWU from 2008 onwards.¹⁸⁶

- The institutional enrolment plan up to 2010 was submitted to the Minister of Education.
- Dr NT Mosia was appointed as Institutional Registrar from 1 January 2008.¹⁸⁷

Milestones in harmonisation and alignment

- The harmonisation project to develop one set of admission requirements on the various campuses neared completion, and from January 2008, almost all the faculties on the NWU's campuses would have the same admission requirements.
- Council accepted the new logo and branding strategy, the roll-out of which was completed during 2008.¹⁸⁹
- The NWU applied its policy of functional multilingualism without any major problems in 2007 and submitted its language plan to the Minister in June 2007.
- By the end of 2007, about 22% of undergraduate academic programmes had been aligned.
- The remaining academic structures, as prescribed by the Statute, were successfully implemented and most of the integrating policies, rules and procedures completed.¹⁹⁰
- Good progress was made in stabilising the ERP Oracle-based system and completing the integration of IT systems, bringing the IT infrastructure on the various campuses to the same level.
- The process of aligning existing policies, rules and procedures across the NWU, which began in 2005, continued and Council approved the following policies in 2007:
 - Information and Communication Technology, Networks and Information Resources (ICT) Policy
 - Rules for the Appointment of Senior Managers
 - Rules for the Research Ethics Committee
 - Language Plan Implementation Framework
 - Quality Policy
 - Teaching and Learning Policy¹⁹¹

- Assessment and Moderation Policy
- Policy on the Generation and Approval of Policies
- Procurement Policy
- Policy on Academic Dishonesty
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- Study Guide Policy
- Archives, Museum and Collections Policy
- Institutional Library Policy
- Research and Innovation Policy
- Financial Policy and Rules
- Disability Policy for Employees
- Community Engagement Policy ¹⁹²

The plan was to develop fully aligned policies, rules and procedures as part of an ongoing process of entrenching the NWU culture of management effectiveness during 2008. ¹⁹³

Research and innovation milestones

- A new “research entity model” was accepted, enabling any research entity on any campus to progress from a niche area, to a focus area, to a unit and eventually to a centre of excellence.
- A comprehensive framework for commercialisation was finalised. The essence of this was the establishment of a trust as a “holding instrument” for all commercial activities.
- A specific framework for community engagement as an essential part of the implementation of expertise was finalised.
- In terms of patents, the NWU was the leading university in South Africa, with 86 patents held and 77 pending in 2007.

Milestones in quality teaching-learning

- The quality policy was reviewed and the internal programme reviews continued. Good progress was made with regard to the HEQC audit and even though the HEQC announced a change in the date of the Institutional Audit, the NWU decided not to lose the momentum that had already been gained by the self-assessment process. The fifth draft of the self-evaluation portfolio was distributed for comments and critique to a larger managerial and academic audience.

- A second institutional system was introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning on the campuses, namely the compulsory Institutional Course for New Lecturers.
- The Faculty at the Vaal Triangle Campus was restructured into two faculties with six schools, and would also be in line with the Institutional PQM and programme alignment processes. The names of the two faculties were the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Economic Sciences and Information Technology. ¹⁹⁴
- The MEd (Educational Planning and Administration) programme at the Mafikeng Campus received accreditation with conditions from the HEQC. A final decision was pending once all required processes were finalised. ¹⁹⁵
- The NWU submitted improvement plans for the Advanced Certificate in Education and Postgraduate Certificate in Education to obtain full accreditation without conditions from the HEQC. ¹⁹⁶

Milestones for students

- Approval was gained for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Student Support Services (ACSSS) as a Committee of Council. ¹⁹⁷
- Supplemental Instruction (SI) was successfully established on all campuses.
- A Graduate Career Centre was launched on all three campuses.
- The Soccer Institute on the Mafikeng Campus was launched in April 2007 and four players were selected for the South African u/21 squad. ¹⁹⁸

Milestones for staff

- Working with Higher Education South Africa, the NWU submitted a business plan for a grant of more than R3 million to prepare and implement an effective HIV/Aids strategy.
- To further foster unity, over 300 staff members from all three campuses and the Institutional Office participated in a day of social sport and interaction on 9 November 2007.
- In the second climate and culture survey conducted, the “*culture quotient*” increased from 51.8% in 2005 to 58.3% in 2007.
- The NWU again reached the Department of Education target that requires universities not to spend more than 57.5%-63% of first-stream income on personnel costs.

- The performance management system was further implemented on the Mafikeng Campus (to the level of Directors), and maintained on the other two campuses.
- The employee wellness programme was maintained and implemented.
- The contracts of the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle Campus Rectors were extended Prof AL Combrink, who was due to retire, would stay on until 31 December 2009 and Prof PJJ

Prinsloo, who was also retiring, until 31 August 2009.¹⁹⁹

Employment equity milestones

The equity targets were recalculated and headway was made with the employment equity programme. For example, of the 336 appointments made throughout the university during the first months of 2007, 38.1% were black South Africans, while 53.3% were female. The tables below show the employment equity targets for the Institutional Office in 2007:

Institutional Office Status quo 31 August 2007

	2007 profile: straight numbers					2007 profile: percentages				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Status quo - IO	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female		Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	
Top Management	2	5	2	1	10	20%	50%	20%	10%	100%
Mid Management	2	9	0	2	16	13%	56%	0%	31%	100%
Academic										
Non-academic	6	59	9	112	186	3%	32%	5%	60%	100%
Total	10	73	11	118	212	5%	34%	5%	56%	100%

	2007 targets: straight numbers					2007 targets: percentages				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Status quo - IO	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female		Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	
Top Management	2	5	2	1	10	20%	50%	20%	10%	100%
Mid Management	4	26	1	13	44	9%	59%	2%	30%	100%
Academic										
Non-academic	6	34	6	74	120	5%	28%	5%	62%	100%
Total	12	65	9	88	174	7%	37%	5%	51%	100%

	2010 targets: straight numbers					2010 targets: percentages				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Status quo - IO	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female		Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	
Top Management	2	5	2	1	10	20%	50%	20%	10%	100%
Mid Management	6	24	2	12	44	14%	55%	5%	27%	100%
Academic										
Non-academic	8	32	7	73	120	7%	27%	6%	61%	100%
Total	16	61	11	86	174	9%	35%	6%	49%	100%

6.7.15 Highlights of higher education in 2007

Dr Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, shared his views of the state of affairs in the national higher education with the Council on 16 March 2007.²⁰¹

He said that rumours and facts about the dire financial situation of some universities were disturbing. There were also some positive developments, however. HESA was functioning well and was favourably positioned, and the meeting with the Minister on 20 November 2006 had gone well. The Southern African Regional University Association (SARUA) had been successfully launched

Dr Eloff noted that further discussions on the challenges of institutional differentiation had been announced. He then discussed the references that Finance Minister Trevor Manuel had made to higher education in his budget speech. Among other things, the Minister had highlighted the need to increase enrolment, produce more graduates in science, engineering and technology, train more teachers and increase universities' access to broadband. Furthermore, additional research chairs were needed, as were more students in social work. Dr Eloff said the NWU was well placed to contribute in most of these areas.

He gave a summary of three HESA programmes, namely HEAIDS (on HIV/Aids), Higher Education Enrolment Services, and the Higher Education Leadership and Management programme. Outlining HESA's five strategic objectives, Dr Eloff said these were:

- enhancing the sector's contribution to national development goals through research, teaching and community service
- building and strengthening a transformed sector with access to adequate funding, technology and HR capacity
- supporting the development of a policy and regulatory environment to enhance the role and contribution of higher education
- enhancing the higher education's contribution to regional development through continental and international linkages
- strengthening HESA's governance, administration and finances.

Dr Eloff informed Council about the financial position of the higher education sector, saying government had allocated additional funding of R2,2 billion for the sector. There were concerns that some of these funds would be used to "rescue" universities that had been badly managed financially, or that had made financially imprudent decisions in terms of their mergers (such as

moving whole faculties over long distances to financially unviable campuses). According to media reports, only three to seven universities were solvent.

University mergers were still unfolding, he said, and mixed successes were being reported

The first group of merging institutions that had performed well consisted of Unisa, Tshwane University of Technology, University of KwaZulu-Natal and NWU. The second group of performers were Limpopo University, University of Johannesburg, Walter Sisulu, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Merger difficulties that had been encountered were with institutional culture, management culture, finances, core business, capacity (especially at management level), and personal accountability of managers versus a collegial, democratic style. Generally speaking, universities' core business had deteriorated

Outlining the progress of the Presidential Working Group on Higher Education, Dr Eloff reported that:

- The next meeting with the President and Cabinet members was scheduled for 8 May 2007.
- A new task team had been appointed to review the draft proposal.
- The next development phase from JIPSA was to concentrate on town and regional planners and placement of graduates.

In the context of these events, the NWU was well placed financially but lagged behind in salaries. In terms of effective management, systems optimisation and transformation, it had a clear and workable vision, values and mission, as well as strategic goals towards becoming a balanced teaching learning and research university. Focused efforts were needed in specific areas such as the HEQC audit, and in improving the throughput rate and increasing research output. The NWU's entrepreneurial spirit and "can do" approach would enhance its viability.²⁰²

6.7.16 The NWU performance since the merger, 2004 - 2007

NWU performance of the core business ²⁰³

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total student enrolment	40 145	38 596	38 736	44 750
Undergraduate pass rate (contact and distance)	75.2%	78.8%	78.5%	79.5%
Graduation rate (number of degrees as % of total heads)	24%	20%	25.3%	25.3%
Total degrees and diplomas awarded	9 657	7 746	9 821	11 346
Master's degrees awarded	626	700	765	618
PhDs awarded	87	82	110	124
Article equivalents published (total)	275	327	361	375*
NFR-rated researchers	73	85	82	95
Total research output**	798	865	1 074	1 060*

* Estimated

** Includes research masters, PhDs times 3 and publications

NWU financial performance ²⁰⁴

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total budget income (R million)	R953	R1,080	R1,253	R1,420
Surplus (recurrent items) (R million)	R14,7	R68,7	R62,6	R65,7
Staff cost/total cost	53.25%	52.4%	52.6%	53%
Self-generated income (R million)	R311	R371	R441	R578 (Including accommodation, contract work, patents, licensing fees)
% of income from government	45.13%	43.2%	42.76%	39.8% (broke the 40% barrier for first time)
% of income from tuition fees	21.3%	21%	20.2%	18.9% (broke the 20% barrier for first time)
Capital expenditure on new buildings (R million)	R5,9	R29,3	R44,5	R46,8 (plus R54,1m in infrastructure macro maintenance)

6.7.17 The challenges facing the NWU in the next phase of consolidating the merger and incorporation

In the next phase during the following years of the NWU's evolution, the focus would be on consolidating the merger and incorporation. Here, the challenges would be to improve the core business and accelerate the pace of transformation.

To improve the core business, the university would have to:

- maintain good teaching-learning outputs and decrease the dropout rate
- improve research outputs on all campuses
- improve levels of innovation and community engagement

- maintain financial viability and invest in staff.

For transformation, the emphasis would be on:

- redress (buildings, infrastructure and services)
- equity (not just overall numbers, also specific levels)
- normalising the student experience on all campuses.

Other priorities were to improve internationalisation, improve quality assurance processes after the HEQC audit and to keep on balancing the unity and diversity, as well as centralisation and decentralisation, all the while pressing ahead with the cross-campus alignment of the core business.



Endnotes

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CHAPTER 7

Academic alignment sets the scene for programme parity

Although the NWU had inherited glaring discrepancies in academic programmes across its three campuses, the university was determined to ensure that by 2010, every degree it produced would have the same value in the market, regardless of which campus it had come from. Achieving this ambitious goal was no easy task.

7. The alignment process for academic programmes for the new merged university

7.1. The framework for academic planning for mergers and incorporations¹

The Ministry of Education's 2003 Guidelines for mergers and incorporations described academic planning as shaping the future of an institution to a greater extent than any other plan. According to the guidelines, an academic plan and programme alignment must be developed within the framework of national policies, specifically the National Plan for Higher Education and the Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) policy. The plan itself must balance academic desirability with financial viability, and its contents must be derived from an "audit" that the university concerned has conducted into its academic programmes, infrastructure and student flows.²

These requirements imply that issues such as the size and shape of the higher education system should not be left to the vagaries of uncoordinated institutional decisions. The White Paper on Education and the National Plan stress that the higher educational system must be steered in such a way as to meet national goals through a combination of planning, funding and quality assurance.³

Therefore, in determining the "range and scope" of individual public higher education institutions, the Minister took two steps. The first, taken in 2002, was to specify a PQM framework for each institution. The second was to cap the funded enrolments of individual institutions and to use student enrolment planning as a steering mechanism.⁴

7.2. Terms of reference for academic alignment

The Institutional Senate approved the terms of reference for the alignment process for academic programmes on 22 August 2007.

Senate's starting point was to explain the meaning of academic programme alignment. This refers to all the arrangements made by programme leaders at the NWU to ensure equivalence (parity) in programme and module outcomes for all similar programmes, as well as equivalence in the quality arrangements for all programmes offered

Defining "curriculum" is difficult as it means different things to different people, according to the Institutional Senate. For the purpose of the academic programme alignment process, curriculum refers to a specific purpose and values of learning within a learning programme that leads to a qualification. In other words, a curriculum is a combination of particular modules that leads to an explicit specialisation within a programme.

Core modules are modules required to ensure that the specialisation in terms of study fields in the curriculum or programme is achieved⁵

7.3. Criteria for the Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM)⁶

The PQM of a higher education institution sets out the qualifications and broad fields of study that the Minister has permitted it to offer. The qualifications it offers must conform to national academic policies approved by the Minister, such as Report 116 of 1995 for universities. The implication of these binding regulations for the new merged university was that it was not permitted to include technikon-type undergraduate certificates or undergraduate diplomas in its PQM.⁷

Five criteria were used in determining whether a higher education institution could offer a qualification in a field of study:

- institutional capacity, especially the ratios of qualified academic staff to students
- overall graduation rates and the graduation rates in the proposed programme area
- past enrolment trends
- the programme and qualification mix of neighbouring institutions
- adherence to the conditions that are applied when the Department of Education considers new programme applications.⁸

7.4. Creating the NWU's new PQM⁹

The initial task team on the PQM consisted of Prof AL Combrink (PU for CHE) and Mr AC Nyakutse (UNW). Their strategy was to collate and combine the PQMs of the two institutions into one document for the Joint Senate

Committee to discuss at a meeting on this topic.¹⁰ The discussion would focus on programme rationalisation and the six areas of concern outlined in government's National Plan.

The Joint Senate Committee decided that a proper analysis of the prevailing status of the PQMs of the two institutions had to be done before December 2003. In this analysis, emphasis was placed on the academic programmes offered at the time, and on ways to consolidate the PQM into one coherent document for the new university. Mr MC Rakubutu and Dr S Coetzee-Van Rooy, as Directors of Academic Support Services at the two universities, would coordinate and monitor the process, and ask the Deans at the various faculties to cooperate.

During the Joint Senate Committee meeting of 12 November 2003, Prof Combrink and Mr Nyakutse reported that the PQM had been cleaned up and a consolidated document proposing an interim PQM for the new university had been compiled.

For the longer term, a proposed plan for a single academic framework for the new institution was discussed. This plan provided for CESM study groups on the campuses to review all the academic programmes in view of the merger and incorporation. The Directors of Academic Support Services on the campuses would coordinate the process, which would continue until the end of the Joint Senate Committee's lifespan.

7.5. Student enrolment caps in the funding formula

In April 2004, the Minister capped student enrolments because of unexpectedly high student numbers. These caps on the allocation of block grants for the 2005/06 funding year were as follows:

- Contact Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrolments: the maximum 2003 total permitted for funding calculations for 2005 was the total for 2002 + 5%.
- Distance FTE enrolments: the maximum 2003 total permitted for funding calculations for 2005 was the total for 2002 + 3%.

These capped totals were used to determine the 2006 funding formula and to calculate the teaching input for funding for the years 2007 to 2009, according to the Ministerial Statement of June 2005. The main implication of these funding caps, particularly if they continued for the full 2006-2009 period, was that enrolment growth would not be funded.¹¹

7.6. Student enrolment planning¹²

The Minister consulted the higher education sector on proposals to control student enrolment numbers at both systemic and institutional levels, for the sake of affordability and sustainability.

At a systemic level, the control mechanism was government funding linked to a broad system-wide student enrolment plan. At institutional level, institutions themselves controlled enrolments through the use of enrolment management mechanisms.

The enrolment planning proposals had several implications for the NWU. Firstly, it would not be able to determine the shape and size of its student enrolment up to 2009. Instead, the Minister would determine this. The second implication was that the NWU would have to base the enrolment plan on its funded enrolment, which was calculated on the combined 2003 total for PU for CHE and UNW. Thirdly, the NWU would have to exercise caution in any academic plan driven by financial projections of future government funding.¹³

7.7. Academic programme alignment¹⁴

By 2006, only one structural element pertaining to the merger guidelines was still outstanding: the finalisation of the academic programme alignment on the three campuses, which generated long debates in Council. The NWU had already proposed that by 2010, any degree of the university should have the same value in the market place, no matter which campus it came from.

The situation was that, as a result of the merger, the NWU had inherited a number of academic programmes that duplicated each other or were in decline and, at the same time, a substantial number that were of strategic value to the NWU. The purpose of academic programme alignment was to rationalise overlapping or redundant offerings, strengthen programmes with strategic value and achieve uniformity in academic standards, delivery and structures.

The newly constituted Institutional Senate contributed actively to academic programme alignment through its Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) and its sub-committees. Together, they cover all learning fields and faculties at NWU. These structures made significant progress during 2006 in preparing aligned academic policies and taking them to the Senate for approval.

From mid-2006 onwards, Senate approved a number of policies to guide the academic alignment process. Among them were the Teaching and Learning policy, Assessment and Moderation policy, Recognition of Prior

Learning policy and the Study Guide policy. In addition, Senate approved the guidelines for the writing of study guides and the second version of the academic programme alignment manual. The latter clarified an important issue for the alignment exercise: the structure of generally formative degrees in terms of credits and numbers of modules per NQF level.

One of the mechanisms approved for programme alignment was the establishment of “academic programme alignment clusters” to focus on the coordination, alignment and rationalisation of academic programmes. Another important development was the shift towards academic transformation and accelerated organisational unity through programme alignment. There was also a strong focus on the implementation of the policy and procedures of ICAS. As a result, good progress was made with the implementation of programme alignment in the second half of 2006, especially in the study fields of law and education.

The implementation of the programme alignment framework proceeded in 2007. As at 1 January 2007, the NWU was offering a total of 705 programmes, of which 355 were undergraduate offerings and 350 postgraduate offerings.

7.8. The functioning of the Core Steering Team ¹⁵

The Core Steering Team was the main body overseeing the effective flow of the academic programme alignment process at the NWU. It reported regularly to the Institutional Management and the Institutional Senate on progress, using reports from its so-called CAR convenors and committees (CAR standing for coordination, alignment and rationalisation).

In overseeing the academic programme alignment process, the Core Steering Committee released a second updated draft of the academic programme alignment manual. The aim was to assist all Deans, academics from all faculties on the campuses, and CAR convenors and members to proceed effectively with the academic programme alignment process.

The following topics were addressed in this manual:

Elective module: these are modules that contribute to the achievement of the programme or curriculum outcomes, but learners could choose which of these modules they wanted to include.

Fundamental module: these modules give rise to the critical cross-field outcomes that learners have to take to comply fully with the requirements for obtaining a qualification.

Generic academic programme: these are academic programmes that form the core of traditional university education and aim to infuse general knowledge and skills in the broad disciplines such as Arts, Economics and Natural Sciences.

Professional academic programme: the quality assurance and accreditation of these programmes is governed by professional bodies, which regularly review the competence of the university offering these programmes. By their nature, these programmes infuse specific and specialised knowledge and skills in the domain of the programme.

Programme: this is a purposeful set of sequential learning activities and experiences that lead to a qualification in a particular field of study.

Qualification: this refers to the different degrees, diplomas and certificates that the NWU offers and which are approved, accredited and registered by the Department of Education, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Qualifications are planned combinations of outcomes which have a defined purpose or purposes and are intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning.

Tutorial sessions: The aim of tutorial sessions is to supplement contact sessions by enabling the lecturer (and/or assistants) to assist students in smaller groups to engage with a particular problem related to the outcome of the module.

Credit weighting for modules: The approved credit weightings for modules at the NWU are 8, 12, 16, 24 and 32. The following table presents a proposal for the allocation of periods, tutorials and practical periods per week, related to credit weighting for modules. This proposal was widely consulted on during the academic alignment process.

Credits and the allocation of periods, tutorial periods, practical periods:

Module credit weights	Number of periods allocated per week	Number of tutorial periods allocated per week	
8,12	3	3	The general guideline is 4 practical periods per week. Discuss with campus time-table planner to ensure whether feasible in terms of infrastructure availability
16	4	3	The general guideline is 4 practical periods per week. Discuss with campus time-table planner to ensure whether feasible in terms of infrastructure availability
24,32	52	3	The general guideline is 4 practical periods per week. Discuss with campus time-table planner to ensure whether feasible in terms of infrastructure availability

Guidelines for credits and allocation of time for assessment: managers consulted these guidelines for planning in the academic programme alignment process.

Guidelines for informal formative assessment: there were no specific guidelines for the number of informal formative assessment opportunities for modules. The underlying assumption was that such opportunities would be presented in every contact session that students attended at the NWU.

Guidelines for formal-formative assessment: based on the approved Assessment and Moderation policy, these guidelines highlighted the importance of continuous assessment.

Implementation of SAQA's critical cross-field outcomes (CCFO's) in all academic programmes at the NWU: one way of implementing the CCFO's in NWU programmes was to include compulsory modules focused on CCFO's as described in the following table.

Approved implementation for CCFO modules in academic programmes at the NWU:

NQF level	Semester 1	Semester 2
5 (First year)	No CCFO modules in this semester A compulsory 12-credit Academic Literacy (AL) module is introduced in the first semester for those first-year students identified by the Test for Academic Literacy (TAL) as demonstrating an unacceptably high risk for successful study.	Academic Literacy 5 (12 credits) Learners who did not demonstrate appropriate language proficiency and academic literacy levels in the assessment would complete Language Proficiency in semester 1 and proceed to Academic Literacy in semester 2.
6 (Second year)	No CCFO modules proposed in this semester	Generic Module: Understanding the World as a set of related systems 1 (12 credits)
7 (Third year)	Programme-specific module: Understanding the World as a set of related systems 2 (12 credits)	No CCFO modules proposed in this semester
TOTAL credits	12 credits	24 credits

Programme structures: the structures of professional and generic programmes differ according to their needs and requirements. There was no guideline for the structure of professional programmes as professional bodies determine the requirements. In the case of generic programmes, the following programme structure was proposed

Proposed 6, 4, 2 module structure for generic programmes, (See overleaf table):

The Institutional Senate decided to implement CCFO modules on 24 October 2007.

As mentioned earlier, the proposed module structure did not make provision for professional programmes. However, where the professional programmes used

modules from the general formative degrees, the module structure would influence the professional programmes to some extent. The understanding was that the professional programmes should adhere to professional body regulations and that any exceptions should be negotiated with the owners of professional programmes, where possible.

The modules overleaf could be sub-divided into credits (in line with the institutional credit weighting decision that approves modules with 8, 12, 16, 24 and 32 credits) if this would best serve the clustering of modules in a particular programme. For example, a module of 16 credits could be sub-divided into two modules of eight credits.

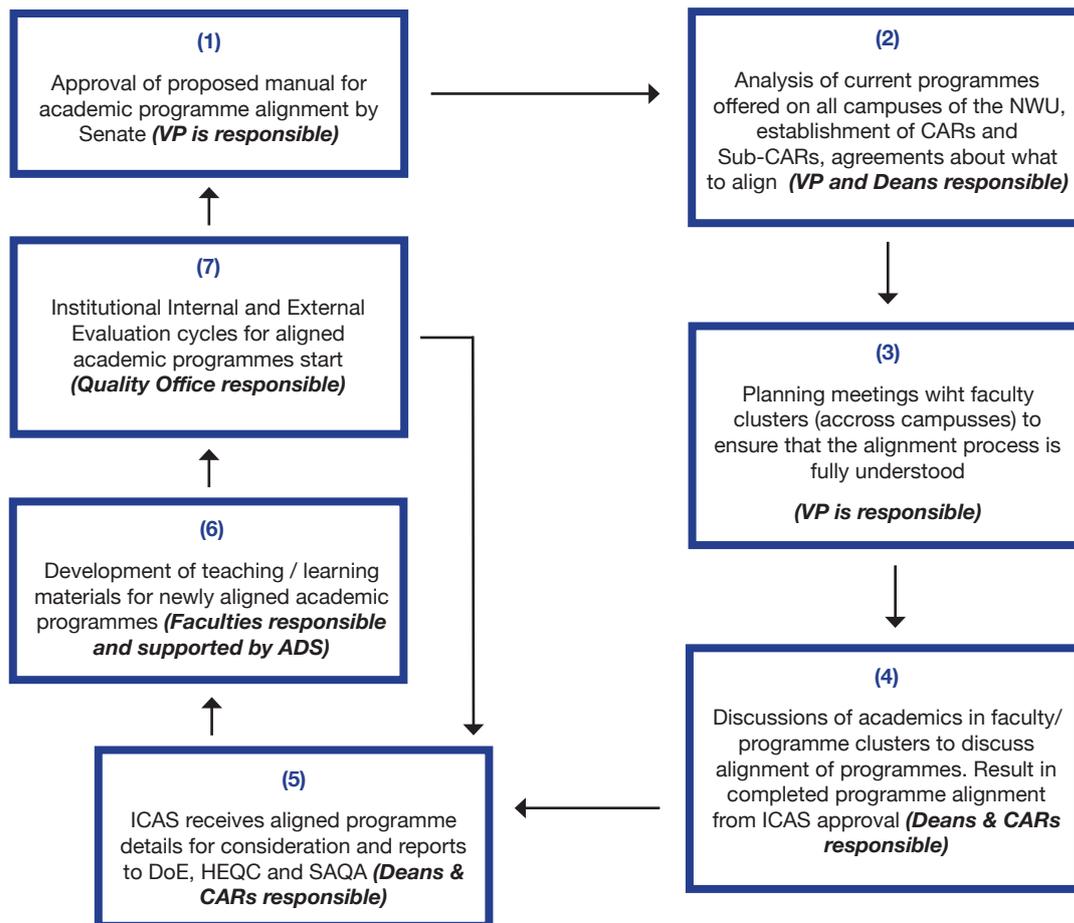
	Semester 1						Semester 2					
Year 1 (total = 144 credits)	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Year 2 (total = 140 credits)	16		16		16		16		16		12	
Year 3 (total = 140 credits)	32		32		12		32				32	
TOTAL CREDITS (424)	212 credits						212 credits					

If a particular programme could not fit within the proposed 6, 4, 2 programme structure for generic programmes, it should be structured appropriately and the deviation explained and motivated in an ICAS application. The deviation should not interfere with the provision of other aligned programmes that use the

proposed programme structure (6, 4, 2 modules).

Modules could be sub-divided into smaller modules (within the approved credits structure to allow for some flexibility). Again, sub-division should not interfere with the provision of other aligned programmes using the 6, 4, 2 programme structure.¹⁶

Process map for academic programme alignment at the NWU¹⁷



Step 1:

Step 1 of the programme alignment process was concluded with the completion of the academic programme alignment manual. Senate approved the early versions of this manual on 10 May 2007, and it was used in training sessions for academic staff across campuses from September to November 2006. When decisions about the CCFOs were made, the manual was updated and distributed to all Deans and members of the so-called CARS committees (C=coordination; A=alignment; R=rationalisation) and subcommittees.

Step 2:

The list of NWU programmes was analysed and, based on this analysis, the coordination, alignment and rationalisation committees and subcommittees were established at the end of 2006. Deans were still busy with a more detailed review of programmes offered in their faculties. The questions being asked were:

- Which programmes were similar and could be aligned across all campuses?
- Which programmes were different and would continue as different programmes offered on one or two campuses but not on all three?
- Which programmes were being considered for rationalisation?

Answers to these questions were especially crucial for the generic programmes in Natural Sciences and the Arts. To speed up alignment discussions on these disciplines, urgent decisions were needed from the Deans concerned

Step 3:

Training workshops for all academics involved in the academic programme alignment process were held from September to November 2006. In total, 137 academics from all campuses were trained

Step 4:

This alignment process was under way in some coordination, alignment and rationalisation committees but not in others. It seemed that the subcommittees in Humanities has struggled the most to make progress. The list of programmes mentioned in step 2 would speed up the process.

Step 5:

The ICAS process and forms were well established and ICAS approved the following aligned programmes: LLB in the field of law, NPDE, ACE and BEd in the field of Education, and the BCom (CA) in the accounting field.

Most of the submissions were finalised by June 2008 for implementation in January 2009.

Step 6:

This entailed establishing an Institutional Study Guide Policy and study guide manual and an institutional decision about the funding of study guides for students on the Mafikeng Campus. It was also necessary to establish an institutional process and office for the management of the study guide production process, and to appoint a Manager: Teaching and Learning Production and Coordination in the Institutional Academic Development and Support (ADS) office.

Step 7:

This step revolved around internal and external programme evaluations. The question that ICAS was tasked with exploring before the end of June 2007 was whether academics should continue with the internal and external evaluations for existing programmes, and whether they should start a new schedule for aligned programmes from 2009/10.

7.9. Implementation of the programme alignment framework

Implementation of the framework continued throughout 2008. By 31 December 2008, some 32% of undergraduate programmes had been aligned and rationalised, equating to 114 out of a total of 355 programmes. Over the same period, 22 postgraduate programmes were aligned and rationalised, equating to 6% of all programmes at postgraduate level. Meanwhile, ICAS handled 128 academic programme applications and 123 short course applications during 2008.

Good progress was made in preparing for the HEQC's 2008 quality audit. The focus was on building teaching-learning capacity among academic staff and students and raising the NWU's international profile. Furthermore, institutional library services, an important asset in the university's knowledge base, were streamlined for greater access and cost effectiveness.¹⁸

The academic alignment process gathered further momentum early in 2009 as faculties throughout the NWU worked to meet the June 2009 deadline for obtaining formal approval for undergraduate programmes, curricula and modules from ICAS. The intention was to implement the aligned programmes across the board in 2010. By the deadline set, 128 generic and professional bachelor degrees had been through the alignment process, representing 77% of all undergraduate programmes.

The alignment of some undergraduate programmes was not possible due to campus-specific specialisations.

These specialisations were the result of the NWU’s character as a unitary, multi-campus university serving diversified niche markets. The alignment of other programmes such as nursing was delayed due to challenges faced by some external role players. Another factor with an impact on the alignment process was re-accumulation, which affected about 23% of unaligned undergraduate programmes.

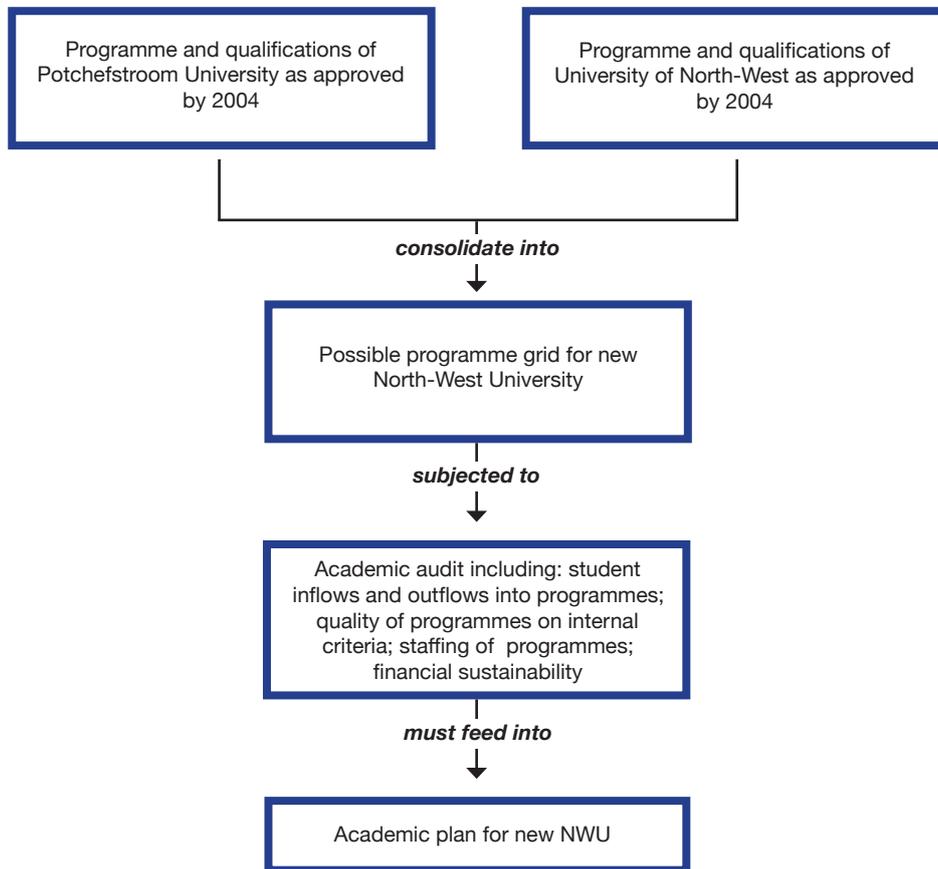
After completing the formal part of academic alignment at undergraduate level, the next step was for faculties to finalise their detailed plans for implementation. A critical aspect of these plans was communication to

students. The NWU was committed to ensuring that academic alignment would not disadvantage pipeline students who were in the process of obtaining a degree. With this in mind, the university used certain principles to underpin the academic alignment exercise. For example, under no circumstances should the changes to programmes and curricula prolong a student’s study programme.

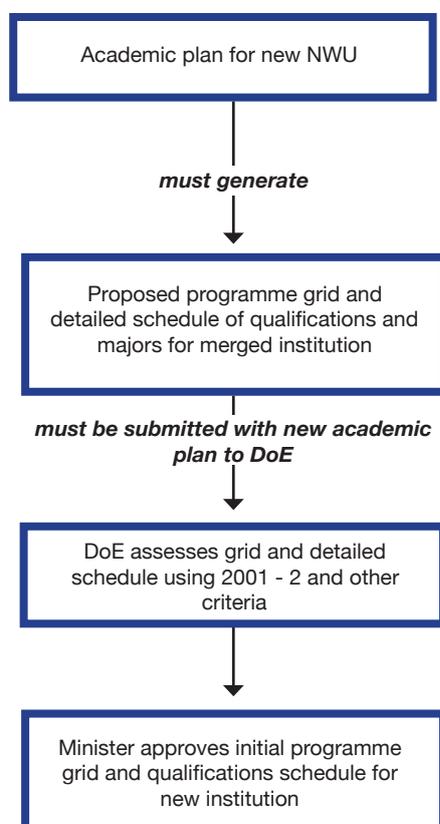
Senate assisted in monitoring the implementation of the undergraduate programme alignment while making sure that the postgraduate programme alignment continued in accordance with the Higher Education Qualifications

Framework.

The processes involved in programme alignment are summarised in the following diagrams:¹⁹



The steps described in this diagram underpinned the academic plan of the new merged university.



These diagrams illustrate what a consolidated programme grid for a merged institution could look like, depending on the following criteria:

- Since an academic programme was defined as studies in a major field leading to the awarding of a formal qualification, each X on the grid represents a programme offered by this university.
- The student inflow and outflow aspects of the academic audit should ideally consider each X as a unit of analysis.
- For purposes of analyses of staffing and sustainability, groups of programmes on a single row in the grid could serve as a unit.

The following diagram is an example of the set of aligned programmes finally submitted to the Department of Education.²⁰

University X: Programme grid Approved contact programmes as at December 2004								
Major fields of study	Undergrad diplomas	General 1st B degree	Professional 1st B degree	Postgrad diploma	Postgrad B degree	Honours degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
1. Agriculture								
1a Agricultural economics								
1b Agriculture								
1c Fisheries								
1d Forestry								
2 Architecture and design								
2a Architecture & building science		x	x		x	x	x	
2b Quantity surveying			x			x		
2c Building management				x			x	
2d Town and regional planning								
3 Arts, visual and performing								
3a Music			x			x	x	x
3b Drama		x				x	x	
3c Fine arts			x				x	
4 Business and management								

Major fields of study	Undergrad diplomas	General 1st B degree	Professional 1st B degree	Postgrad diploma	Postgrad B degree	Honours degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
4a Accounting						x	x	x
4b Banking and finance								
4c Business data systems								
4d Management		x	x	x		x	x	
5 Communication								
5a Journalism and media studies								
5b All other communication								
6 Computer science								
6a All computer science		x				x	x	x

7.10. Prescribed features of the proposed PQM for NWU

The Department of Education expected the new academic plan of the NWU to meet certain criteria:

- It should not be “aspirational” or an idealised version of what NWU hoped eventually to be.
- The plan must take account of current national higher education policies, in that the kind of academic programmes NWU would offer would be subject to Report 116. Therefore, NWU could not offer technikon-type programmes. Only in exceptional circumstances would the Department authorise the university to offer new academic programmes.
- The plan should take account of the ministerial student enrolment planning decisions and proposals, and in particular, the impact that these could have on (a) NWU’s future student enrolment totals (b) its enrolment management processes (c) its financial planning as far as the generation of government funds and student fee income is concerned
- The academic plan must have a solid empirical base, derived primarily from the institutional academic audit referred to in the merger manual. Detailed analyses of the past academic performances of the PU for CHE and UNW should underpin the academic plan.
- The overall sense derived from both the academic plan and the proposed PQM should be that they were primarily a consolidation of the best of the academic activities of the two original institutions.²¹

7.11. Management of the PQM²²

The academic programme alignment process was the basis for the ongoing calibration of the PQM of the NWU. The process, aimed at ensuring there was equivalence or parity in the outcomes of all similar programmes across all campuses, was one of the most fundamental issues on which the success of the merger depended

Different qualification structures, different credit allocations to modules and different content (depending on campus-specific niches and expertise) all contributed to the difficulty of aligning programmes. However, in 2010, it was full steam ahead for the implementation of all aligned undergraduate programmes, and for the further structural alignment process of remaining undergraduate programmes.²³

At its meeting on 10 May 2006, the Institutional Senate accepted four principles as guidelines for the use of study guides for the purposes of academic programme alignment.

- The first principle was the compulsory development and publication of study guides for all “taught” modules (undergraduate and postgraduate) offered at all campuses of the NWU.
- The second principle was that compulsory study guides should be programme-based, outcomes-based and interactive to encourage active learning in all modules.
- Thirdly, the Institutional ADS Office should compile an institutional manual for the writing of programme-based, outcomes-based, and interactive study guides in collaboration with the campus ADS offices. The ADS offices should circulate the proposed manual to all

faculties for their inputs before approval by the Institutional and Campus Senates during October 2007.

- Fourthly, all compulsory study guides were to be included in the same production process, coordinated by the Institutional ADS Office.
- A fifth principle was proposed but not accepted. This was that a student levy should be used to pay for additional study material (over and above students' textbooks and workbooks). The Senate did not accept this proposal because of the absence of an institutional decision about the inclusion of levies paid by students as part of their class fees for the development of study guides. This meant that students would not in future have to purchase additional study material such as class notes or Dictates.

7.12. The implementation of the module *Understanding the World*

An important part of academic planning is the introduction of knowledge, skills, competencies and values that students acquire through their studies to obtain life skills. Depending on their level and duration of their studies, NWU students should have various knowledge, skills and competencies, and values after completing their programmes.

Scientific knowledge and insight stretching over one or more subject areas is a necessity. This should comprise factual knowledge and problem-solving knowledge. Factual knowledge should include knowledge and insights about concepts, structures, procedures, models, theories, principles, research methods and the place and boundaries of science in human life. In the case of problem solving, students need insight into the encyclopaedia and coherence of science, and the realisation that problem solving does not exist in isolation.

When it comes to skills and competencies, students who have completed their studies should be able to identify and solve problems critically and creatively, have the knowledge to act as entrepreneurs, be able to function in groups and lead groups, be able to apply effective and responsible self-management, and be able to autonomously obtain, master, apply, analyse, integrate and evaluate knowledge.

At the same time, students should be able to communicate knowledge scientifically in various media, meaning they should have listening, reading, speaking, reasoning and computing skills. They should also be able to effectively and efficiently use science and technology with responsibility towards the environment, their own health

and the health of other people. Other attributes are an appreciation of the need for lifelong learning, accuracy and punctuality, as well as the ability to formulate and justify one's thought framework with reference to Christian and other views of life.

The desired values students should have are respect for fellow human beings, creation and authority, a commitment to the pursuit of excellence, dedication and integrity, and a skill to advance in principled thinking and adaptability.

Finally, students should be aware of the importance of citizenship. This means participating as a responsible citizen in the life of the local, national and international community, and cultural and aesthetic sensitivity about a variety of social relationships and the possibilities and limitations of a plural society.

7.13. Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA)

The UNW had no formal process for recognising teaching excellence. The PU for CHE had an award, called VERKA. This process was revised and consulted about on all three campuses, resulting in the ITEA process being implemented in January 2007 across all three campuses.

The ITEA was instituted to encourage full-time academic members of staff to develop their teaching skills and to give evidence-driven demonstrations that their teaching practices adhere excellently to sound outcomes-based teaching principles that should result in effective learning in the higher education sector.

The Institutional ADS Office owns and administers the ITEA process. Full-time academic members of staff who have completed phases one and two of the Institutional Course for New Lecturers (ICNL), and have been in permanent employment for one year at the NWU, could apply to be considered as participants in the ITEA process. Deans in co-operation with the School Directors or Heads of Department approve the applications of participants from their faculties. Hence, an application is regarded as a nomination by the Dean, school director or head of department concerned.

Participating candidates must teach at least two full semester modules during the year of participation in the ITEA process. Candidates who teach more modules may select two modules to be assessed in the ITEA process. The campus teaching advisor and the teaching, curriculum and quality committee of the relevant faculty then selects a three-member evaluation panel for each ITEA candidate.

The evaluation panel should include the chairperson or another member of the teaching, curriculum and quality committee, as well as a senior subject expert and a

campus-teaching advisor. To ensure continuity, at least two members of the evaluation panel must attend all three contact sessions for a participant. The same evaluation panel assesses a candidate's contact sessions and portfolio or presentation.

Institutional Academic Development and Support

Having already attended to the streamlining of ADS in 2005, the directorate held a joint planning session in February 2006 for the institutional and campus ADS offices. The purpose was to ensure that institutional priorities listed in the Institutional Plan were addressed on all the campuses. Planning and coordinating the work of institutional and campus ADS units in this way could potentially accelerate the achievement of the ADS goals set in the Institutional Plan.²⁴



Endnotes

- 1 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05, ppt
- 2 Ministry of Education, Higher Education Restructuring and Transformation: Guidelines for mergers and transformation, April 2003, pp 35, 40
- 3 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05, ppt
- 4 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05, ppt
- 5 Sevid Mashego, Academic programme alignment, (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report, October 2011)
- 6 MJ Venter, Organisational unity of the NWU, (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 7 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05, ppt
- 8 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05, ppt
- 9 DJ van Wyk, The merger and incorporation process (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report 21 23 45 5 compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 10 NWU Institutional Office archive, JSC meeting, minutes, 18 June 2003
- 11 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05 , ppt
- 12 MJ Venter, Organisational unity of the NWU, (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 13 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 05, ppt
- 14 MJ Venter, Organisational unity of the NWU (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 15 MJ Venter, Organisational unity of the NWU (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 16 MJ Venter, Organisational unity of the NWU (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 17 MJ Venter, Organisational unity of the NWU (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
- 18 Sevid Mashego, Academic programme alignment (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report, October 2011)
- 19 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 2005
- 20 NWU Institutional Office archive, Academic Programme Alignment Workshop, 28 July 2005, ppt
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- 22 Sevid Mashego, Academic programme alignment (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report, October 2011)
- 23 Sevid Mashego, Academic programme alignment (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report, October 2011)
- 24 Sevid Mashego, Academic programme alignment (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report, October 2011)

CHAPTER 8

Research grows from the roots up

The two universities that merged to form the NWU brought their own research cultures and perspectives to the merger. The challenge was to retain the best of their research legacies while building synergies for the future.

8. Merging the research activities and post-graduate education of the two merged universities¹

8.1. Pre-merger restructuring at the PU for CHE²

The origin of the research management structure

The major restructuring of research at the former PU for CHE in the late 1990s is recounted here in some detail, since the eventual research management structure of the NWU after the merger was mainly built on the PU structure.

During the 1990s, research and postgraduate education became a cause for concern to the leadership of the former PU for CHE. Both research quality and productivity were perceived to be weak compared to other universities in the national system. Traditionally the university had largely been a teaching institution, and research was mostly left to the initiative of individual staff members, with the exception of a few pockets of excellence.

The Department of Education published its White Paper on Higher Education in 1997 during a time when it was initiating a far-reaching restructuring of higher education in the country. In the White Paper, there was emphasis on the key role of research, and phrases such as *concentration and selectivity*, *demonstrable strength* and *number of places to be publicly funded* appeared. All concerned interpreted this as signalling that the usual practice of research at that time was to be replaced by a focused approach and that only focus areas with evaluated strengths would in future be able to qualify for government funding. This was in line with most international trends.

Although the Department did not implement these plans in the form proposed, the intention of government policy at the time was clear. The government then revised the national science and innovation system, leading to new funding modalities. The concept of mode-2 knowledge production (the idea originating from Europe that knowledge was produced more and more within the context of application) also exerted a powerful influence on the key policy makers in higher education.

At the PU for CHE, there was an intuitive drift in the direction of mode-2 knowledge production and associated interdisciplinary approach. The policy-makers chose “an

entrepreneurial orientation” as a key phrase in its vision statement, formulated in 1994, and after the merger and formation of the NWU in 2004, the new strategic plan also referred to “the NWU as a mode-2 university”.

Examples included several high-level joint-research agreements between the university and large industrial companies, as well as numerous interactions of staff members with institutions in society, government and industry. These formed part of attempts to meet the challenge of being relevant to communities outside the university and simultaneously to strengthen finances for the academic task. It was policy to re-invest all income generated through mode-2 activities in research capacity building.³

Planning and preparations

The realisation that the research profile of the PU for CHE was inadequate was especially strongly felt by the Rector, Prof CJ Reinecke, as head of the institution at the time. He was an experienced researcher in the field of Biochemistry and had strong ties with universities in the Netherlands. He took the lead in 1997 and contracted the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at Twente University to design and implement the restructuring of research at the PU for CHE, with the overall purpose of quality improvement.

The Rector, with the assistance of a consultant from CHEPS, prepared an implementation manual. In response to government policy of concentration and selectivity and drawing from the experience of CHEPS, the main feature of the manual was to form a small number of focus areas to integrate research and postgraduate education. These focus areas were based on existing strengths, aligned with national priorities and emphasising interdisciplinarity.

Implementation and international audit

The implementation process was simultaneously bottom-up and top-down. During 1997, faculties had the opportunity to propose focus areas, which elicited around 55 proposals. A small committee, chaired by the Rector and consisting of some of the university’s top researchers and senior managers, studied the proposals, consulted with the Deans and succeeded in eventually reducing these to 15. This was done by grouping together related proposals and eliminating some that were not feasible.

The Rector and his advisors identified interim group leaders to consult with the group members, to prepare documentation on the research record of each of the 15 groups and to propose research plans for the groups according to a prescribed format. Each document was sent to an expert advisor from the international research community and, based on their responses, the group leaders made appropriate adjustments.

Following this, each group prepared an extensive in-depth self-evaluation, again according to a prescribed format and a research plan. In line with the CHEPS philosophy, an external audit committee of international stature then reviewed these self-evaluations and plans, together with the process followed, to arrive at the proposed focus areas during a week-long visit to the university.

The chairperson of the committee was a recently retired president of the Free University of Amsterdam, Dr HJ Brinkman, who had acted as advisor to the PU for CHE previously, but was sufficiently independent for this purpose. The remainder of the committee consisted of three members drawn from the international academic community and three national members, one each from industry, the science councils and the universities. The presence of members from Europe and Australia ensured involvement from developed countries while the presence of a university Rector from a neighbouring African country, together with the chairperson of the former National Commission on Higher Education, ensured credibility in the African context.

After intensive deliberations, including interviews with delegations from all the proposed focus areas, the committee presented its findings to an open gathering of staff and students. In its written report, the committee concluded that the university had followed “best international practice in university quality promotion: a combination of self-assessment and external assessment”.

The committee commended the university for “*the standard it has developed for future quality evaluation at the university*”. It recommended that the university authorities accept 12 of the 15 proposed focus areas. What these focus areas had in common was their interdisciplinary and relevance to South African circumstances. The 12 focus areas recommended for approval were:

- Decision-making and Management for Economic Development
- Communication in South Africa: Language, Literature, Media
- The Teaching-learning Organisation
- Manufacturing, Energy Systems, Material and Mineral Technology

- Reformed Theology, Ethics and Society
- Development in the South African Constitutional State
- Preventive and Therapeutic Interventions
- Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Research and Services
- Business Mathematics and Informatics
- Space Physics
- Chemical Transformation and Separation Technology
- Environmental Sciences and Development

In addition, the committee made other valuable recommendations on more general, related matters, including aspects of research management, staff development, postgraduate education and community development programmes.

Progress was swift. The committee met on campus during June 1998, the written report was completed in August and the university management promptly accepted all the recommendations. The stature and authority of the committee was such that there was very little objection to these decisions, which were widely and easily accepted

Restructuring into focus areas and schools

By the end of 1998, the 12 focus areas had been officially approved and a Research Director was appointed for each focus area. In most cases, they were researchers with international standing. Where required, external advisors participated in the final shaping of some of the focus areas.

At the same time, the university management used the opportunity to reduce the number of academic departments. There were 87 departments at the time, and there were merged into 35 new schools, each consisting of a few subject groups, which handled matters particular to the different disciplines. The guiding principle here was to form the schools in such a way that they were aligned as closely as possible to the focus areas, given their assigned responsibility for teaching and learning as contained in course work, mostly along disciplinary lines. Research and postgraduate education through research would in future be the responsibility of the focus areas, with emphasis on interdisciplinary and a mode-2 approach.⁴

The university decided to retain its nine faculties with some adjustments, while the structuring of the schools was such that each was located entirely within a faculty. However, in order to encourage interdisciplinary research, the focus areas sometimes crossed faculty boundaries,

containing members from more than one faculty. In each case, management determined the faculty in which the “centre of gravity” of a focus area was situated and the Director of the focus area then reported to the Dean of this faculty. A School Director headed each school and, to ensure that the new research structures would not be subservient to the more traditional structures, Research Directors and School Directors received equal status and empowerment.

The implication was that a staff member would report to both a School Director and a Research Director and receive directions from both, thus creating a “matrix-like” system of management. A system of written “task agreements” was introduced between each staff member and the relevant School Director and Research Director jointly, with any disputes referred to the Dean concerned for resolution.

Quality assurance measures

Following these rather radical developments, several significant structures and processes completed the new drive for research.

A small Research Support department was set up, headed by a Dean of Research, Prof JC Geertsema, who came from the ranks of the serving Deans. His status as colleague on the same level of authority enhanced acceptance of the new office by the Deans of the faculties.

A monitoring commission was formed to closely monitor the 12 focus areas to ensure their sound development, as recommended by the audit committee the previous year. The monitoring commission consisted of five researchers of international standing from within the university, and deliberately excluded Senior Management and the Research Directors. In addition, the Dean of Research acted as secretary and was responsible for the final editing of the report.

The commission functioned as a generalist commission, concentrating on sound research practice. Initially some Research Directors were sceptical and feared intrusion into their own domains, but this changed when it became evident that the commission provided sound advice and effectively voiced the concerns of the community of researchers to management.

A three-year cycle (1999 to 2001) of external peer reviews of the 12 focus areas was started, reviewing four focus areas per year. The university made funding available to bring external reviewers from the national and international community to the PU for CHE for periods of three days in each of these years. Four panels, each typically consisting of one international and two national members, convened simultaneously under the leadership of an independent chairperson for the joint

sessions. The chairperson of the audit committee of the previous year, HJ Brinkman, acted in this new capacity and CHEPS provided the secretariat.

The peer reviews followed the format of an extensive self-evaluation, followed by an external review. These reviews were not in any way part of a national review system, but were organised on a voluntary basis by the university for its own quality improvement purposes. Feedback from the Research Directors whose focus areas were reviewed indicated that they considered the experience extremely valuable.

Additionally, a high-level Executive Committee for Research was established, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and Rector and consisting of the relevant Senior Managers, the Deans, the Dean of research and the 12 Research Directors. The purpose of the committee was to decide on policy matters concerning research and to evaluate the management actions in this regard.

For the first time, the university budget made significant internal research funding available. This funding came from interest on investments which management had earmarked for strategic purposes. The funding was sufficient only for the basic expenses of focus areas, but was a vast improvement compared with the past. The intention was that focus areas should attract supplementary outside funding to support research projects. In addition, the Monitoring Commission was entrusted with the responsibility of making recommendations on a separate seed fund for innovative approaches within the focus areas.

A major consequence of the implementation of the new research strategy was a noticeable change in institutional culture, sometimes referred to as “*perhaps the most important, yet the most difficult to achieve*”. Those who were serious about research were inspired by the appointment of 12 Research Directors on the same level as School Directors and dedicated to the research task, together with the entire line management fully accepting responsibility for implementing the new dispensation.

Even those who were uncertain about their commitment to research chose to become members of focus areas, rather than to be left behind. The Research Directors welcomed the new opportunity, were enthusiastic about their new duties, were inspired by the new challenges and were energetic in building their focus areas. They were dedicated researchers who participated in international networks and had their own research cultures and research visions. Hence, they were remarkably free from bureaucratic management styles and mostly encouraged an “adhocracy culture”, characterised as dynamic, entrepreneurial and creative. Informal comment from researchers at other South African universities was

generally positive and reinforced the growth of the new culture.⁵

8.2. The merger and the research strategy⁶

At the time of the merger, UNW had a weak research culture, as was evident from the low publication output and other research benchmarks. Under these circumstances, the Interim Management of the newly formed institution decided to adopt the focus area system for the benefit of the larger institution while entering into a phase of capacity building. Thus, the further development of the focus areas continued and the second round of external evaluations of the focus areas proceeded as planned, with representatives from all campuses participating – in some cases as observers.

The second cycle of external evaluations took place during the years 2004 to 2006, with a former Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Prof Michael Gibbons, as chairperson of this Audit Committee and with the ACU providing the secretariat.

In 2004, as one of its three strategic objectives, the newly merged NWU adopted the strategic imperative: *“Research and innovation: developing from a learning/tuition-based university with focused research to a balanced teaching and research university. This included the development of a strategic framework with measurable outcomes and its presentation to the three campuses to guide future research plans. A consequence was the formation of ‘research entities’, thus creating a development trajectory, based on well-defined criteria, for research groups to progress from ‘niche area’ to ‘focus area’ to ‘research unit’ and ultimately to ‘Centre of excellence’.”*

At the time of the merger, research on the Potchefstroom Campus and the Vaal Triangle Campus was managed in an integrated way, both campuses coming from the former PU for CHE. The Mafikeng Campus had a very different research management system. The Dean of Research, Prof JC Geertsema, proceeded with discussions (which had already started in 2003) with Dr MP Maaga, Director of Research at Mafikeng Campus, to work towards a unified research system for the new NWU. There was agreement that discussions between researchers from all campuses should be facilitated so as to explore the possibility of forming joint structures between the focus areas (Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle) and the existing niche areas (Mafikeng) where appropriate. Several such discussions took place during the ensuing years.

In view of the low level of research output at the Mafikeng Campus and the Vaal Triangle Campus, the Interim Management during the merger phase appointed an

outside consultant, Dr Daan van Vuuren, to investigate the situation on each of these campuses. His report served as the basis for the discussions that followed

One of the recommendations of Dr Van Vuuren was that a strategic planning session for research at the Mafikeng Campus be arranged with the Institutional Research office and the top management of the Mafikeng Campus (Campus Rector, Campus Vice-Rector and Deans). This workshop took place in November 2005. Prof Frikkie van Niekerk, the member of the Institutional Management responsible for research and innovation, and Prof Dan Kgwadi, Rector of the Mafikeng Campus, co-chaired the workshop. Prof van Niekerk indicated that as part of the merger process a task team was requested to investigate possible models for a research support function to support all campuses. The task team’s recommendation was that the new institution should have a single research office, situated in Potchefstroom and headed by a Dean or Director of Research. This office should function at the institutional level and would serve all campuses.

The report on the workshop included a short background on the history of research at the Mafikeng Campus, providing some insight into the state of research on the campus. Briefly, the background was this: the University of Bophuthatswana was established in 1971 mainly as a teaching university but also to do research and community service and numerous articles had been published. The university was wholly funded by the Bophuthatswana Government. In 1994, Bophuthatswana was incorporated into the Republic of South Africa and became the University of North-West. From then on, the central government funded the university according to the SAPSE formula. In 1994, it was found that the University of North-West was over-staffed and to remedy this, the staff members were offered lucrative retrenchment packages in 1996. The most productive people left because they knew that they would find employment elsewhere. This process was repeated in 1998 leaving the university with very few active researchers.

After the merger, the Institutional Committee for Research and Innovation (the successor of the former Executive Committee for Research of the PU for CHE) was structured as a subcommittee of the Institutional Senate. It met for the first time in May 2005 with high-level membership from all three campuses. An example of the new integrated approach was an early decision that medals for the best master’s students would, in future, be awarded for the university as a whole. Individual campuses could award separate medals for capacity-building purposes.

Academics from all three campuses of the newly merged university accepted the research management system inherited from the PU for CHE as best practice. The university management viewed the results achieved during the 10 years since the initial restructuring of research in a very positive light. For instance, during the preparations for the HEQC's 2009 institutional audit, it became clear that the approach to research management was largely in agreement with the published criteria of the committee, both being informed by international norms.

8.3. The Joint Senate Committee research task team⁷

The Joint Senate Committee (JSC) task team on research management, consisting of Prof JC Geertsema (PU for CHE) and Dr PM Maaga (UNW), recommended at the JSC meeting of 18 June 2003 that the new institution should have a single research office headed by a Dean/Director of Research. The seat of the research office should be at the Potchefstroom Campus, since it already had a computerised research management system and associated administrative and quality procedures. Staff from the research office might be placed at the other campuses.

The JSC ultimately accepted the task team's report⁸ and mandated the team to look at the provision of support staff for research offices at the different campuses to help stimulate the redress of inequalities. A matter of great concern would be the significant development of research at all the campuses.

8.4. Consequences of the approved structure for research management at the NWU

On the topic of research, the Education White Paper 3 declared that this function is the principal tool for creating new knowledge: "*The production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge and the development of high-level human resources are core functions of the higher education system. Research plays a key role in both these functions.*"⁹

The active participation of NWU staff on all campuses led to a significant improvement in research productivity (publication output and doctoral degrees delivered), research income and the ratings of research staff within the national rating system. This is clear from the following table, which summarises the changes that took place from 1999 (both universities) to 2006 (merged institution) for some relevant indicators.

Comparable research indicators 1999 – 2006

	Publication output (in article equivalents)	NRF funding position among institutions	Doctoral degrees	NRF-rated staff
1999	193	12	48	45
2006	352	7	102	85

These numbers showed a strong increase in total research publications, measured in article equivalents. The quantitative improvement of research output does not necessarily mean an improvement in quality, however. Partial proof of quality improvement was the number of NRF-rated staff, since an applicant only earns a rating through high-level international peer review of the quality of research output. Similarly, the improved NRF funding position as compared to other institutions could be attributed to the external panel's perception of an improvement in quality.

As planned, postgraduate education became increasingly integrated with research because of specific managerial decisions towards achieving this goal. The requirement now was that thesis topics must come from the research programmes of the focus areas, instead of being *ad hoc* topics proposed by students or staff. This integration then led to an improvement in the quality of postgraduate education as well. The strong growth in doctorates awarded is also evident in the research indicators table.

A further consequence of the restructuring process was that the university had a well-functioning organisational system for research management. The Director of Research Support (formerly the Dean of Research) performed a strong coordinating function and had the "*functional authority*" to ensure the implementation of accepted policy throughout the institution. Although the central research office was rather small, consisting of only four permanent staff members, it was complemented by the equally small, decentralised offices of the initial Research Directors. Together, the centralised and decentralised offices constituted a viable administrative and management structure.

Another advantage of the restructuring was the strong emphasis on strategy at all levels. An annual strategic plan for research and innovation guided research university-wide and each of the focus areas had strategic plans directing their research activities.

This all added up to marked improvements in the research and innovation capabilities of the NWU. An indication of the university's innovation prowess in comparison to its peers was its performance in the 2005 innovation competition of the Innovation Fund

of the National Research Foundation (NRF). The NWU received the award for “*Most Progressively Innovative Higher Education Institution*”.

Similarly, the university has consistently been among the top five (and in some years one of the top two) recipients of funding from the national Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP), which promotes interaction between universities and industry. By actively managing its intellectual property portfolio, it has licensed a number of patents to private companies, and has also established a number of spin-off companies from its innovation activities.

8.5. The years of research consolidation: 2007-2010¹⁰

A series of reviews of the state of research on the three campuses was undertaken after 2006, both as part of the annual review of focus areas and as specifically identified reviews. These reviews consistently highlighted the need to review the coherence and cohesion of research management processes across campuses, particularly in the focus areas. For this reason, a strategy was formulated to ensure the integration of activities, encourage maximum participation and ensure that differentiation and quality could be maintained and expanded.

In the Institutional Plan for 2007-2009, the management team identified research output as a top priority and as a result formulated action plans in the Operational Plan. A strategy was developed to move the university from a primarily tuition-based university to a balanced tuition and research one. This included making sure that academics set aside a certain amount of time for research, alongside their teaching and community engagement responsibilities. With this in mind, the NWU adopted the 40:40:20 strategy for tuition, research and the application of knowledge.

At the same time, a research management framework was put together to allow the campuses and their faculties a certain amount of flexibility. This was important because the campuses had diverse research activities and varying levels of output per faculty, necessitating the leeway to develop different but coherent research strategies.

According to this framework, research would be conducted within *research entities*, which would have the following characteristics:

- Their activities would fit within the strategic goals and priorities of the NWU.
- They would engage in longer-term multidisciplinary activity focused across several faculties or campuses.
- Each entity must be a significant organisational grouping and have critical mass.
- An entity’s income must come from a variety of sources.
- It should receive support from the relevant faculties and schools.
- An entity should have its own core staff, space, equipment and facilities.
- It should have its own identifiable cost centre(s) and accounts.

Research entities (or their constituent parts) would not all be at the same level and some type of growth path (trajectory) was required with carefully prepared and accepted criteria. The underlying principle for identifying and developing research entities was that each campus should develop research strengths relevant to their areas of specialisation and local context. Systems of matrix management would need to be constantly refined to provide sufficient local autonomy, allow maximum flexibility to take advantage of opportunities and respond to local needs, and ensure retain quality control.

A research entity development trajectory was approved at Senate in 2007, which included the following levels:

- Level 0: Start-up group
- Level 1: Research niche area
- Level 2: Research focus area
- Level 3: Research unit
- Level 4: Centre of excellence

Specific criteria and development trajectories were developed and approved for each level.¹¹ Research at the NWU was poised for a vibrant and dynamic era.



Endnotes

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- 2 DJ van Wyk, The merger and incorporation process (NWU Institutional Office archive, unpublished report 21 23 45 5 compiled by DJ van Wyk, October 2012)
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CHAPTER 9

Never compromise on quality

Slowly but surely, a robust quality assurance culture has become embedded in the academic programmes and support services of the university.

9. Developing quality assurance processes for the merged university

9.1. The concept of quality

A 1998 survey of the literature on quality in higher education identified five approaches to this mechanism or management instrument:

- **The reputational approach**, using peer reviews, employer surveys or an institution's own tradition or historical understanding.
- **The outcomes-based approach**, relying on outcome indicators such as the proportion of PhD students who graduate, the number of research publications per staff member, or research grants or awards that an institution earns.
- **The inputs approach**, focusing on the potential quality of recruited students and staff at an institution.
- **The value-added approach**, referring to the contribution that an institution makes over and above the stock of knowledge and potential of a recruited person. Institutions that enrol students with poor grades and manage a reasonable pass rate add value to the education profession.
- **The fitness for purpose approach**, judging the quality of institutions by the extent to which they achieve the goals they have set for themselves.¹

The following viewpoint stated by Robin Middlehurst and Carolyn Campbell illustrates these approaches.

“Quality assurance is an important part of academic professionalism. It is also a key mechanism for building institutional reputation or brand in a competitive local and global arena and a necessary foundation for consumer protection. Across the world, it is part of the armoury used by governments to increase, widen or control participation in the face of rising demand for higher education and it is central to current debates about higher education as a public good or tradable commodity. Quality assurance is also fundamental to the security of qualifications and the mobility of professionals. Without effective and appropriate quality assurance policies and practices, aspirations towards

knowledge economies, lifelong learning, community development and social inclusion cannot be fully realised. It is for these reasons that quality assurance is receiving increasing attention at all levels.”²

Graham, Lyman and Trow supported the view that an internal process underpins the quality in quality assurance in higher education. This means that the management of an institution should take responsibility for quality at the institution, and that lies with the management of an institution, and that quality can be maintained and improved by identifying deficiencies, implementing remedial action and taking cognisance of the outcome of external evaluations or audits.³

The Education White Paper 3 of 1997 emphasised the need for quality assurance in higher education:

“As each institution in the higher education system clarifies its institutional mission based on appropriate programme choices and combinations, as the body of learners diversifies, as the teaching, research and management profiles become more representative of our people, as quality promotion and quality assurance processes take hold, as the institutional landscape changes, as centres of excellence are recognised and promoted across the system, the distinction between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged will become less and less relevant.”⁴

9.2. Quality assurance planning at NWU⁵

9.2.1 General approach and strategy⁶

Prof SJP du Plessis of the PU for CHE and Prof MW Legotlo of the UNW led the Joint Senate Committee task team on quality assurance for the new merged institution. This task team submitted a draft policy document to the Joint Senate Committee meeting of 10 September 2003. Their document outlined seven quality-related matters that should be taken into account in the formation of the new university. These were the general characteristics of quality assurance; quality assurance and promotion standpoints; quality assurance, quality promotion and self-evaluation; responsibility for quality assurance; quality policies; quality audits on macro level, and academic quality assurance structures, also on macro level.

The Joint Senate Committee (JSC) accepted this document and recommended that it be submitted to the Joint Management Committee and the Joint Operating Team as a proposed policy document. Furthermore, the JSC mandated the task team to compile a draft quality manual which would include practical arrangements for implementing a quality office (taking into account factors such as budget, action plans, etc), and requirements needed for an HEQC audit. The development of the quality manual should take into consideration the background quality assurance documents of the HEQC and the national Department of Education.

A progress report was submitted to the JSC meeting of 12 November 2003, and the document was referred to the Joint Management Committee as “work-in-progress”.

9.2.2 Developing quality assurance processes at the merged university ⁷

During its first year of existence, the NWU did not give much formal attention to the planning and documentation of quality assurance processes and procedures. Since the management structures had to be finalised first, a Director in the Institutional Quality Office was appointed at the end of 2004.

From 2005 work started in earnest on the establishment of uniform quality assurance processes across the three campuses. The institutional policy has since been revised a few times in order to keep pace with the changes at the NWU and the general higher education sector.

At the former PU for CHE, so-called departmental evaluations were well known, and the paradigm shift to programme evaluations was relatively easily facilitated. The latter had already started in 2003, a year before the merger. A Dean handled quality issues until the appointment of a Campus Vice-Rector in 2005.

At the Mafikeng Campus, the quality assurance process received a lukewarm response initially. Much time was spent establishing a trust relationship between the Quality Office and the campus’s managers and academics. The eventual appointment of a Campus Vice-Rector: Quality set the scene for the commencement of internal and external programme evaluations in 2007. Since then, many evaluations have been conducted. Academics in general and Directors and Deans in particular started to appreciate the value of quality assurance and to participate actively in the process.

The next major milestone was the HEQC audit. Overseeing preparations were the Executive Advisor in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of the Quality Office, ensuring that the university was ready for the HEQC audit visit in March 2009. ⁸

In anticipation of this event, quality assurance took precedence at the NWU throughout 2006 as preparations for the 2009 HEQC quality audit gained momentum. Led by the Quality Office, the aim was to ensure that quality assurance of academic and support functions become embedded in the organisation, not just for the immediate future but also in the long term.

To this end, a sound planning and policy framework was developed as the cornerstone of sustainable quality assurance at the NWU. The Quality Plan developed in the previous year was taken a step further early in 2006 when Senate approved it. Next, the Quality Policy was reviewed and tabled at Institutional Management at the end of 2006.

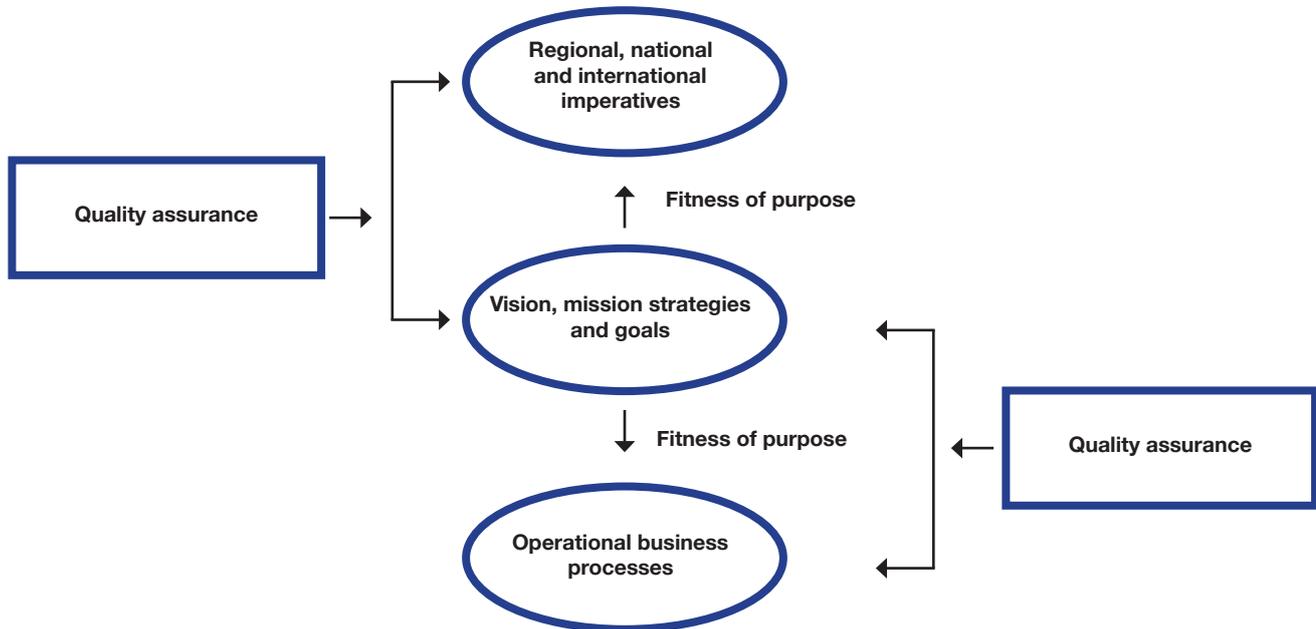
A gap register was compiled and a drive commenced to apply the policy framework across the university. All campuses appointed quality coordinators who assisted in facilitating the internal programme evaluations, among other things. Recognising the importance of quality-related issues, the Potchefstroom Campus went further by appointing a quality manager for each faculty.

During 2006 four critical external programme evaluations were conducted, as were 22 internal evaluations. Potchefstroom Campus conducted 16 internal evaluations, the Mafikeng Campus three and the Vaal Triangle Campus three. With this quality assurance infrastructure in place, the NWU commenced the first phase of the self-evaluation for the HEQC quality audit. This was a comprehensive process of evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of the university’s quality arrangements for its core business of teaching-learning, research and implementation of expertise.

The starting point was to streamline the functioning of the existing Core Steering Team, which was renamed the HEQC Quality Audit Project Team. Next, the 19 audit criteria were allocated to 14 task teams with 10 convenors, and an internal situation analysis was conducted, using the HEQC criteria as guidelines. The analysis included identifying various gaps, together with associated risks, that would be tabled at Institutional Management early in 2007. The results were also used to redevelop the NWU’s Quality Management System, in close collaboration with the HEQC project for merged institutions. ⁹

The self-evaluation process went hand in hand with the development of a self-evaluation portfolio for the 2009 HEQC Audit Panel. The evaluation process and self-evaluation report were based on a clearly defined framework, shown in the following diagram.

Framework for NWU self-evaluation quality process ¹⁰



In parallel with the programme evaluations, the NWU began the programme alignment process. The objective was to support equal quality within similar and comparable programmes presented on the various campuses. This process eventually resulted in the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses undertaking a joint internal evaluation of the first aligned programme, namely the LLB programme, in 2011.

Almost all the internal and external evaluations showed that the NWU's campuses would have to work closely together to standardise and undertake joint quality assurance of similar and comparable programmes.

As far as quality assurance of support services was concerned, shortly after the merger, many support services started to document their business processes and map out quality assurance plans for them. Under the guidance of the Quality Office, various capacity-building workshops were held to speed up the process. As a result, quality manuals were published for the majority of the support units. The next step was to initiate self-evaluations and peer evaluations of support units on the campuses and the Institutional Office.¹¹

The quality enhancement of support units included discussions between the Quality Office and key NWU support service managers on the redevelopment and upgrading of the support services quality manual. This exercise paved the way for closer alignment in the processes and procedures followed by the campuses, whose support services also engaged in a self-evaluation exercise during 2007.

In addition, the quality assurance capacity on the campuses was strengthened by transforming the existing website into an intranet with supporting documentation that staff members could access easily.¹²

After the HEQC audit site visit in March 2009,¹³ the university developed a Quality Improvement Plan of the NWU with a threefold purpose. This was to:

- respond officially to the recommendations of the HEQC
- set appropriate goals in response to the HEQC recommendations by prioritising the goals and proposing programmes of action in teaching-learning, culture, climate and diversity management research, management and leadership, infrastructure and community engagement
- attend to related developmental and quality improvement matters identified by the institution.¹⁴

The results of this process still influence the quality planning agenda of the NWU and will not disappear from the radar in the near future.¹⁵

In the meantime Dr Jannie Jacobsz from the Institutional Quality Office did supplementary research work on this topic and obtained an MPhil qualification on the HEQC audit, which enlightened a broader academic audience to the work done at NWU.¹⁶

9.3. Quality assurance measures

The NWU's internal quality assurance practices encompass individual and group settings.

Every employee of the NWU has a job profile and a task agreement, which clearly defines the agreement between employer and employee. In order to create an environment conducive to employee performance, it is essential to continually scrutinise the quality of the processes in which every employee works and the outcomes that each individual delivers.

In support services, peer evaluation is an important quality assurance tool as it ensures systematic and ongoing quality development and improvement in all support departments. Peer evaluation serves as a control measure to verify the validity of internal quality assurance processes. These evaluations also assist and enhance the NWU to proactively plan and act on quality-related objectives and achievements.

The following table shows the support departments that undertook peer evaluations between 2009 and 2011.

Kind of service	2009	2010	2011
Institutional Office	(1) Language Directorate		
Mafikeng Campus		(3) Academic Services	(5) Student Affairs
Potchefstroom Campus	(2) Statistical Consultation Services		(6) Protection Services (7) Library Services
Vaal Triangle Campus		(4) Student Development	
Total	2	2	3

An example of how peer evaluation works is the experience of the Student Development Service at the Vaal Triangle Campus, which underwent an external peer evaluation on 19 and 20 October 2010. Colleagues from the Quality Office and from peer departments of other universities participated. The physical visit and evaluation was preceded by an intensive preparation process in which all the staff of the department played a part.

The result was an assessment portfolio that contained an overview of the department's activities and the results of a self-evaluation identifying general gaps and risks. A report on the evaluation was prepared and the department had the opportunity to comment on it. After that, the final report was released with recommendations on

how to address the identified gaps and the risks on a managerial level.¹⁷

9.4. New phase for external programme evaluations

In 2010, a new phase dawned for academic external programme evaluations at the NWU, when international experts became part of the evaluation panels. The following table lists the programmes that were externally evaluated at the NWU in 2010.

Date	Programme	Campus
16 March 2010	History (subject-in-programme) Undergraduate	Vaal Triangle Campus
9 April 2010	Chemistry (subject-in-programme) Undergraduate and Honours	Mafikeng Campus
20 August 2010	M Social Work: Forensic Practice	Potchefstroom Campus
7 September 2010	MA Theology	Vaal Triangle Campus
13 October 2010	Mathematics (subject-in-programme) Undergraduate and Honours	Mafikeng Campus
2 November 2010	MBA	Potchefstroom Campus

An important aspect of external evaluation was the follow-up process. If a programme was found not to comply with the HEQC's minimum standards during the external programme evaluation, a post-evaluation visit was undertaken to ensure that improvement plans were implemented to improve the grading of the programme to the minimum standards. In 2010, nine post-EPE visits took place on the campus.

External programme evaluations gained momentum in 2011 and 2012.

By this point, it had become clear that the benefit of external evaluation went beyond the formal evaluation outcome and that it included 'softer', more indirect contributions. This was particularly apparent during the external programme evaluation of the Master's Programme in Environmental Management on the Potchefstroom Campus in October 2011. Other external evaluations at the Faculty of Natural Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus were also seen as positive experiences that led to a greater awareness of quality.

Quality awareness was also taking root at the Mafikeng Campus. Dr Eva Manyedi, the quality coordinator on the campus, said: "An external programme evaluation is a developmental process and not a threat." She added that academic programmes on this campus had benefited substantially from external programme evaluations.¹⁸

Commenting on the peer evaluation undertaken at the Ferdinand Postma Library on the Potchefstroom Campus on 18 and 19 October 2011, Ms Elsa Esterhuyzen, librarian, said that the peer evaluation process was an enlightening event. The participants had gained much more than they had expected, leaving everyone with a sense of accomplishment. *“In the process, we looked critically at what we do and how we do it, which was in itself a valuable exercise. The existing quality manual was revised in the required format with procedural additions created with Visio software. The Library received considerable support from the Quality Office.”*

The library evaluation panel consisted of four external members who were library directors of universities, and three NWU senior staff members who make use of the Library as academics and expect their students to do the same. Before the visit, each panel member received a hefty portfolio of documents and a process flow chart showing the activities of the Library.¹⁹

To further raise awareness of the benefits of quality assurance, a workshop was held on the Potchefstroom Campus for support service departments on 17 March 2011. Of the 27 departments on the campus, 23 were represented and some had a full turnout of all their staff.²⁰

9.5. Gaining further momentum in 2012

Moving into 2012, the campuses had busy quality assurance schedules.

At the Potchefstroom Campus, which had hosted accreditation visits by four statutory bodies in 2011, more such visits followed:

In February 2012, the Psychology Board of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) visited the Potchefstroom Campus to accredit the honours degree in Psychology and the honours and master’s degrees in Industrial Psychology. Next, in October, the board visited the Mafikeng Campus to accredit the Psychology programme and its subdisciplines and fields of study.

In August 2012, the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) visited all three NWU campuses to accredit the university’s CA programmes.

In the same month, the South African Council for Social Service Professionals (SACSSP) visited the NWU’s three campuses to conduct a review of the Bachelor’s degree in Social Work. This followed the Council on Higher Education (CHE) announcement of a national review of the degree.

In September 2012, the Mafikeng Campus received a visit from the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC), which conducted a second follow-up visit to accredit

the Diploma in Animal Health and the BSc in Animal Health degree programme.²¹

9.6. Other quality milestones

Throughout 2012, the university paid close attention to strengthening the quality mind-set and seeing to the detail of quality assurance processes and procedures.

The Institutional Quality Office (IQO) focused on ensuring that all NWU faculties and support departments had quality manuals to guide their operations. A quality manual consists mainly of an overview of a faculty or support department background, positioning, vision, goals, structure, processes and quality management measures.²² At the Institutional Office, quality manuals were compiled or updated for Internal Audit, Records Management and Administration, the Quality Office, Career Centre and Student Administrative Systems.²³

On 7 and 8 February 2012, the Quality Office collaborated with peers from other universities in hosting a discussion forum on quality assurance at support departments.²⁴ This initiative was followed for the first time by an internal networking indaba in October 2012 for the 85 support departments of NWU. Dr Ina Rothmann of Afriforte, the keynote speaker, focused on customer service in a university environment.²⁵

Ms Antoinette Vermeulen, Quality Manager: Academic Programmes, delivered a paper on quality assurance at a conference of the American Evaluation Association during 2012. The Stephen F Austin State University (SFA) also invited her to do a presentation as a guest lecturer on social work-related experiences, assessment and quality control in South Africa.²⁶

Looking ahead to 2013, a number of external and internal programme evaluations were planned on the Mafikeng and Potchefstroom campuses. The internal evaluations would include the BEd Hons programme (Learner Support and Education Management, Law and Systems) across the three campuses.

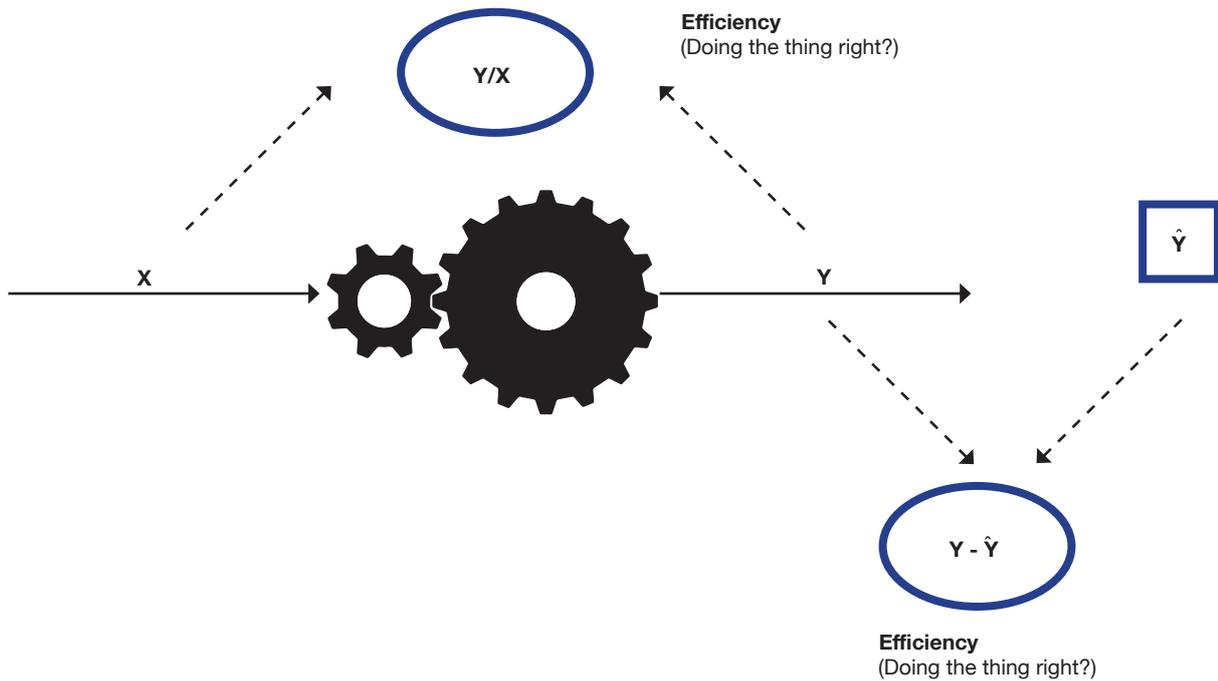
On the support side, the plan was that the Information Technology departments on all three campuses and the Institutional Office would undergo a peer review, with experts from as far afield as the USA participating as panel members.²⁷

9.7. Measurement is critical

In an effort to explain the philosophy behind the quality endeavour of NWU, Dr Maarten Venter and Dr Jannie Jacobsz expressed their understanding of process design, measurement and quality, as follows: *“It might be asked, ‘but why measurement?’ The answer to this is embedded in the following questions: Do we progress towards our (NWU, campus, faculty, school, subject*

group, programme group) agreed upon goals? The degree of goal attainment is known as Effectiveness. We also need to answer questions of the following type, which point towards efficiency, namely: are we progressing fast enough? Can we afford the pace? Is our per capita output improving? And what resource conversions are we bad at?"²⁸

Measurement serves at least two purposes, namely to inform and to steer. It was the scientist Lord Kelvin who said, "When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely in your thoughts advanced to the stage of science." The next diagram illustrates their viewpoint.²⁹



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- 27 http://www.nwu.ac.za/webfm_send/64827
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CHAPTER 10

An efficient, stable university that also has heart and soul

Efficiency and stability have been hallmarks of the NWU since its inception in 2004 but that does not mean that the university lacked the human spirit that breathes life into an organisation.

10. Organisational unity of the NWU

10.1 Determining the corporate soul of NWU

Office politics could dilute an organisation's sense of mission, and operating matters always consume daily agendas. These trends tend to sideline the very values that normally steer the working lives of employees, who then simply give in to the pressure to perform. In this struggle to survive and make progress in a competitive organisational environment, employees and managers lose sight of something more important – an ecology in which work should serve people, not only as a means for earning a living, but also as a platform for people to develop their best talents. The soul of an organisation therefore concerns more than matters of the bottom line.¹

The mode in which an institution operates determines its well-being. There is a danger that a generation of spiritless managers could shape the organisational culture and in the process build soulless organisations. Spiritless managers can only follow the rigid blueprint of strategic plans. They depend on hierarchy for power, and squander resources for short-term goals at the expense of long-term growth. Soulless organisations are filled with people who are satisfied in their professions - just not their jobs. Workers in soulless organisations only care about their personal agendas rather than the organisational goals.² In these circumstances many workers feel burnt out and overstressed. The solution is to create an environment that lets individuals consider and embrace their most deeply held values, which in turn creates a happier and more motivated workforce.³

Against this background, David Batstone of the University of San Francisco has identified eight principles that are most crucial for institutional performance in that they create and preserve integrity and profitability:

- The Council and Management would align their personal interest with the fate of stakeholders and act in a responsible way to ensure the viability of the organisation.
- The business operations would be transparent to stakeholders, employees and the public. Therefore, the Management would stand by the integrity of their decisions.

- The organisation would think of itself as part of the community that it serves, as well as an enterprise with a customer base.
- The organisation would market its products honestly to prospective customers and honour their dignity up to and beyond transactions.
- The employees would be treated as valuable team members or assets and not just as replaceable hired hands.
- The environment would be treated as a “silent” stakeholder.
- The organisation would strive for a balance between diversity and equality in its relationships with all role players.
- The organisation would pursue an international venture based on respect for the rights of the people of trade partner nations.⁴

How could institutions evaluate this kind of goodwill in their operations? The focus for NWU is on using strategies to change the integrity of institutional behaviour. One of the strategies should be ensuring that managers, who are responsible for directing and controlling the work and staff, have the vision and courage to make good choices when the pay-off may not be immediately visible. The translation of principles into institutional operating practices often fails at the point of execution. A principle-centred institution would assess its principles in relation to its operating practices in the following three areas:

- reinforcing its reputation
- avoiding costly lawsuits
- managing its business network more effectively.⁵

In a principle-centred workplace, shaped by a values-based, vision-driven leadership, the goals and values of the organisation are in alignment with those of the people who work there. The atmosphere in this kind of workplace should stimulate employees to express their highest attributes – their desire to help others, their eagerness to contribute to something larger than themselves, and their courage to stand up for what is right.⁶

There is a need for more thorough approaches of ethical and moral thought to enhance systemic organisational

change in an effort to build optimally moral organisations to become ideal human environments. Fundamental restructuring of institutions should also produce moral intentions and behaviour of every aspect of organisational life. The following table illustrates a conceptual framework for thinking about moral and ethical matters in organisations, and shows the distinction between mandatory and aspirational ethics.

Ethical frameworks	
Duty-based concepts	Character-based concepts
Doing	Being/becoming
Mandatory ethics	Aspirational ethics
Principle ethics	Virtue ethics
Responsibility	Responsibleness

Mandatory ethics consist of behavioural rules and prescriptions for professional conduct that are enforceable. Mandatory ethics intend to set a minimum standard for performance and are an important part of an organisation's framework. Aspirational ethics consist of aspirational goals designed to reflect the highest ideals of the profession with regard to moral and ethical outcomes.⁷

The awakening of the corporate soul implies that managers should encourage employees to engage in their work at their full capacity and desire, and requires a new kind of leadership. The leaders who want to restore the corporate soul should be familiar with the new state of mind and practice of the virtues that they want to achieve.⁸

The following results of the NWU's culture and climate surveys, as well as the rest of this story, are an enduring yardstick for evaluating the application of these principles in shaping the corporate soul of NWU.

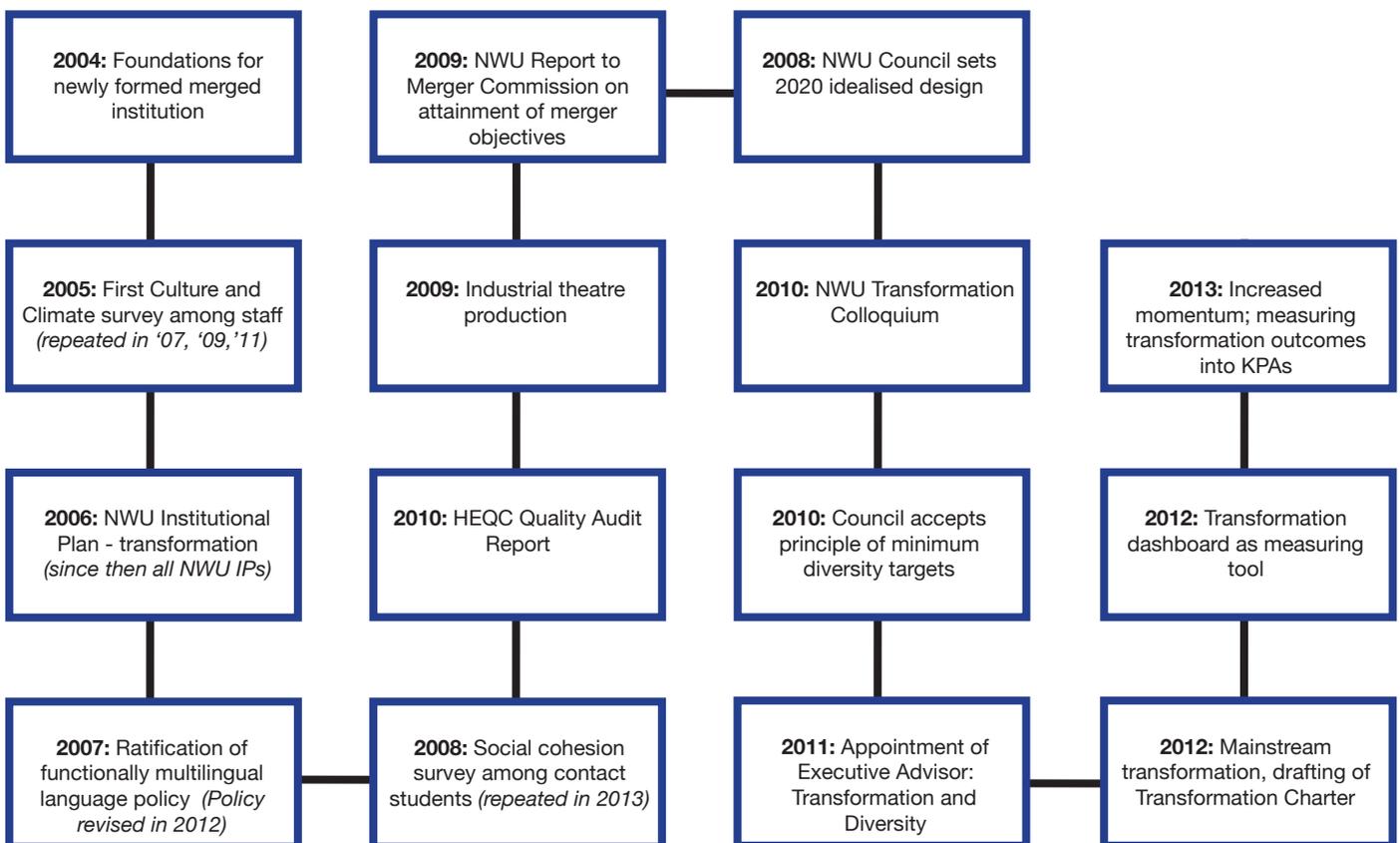
10.2 Transformation at the NWU

10.2.1 NWU transformation trajectory, 2004-2013

Timeline for the key deliverables⁹

In its continued pursuit of an environment conducive to dialogue and debate on contentious diversity matters at the NWU, it might be worth reflecting on the deliverables that have been produced since the establishment of the NWU.

The following timeline shows some of the key deliverables linked to transformation, which has received constant attention at the NWU:



The following paragraphs provide an overview of some of the milestones, key deliverables and surveys since 2004 in the overall transformation project at the NWU.

Council lays the foundations

At its first meeting in February 2004, the NWU Council ratified the following decisions taken by the Interim Council Elect to set the framework for the governance and management of the transformation process:

- The NWU would be a unitary multi-campus university with an effective and decentralised, non-federal management system. In practice, this meant that the business units of the university would be the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, and that an Institutional Office would be established.
- The NWU would have one Senate (with Campus Committees), one Institutional Forum and one Institutional Student Representative Council (with Campus SRCs).
- The NWU would have a single set of values, policies, systems and standards, as well as one vision and mission, coordinated at Institutional Office level.
- The language policy of the NWU, in line with Government policy, would be multilingual and functional in character, and would promote access, integration and a sense of belonging, while redressing the language imbalances of the past.
- The NWU would develop a unique institutional culture and ethos while leaving room for variety in campus cultures and ethos.
- The value system and practices of the NWU would be driven by values contained in the Constitution and would promote unity in diversity at all levels of the Institution, as well as tolerance and respect for all perspectives and

belief systems. In this way, the university would ensure a suitable environment for teaching and learning, research and implementation of expertise (including community engagement).

10.2.2 Institutional Plans provide insight into transformation¹⁰

The NWU Institutional Plans provide an overall and comprehensive view of the transformation project at the university. In terms of process, the goals and aims included in these plans go through various rounds of iterations annually so that various stakeholders can give their inputs, and which Council approves. It can therefore be accepted that transformation goals and action plans referred to in all NWU Institutional Plans have enjoyed the buy-in of the various levels of management at the institution.

A reading of these Plans shows that agreement existed from the outset within the NWU community on pursuing a comprehensive transformation agenda by striking a healthy balance between efficiency and effectiveness on the one hand, and equity and redress on the other hand.¹¹

While the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) forms the basis of the transformation agenda at the NWU, the merger initially played a substantial role in providing the necessary impetus for the transformation and growth trajectory of the core business at the university.¹²

NWU Council and Management made it clear from the outset that they see the NWU's contribution to the national transformation project as consisting of the institution's core business, its academe (PQM, throughput rates, research capacity), as well as a continuous pursuit of best practices.¹³

Since the 2007-2009 Institutional Plan, transformation has been embedded as a strategic priority or mission element.

The next table summarises the ongoing development of the transformation focus over time at the NWU.

Transformation as part of NWU Institutional Plans

NWU IP 2007-2009	NWU IP 2008-2010	NWU IP 2009-2011	NWU IP 2010-2012	NWU IP 2011-2013	NWU IP 2012-2014	NWU IP 2013-2015
Strategic priority 1	Mission element 6	Mission element 6	Mission element 1	Mission element 1	Mission element 1	Mission element 1
Structural transformation – starting to move from a tuition-based university with focused research to an effective and transformed balanced institution. ¹⁴	Continuous transformation at the NWU in regard to its positioning, academic profile, equity and redress as part of the contribution to South African higher education transformation. ¹⁵		Striving towards increased unity, the NWU is a value-driven multi-campus institution with diversified niche markets, and aims to transform continually as regards positioning, academic profile, equity and redress to meet the needs of South Africa. ¹⁶		Drive transformation as an urgent, fair and well-managed process of fundamental and sustainable change to address institutional inequalities while accounting for the needs of the country and all its people. This is done by empowering people through quality education, world-class research and meaningful implementation of expertise. ¹⁷	

10.2.3 NWU Transformation colloquium

The colloquium took place in April 2010 under the auspices of the Transformation Oversight Committee of Council. Five action points were at stake: building consensus around institutional transformation¹⁸; strengthening academic architecture¹⁹; broadening capacity for institutional cohesion²⁰; addressing the development needs of students²¹, and dedicated transformation drivers²².

Presentations and group discussions revolved around the following topics: conceptualisation of transformation; multilingualism; curriculum transformation; alignment; student needs/support, and the principles of a transformation charter and compact.

Inputs were made to the commissions that convened on these topics and the deliberations resulted in the following outcomes:

Adoption of and general agreement on the content of a working definition of transformation at the NWU: *“Transformation is a (urgent, fair and well-managed) process of fundamental and sustainable change to address inequalities and the needs of the country and all its people, by empowering people through quality education, research and the implementation of expertise, in the context of South African higher education.”*

Agreement on the necessity to develop and adopt a transformation charter.

The Transformation Oversight Committee was mandated to consider the outcomes of the colloquium, to report accordingly to Council and to see to the drafting of a Transformation Charter.

10.2.4 Report to Council on transformation, diversity and student demography

As a result of the Transformation Colloquium of April 2010, this report of November 2010 was aimed at

thrashing out “a number of the contentious matters on which consensus would be needed so as to take the transformation process at the NWU further - both in strategic and tactical terms”. To this end, the Transformation Oversight Committee made the following proposals, which Council accepted:

The university should create a dedicated position for a transformation officer to support Council and Management on transformation matters.

It should urgently finalise a Transformation Charter.

Instead of establishing a transformation forum, existing forums such as the Institutional Forum should shoulder this responsibility.

Student demography targets should not reflect broad demographic representation. Instead, “an approach of a minimum degree of diversity” is to be followed. This would be based on the principle that any organisation needs sufficient levels of diversity so as not to render it exclusive and exclusionary. This principle balances the Constitutional principle of the right to access to higher education with the principle of receiving higher education in a language of choice, where reasonably practicable.²³

Student and staff diversity targets for 2020 were proposed to Council. These targets are shown in the next table (with 2010 percentages indicated in brackets).

Student targets for 2020

Student targets

Campus/NWU	White students	Black students ²⁴
Mafikeng	10% (1%)	90% (99%)
Potchefstroom	70% (79%)	30% (21%)
Vaal Triangle	25% (32%)	75% (68%)
NWU Total	41% (51.2%)	59% (48.8%)

The target percentages are based on the assumption that by 2020 the Mafikeng Campus will have 15 000 contact students, Potchefstroom 20 000 and Vaal Triangle 10 000.

NWU student scorecard for race profiles and key performance indicators

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total no of students	38 596	38 709	44 726	47 008	50 589	55 723	56 641	67 780
Black	25 207	24 420	28 517	29 935	32 429	39 666	40 230	47 504
White	13 389	14 288	16 209	17 073	18 160	16 066	16 411	20 276
Contact students	27 086	27 889	26 075	25 740	26 853	29 243	31 663	34 931
Black	14 344	14 450	12 381	11 688	12 655	14 425	16 196	18 527
White	12 742	13 439	13 694	14 052	14 198	14 818	15 467	16 404
Undergraduate pass rate (C)²⁵	80.5%	80.4%	79.2%	80.5%	83.9%	83.2%	85.2%	85.0%
Black	76.4%	77.8%	75.6%	76.7%	80.6%	80.3%	82.7%	81.5%
White	83.9%	82.6%	81.9%	83%	86.4%	85.7%	87.6%	88.8%
First-year drop-out rate (C)²⁶	13.6%	13.05%	12.3%	12.3%	11.8%	12.4%	12.5%	12%
Black	-	-	14%	14%	12%	14%	12%	15%
White	-	-	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%
Graduation rate (C)²⁷	22.6%	27.3%	25%	24.9%	26.1%	24.5%	24.1%	23.3%
Black	20.6%	28%	24.4%	24.9%	24.7%	22.6%	22.2%	20.7%
White	24.8%	26.6%	25.7%	24.9%	27.4%	26.3%	26.1%	26.2%
No of degrees and diplomas awarded (C)	6 117	7 609	6 529	6 410	7 008	7 151	7 627	8 146
Black	2 951	4 039	3 016	2 914	3 124	3 255	3 590	3 844
White	3 166	3 570	3 513	2 496	3 884	3 896	4 037	4 302

Student race profiles and key performance indicators per campus

Race profiles for student enrolment (contact and distance)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	B	97.33%	92.82%	98.58%	98.78%	98.64%	98.71%
	W	2.67%	7.18%	1.42%	1.22%	1.36%	1.29%

Potchefstroom Campus	B	55.03%	56.45%	56.13%	65.34%	64.43%	63.34%
	W	44.97%	43.55%	43.87%	34.66%	35.57%	36.66%

Vaal Triangle Campus	B	61.97%	68.7%	71.93%	72.78%	75%	77.06%
	W	38.03%	31.3%	28.07%	27.22%	25%	22.94%

Race profiles for student enrolment (contact)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	B	97.08%	92.82%	98.88%	98.99%	98.75%	98.71%
	W	2.35%	7.18%	1.12%	1.01%	1.25%	1.29%
Potchefstroom Campus	B	20.83%	21.64%	23.76%	25.03%	25.36%	25.34%
	W	79.17%	78.36%	76.24%	74.97%	74.64%	74.66%
Vaal Triangle Campus	B	61.97%	64.85%	67.13%	68.8%	73.93%	76.75%
	W	38.03%	35.15%	32.87%	31.20%	26.07%	23.25%

Race profiles for undergraduate pass rates (contact students)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	B	76.3%	78.5%	83%	81.7%	83.8%	82.5%
	W	75.4%	80.9%	82.5%	84.4%	79%	85.2%
Potchefstroom Campus	B	72.5%	72.6%	81.2%	81%	82.1%	82.1%
	W	80.9%	83.1%	86.4%	85.5%	87.4%	88.5%
Vaal Triangle Campus	B	74.2%	75.4%	75.4%	77.6%	80.8%	79.3%
	W	79.4%	82.8%	79.1%	86.6%	88.2%	90.2%

Race profiles for first-time entering first-year drop-out rates (contact students)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	B	15%	14%	11%	14%	13%	14%
	W	18%	3%	0%	12%	27%	0%
Potchefstroom Campus	B	15%	15%	14%	16%	11%	16%
	W	9%	11%	10%	10%	9%	9%
Vaal Triangle Campus	B	16%	15%	13%	14%	13%	19%
	W	18%	13%	12%	18%	17%	14%

Race profiles for graduation rates (contact students)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	B	23.4%	24.7%	23.1%	23%	20.6%	19.4%
	W	10.5%	10.9%	30%	18.3%	16.7%	13%
Potchefstroom Campus	B	27.4%	26.8%	29.4%	25.6%	28.5%	27.2%
	W	26%	25.4%	27.8%	26.5%	26.3%	26.4%
Vaal Triangle Campus	B	23%	22.5%	20.8%	17.1%	17.4%	16.3%
	W	24.5%	24.9%	27.4%	19.3%	25.1%	25.3%

Race profiles for degrees and diplomas awarded (contact students)

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	B	98.93%	96.7%	98.55%	99.2%	98.99%	99.13%
	W	1.07%	3.3%	1.45%	0.80%	1.01%	0.87%
Potchefstroom Campus	B	21.73%	21.73%	25.1%	24.35%	26.95%	25.91%
	W	78.27%	78.27%	74.9%	75.65%	73.05%	74.09%
Vaal Triangle Campus	B	60.51%	62.47%	60.81%	60.74%	66.24%	67.95%
	W	39.49%	37.53%	39.19%	39.26%	33.76%	32.05%

It is evident from the last six tables that the academic achievement of black and white contact students at the NWU is similar across all variables.

This indicates that the structural and systemic transformation has, as planned since 2007, been successful in ensuring equity of provision across NWU campuses.

Race profiles on master's and PhD degrees awarded, NWU

		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
Master's	Total	618		583		659		633		639		670	
	B	211	34.14%	206	35.33%	200	30.35%	235	37.12%	227	35.52%	253	37.76%
	W	407	65.86%	377	64.67%	459	69.65%	398	62.88%	412	64.48%	418	62.39%

		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
Doctoral	Total	124		100		123		129		115		155	
	B	35	28.23%	28	28%	45	36.59%	40	31.01%	32	27.83%	42	27.1%
	W	89	71.77%	72	72%	78	63.41%	89	68.99%	83	72.17%	113	72.9%

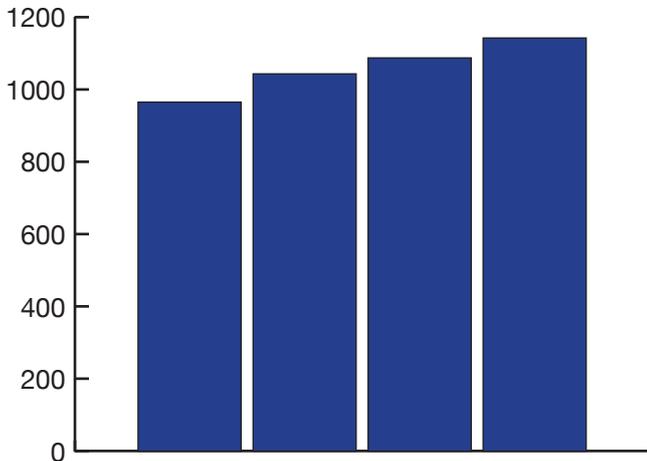
NWU staff profiles

Table: Race profiles for staff qualifications

Staff qualifications, 2009-2012						
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
% with a master's as highest qualification		42.19%	46.15%	38.04%	39.55%	48.12%
	Black	17.47%	18.53%	14.04%	13.41%	14.45%
	White	24.72%	27.62%	24%	26.14%	33.67%
% with a doctorate as highest qualification		53.84%	59.67%	53.22%	60.15%	67.68%
	Black	9.12%	11.18%	10.81%	12.82%	14.37%
	White	44.72%	48.48%	42.40%	47.32%	53.31%

Graph: Black staff members, 2009-2012

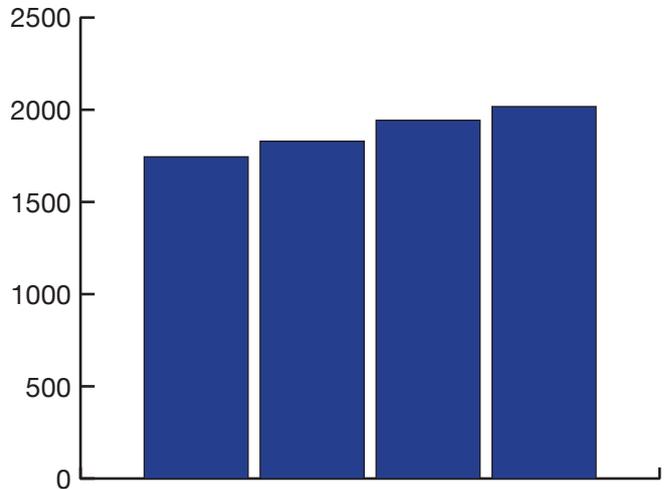
The idealised performance was set at an 18% increase in numbers.



The idealised performance was set at a 15% increase in numbers.²⁸

Graph: White staff members, 2009-2012

NWU staff complement: White staff members, 2009 – 2012 (permanent and fixed term appointments)



This is not a simple endeavour as a myriad of different aspects need to be taken into account simultaneously: equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability.

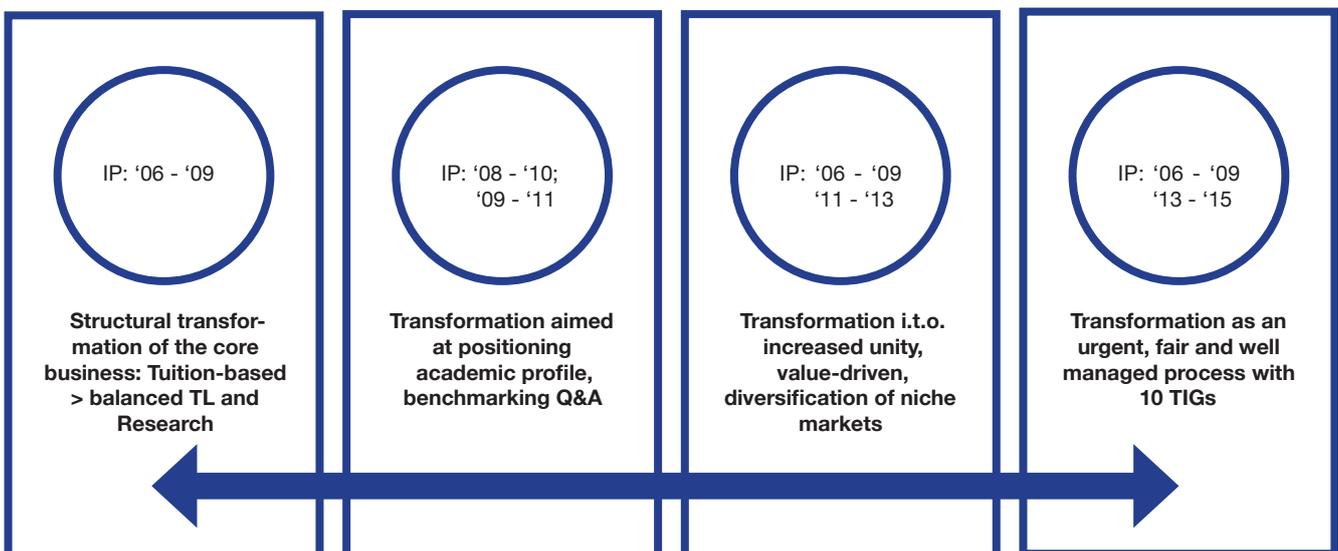
10.2.5 Progress report on transformation ²⁹

Context for evaluating the progress of transformation

In the Education White Paper 3,³⁰ it was foreseen that the transformation of the higher education system would pursue increased and broadened participation, a tangible responsiveness to societal interests and needs, and continuing cooperation in partnerships and governance. This perspective forms the backdrop to the ongoing transformation agenda at the NWU.

It is clear from the next figure that the university's transformation agenda unfolded systematically in respect of the Institutional Plan goals and developed in a clearly defined way. This entailed taking a *structural* approach to transformation during the establishment of the institution, considering the *positioning* of the NWU, emphasising *increased unity* across the university, and managing transformation as an *urgent, fair and measurable* undertaking.

The transformation trajectory of the NW



It is clear from this approach that the NWU, realising the complexities of transforming the institution, distinguishes between organisational change and organisational transformation. Whereas *change* is viewed as a simple, physical, time-specific process that happens externally

to human beings and finds its embodiment primarily in policies, transformation is complex, it involves people, requires experience and reorientation, takes time, does not have a final script and overtly demands a process.

Extent of progress against transformation goals and action plans of 2013

1. Mainstreaming transformation	Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focused approach by Human Capital to equip managers. ▪ HEDA scorecard that, among others, assigns weights to the management of transformation.
	Transformation module in Leadership Management Academy (LMA) programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signing up for this module is still problematic.
2. Access	Extended programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval received to expand Foundation programme offering at NWU. ▪ University Preparatory Programme (UnivPrep) pilot programme holds much potential. ▪ Various measures exist at the NWU to enhance access, such as the extended programmes.
	Marketing and recruitment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planned and focused approach to enhancing access, involving faculties and campus marketing offices.
	NSFAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-organised campus processes in place. ▪ Note the change in the national centralised approach to the management of NSFAS and the possible impact of this on the way the process is managed at the NWU.
3. Alignment	The ongoing process of updating the list of policies that need revision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 45 new policies have been thoroughly revised and adopted by Council. ▪ Council minutes (November 2012, June 2013 and September 2013) record the particulars of policies drafted and revised in 2012 and 2013.
	HEQF project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The cluster approach works well and extensive progress has been made. ▪ Progress reports have been provided at each Senate meeting.
4. Diversity	Further opportunities for dialogue and debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campus processes have started and progress has been made.
	Implementation of language policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is an ongoing process. An appointment will be made in the Institutional Language Directorate to drive the process more proactively from 2014. ▪ A language-specific response was formulated following NEHAWU's memorandum of demands in August 2013.
5. Equity	Employment equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing campus processes are taking place and are measured according to agreed-upon goals. Reports are tabled at the Human Capital Employment Equity Committee of Council.³¹
	Growing own timber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidelines approved by Institutional Management in October 2012 for implementation using campus processes.
	NWU Human Rights Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The NWU is the only SA university with such a committee. ▪ The process of entering into a memorandum of agreement with South Africa's Human Rights Commission has begun. ▪ Several workshops were held to streamline the activities of the NWU Human Rights Committee.
6. Increased unity	Compliance with Statute and unifying policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There has been insufficient progress – realisation of the drive of this goal is attached to the position of Institutional Registrar.
	Inculcation of NWU Code of Ethics and value set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient progress – this is also linked h to the Institutional Registrar.

7. Quality	Managing quality at the NWU to foster a culture of ongoing improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting milestones are up to date.
	Finalisation of the NWU Quality Improvement plan and closing of gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final reporting to HEQC is due at the end of November 2013.
	Client-service orientation and general awareness of quality among support departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A survey was completed and the report will be tabled to Institutional Management in October 2013.
8. Redress	Comparison of redress in the statutes of other universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient progress – realising this goal is attached to the Institutional Registrar position.
	Building infrastructure expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting took place according to planning and reports were tabled every year at the May meeting of Institutional Management and the June meeting of Council.
	Procurement management, BBBEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council approved the revised financial and procurement policy in November 2012. NWU pursues a centralised procurement management structure that provides control and coordination without inhibiting evaluation, recommendation and authorisation powers for procurement needs on a decentralised divisional basis. BBBEE score obtained in 2013: Level 4
9. Resource allocation	Optimisation of budget process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new approach was followed during the budget process for 2013; feedback was much more positive than in previous years.
	Steering of campus niches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is evident that the campus niche approach leads to healthy competition among the campuses without compromising the drive for unity in diversity.
	Resource allocation in line with IP targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a well-established consultative process; feedback was given every year at the May meeting of Institutional Management and at its September budget meeting.
10. Student experience	Maintaining a sound and balanced student experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campus reports on processes were tabled at Institutional Management meetings. The approach to the management of organised student life was reorganised during 2013. The success of the new approach will be determined during the performance evaluation process. The Student Culture and Climate survey was completed; more than 5 000 students responded. Feedback has already been given to campus managements. The final report will be tabled at the Institutional Management meeting in October 2013. First-year experience – planning is ready and the survey will follow early in 2014.
	Positioning sport as a core strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings of the Student Climate and Culture survey would guide strategic priorities. Campuses performance in sport is on an upward trajectory.
11. Success	Transformation dashboard and measurement of the extent to which IP is realised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process was launched successfully during 2013. The dashboard measures more than only transformation and is now used for integrated performance management and performance appraisal of all senior managers at the NWU.
	Ongoing measurement of key performance indicators (KPIs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an extensive process that has been refined to provide disaggregated figures up to faculty level.
	International assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process is on track.

Additional projects that enhance transformation

World Bank³² indicators equate equity with development and interpret the notion to mean equality of opportunities, equity and growth, and equity and efficiency, among others. In line with this, the NWU has embarked on the following development initiatives:

- Active participation in the HERS-SA Academy where women staff members receive training
- The NWU Leadership and Management Academy (LMA), which has a development programme, called the *New Managers Orientation Programme* (NMOP) and includes a module on transformation

- Continual monitoring and measurement of the highest qualifications of staff members with a view to supporting them in obtaining higher qualifications
- More than 300 community engagement projects.³³

10.3 National context of transformation in higher education

Transformation at the NWU is part of the broader transformation of the South African higher education sector and of South Africa.³⁴

10.3.1 Transformation and the National Development Plan, 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 offers a long-term perspective. It defines a desired destination for the country and identifies the role different sectors of society need to play in reaching that goal, according to the then Minister in The Presidency: National Planning Commission, Trevor Manuel, at a media briefing on the implementation of the plan on 19 February 2013.³⁵ The pace of fundamental transformation, employment equity and affirmative action was discussed during a debate at the University of Cape Town in August 2014. Panellists agreed that South African universities still reflected structural inequality in society, but disagreed on the extent to which race- and class-based lenses could diagnose and solve the problem.³⁶

The National Development Plan - moving from a skills-based to a knowledge-based economy³⁷

Increase university science and mathematics entrants to 450 000	[Currently 264 447]
Increase graduation rates to more than 25%	[Currently 17%]
Increase participation rates to more than 30%	[Currently 15%].
Produce more than 100 PhDs per million per year	[Currently 28 per million]
Or 5 000 per annum	[Currently 1421 per annum]

Observers should evaluate the realisation of these requirements against the realities of the performance of the South African pre-tertiary educational system:

The Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum (2012/13)³⁸ rated South Africa 146 out of 148 countries for the quality of the educational system. The report also rated the levels of Mathematics and Science skills last out of 148 countries.

Taking a closer look at the overall performance of the 2012 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination, the results were as follows:

- 511 152 candidates participated
- 377 829 candidates passed
- 26.6% of candidates achieved a Bachelor’s NSC
- Achievements in Mathematics:
 - 121 970 candidates passed
 - 42 916 candidates passed with 50% and more
 - 11 293 candidates passed with 70% and more (13 223 in 2011)
- Achievements in Physical Sciences:
 - 109 918 candidates passed
 - 36 734 candidates passed with 50% and more
 - 10 393 candidates passed with 70% and more (12 050 in 2011).

According to Prof Crain Soudien, the participation rates in higher education represent access of 16% to the sector, illustrating the extent of the challenges of the current South African tertiary education system.³⁹

Participation rates in higher education expressed in race terms

Race group	2005	2007	2009
African	12	12	12
Coloured	12	12	14
Indian	51	43	51
White	60	54	59

Note that the gross enrolment ratio in countries at similar levels of economic development was at least 20%. Tertiary enrolment in most developed countries was 60%>; in Latin America it was 34%, and in East Asia it was 31%.⁴⁰

Student enrolment numbers expressed in race terms

Race Group	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Average annual increase
African	446,945	451,107	476,680	515,058	547,686	595,963	6.5%
Coloured	46,302	48,538	49,001	51,47	55,101	58,219	6.8%
Indian	54,611	54,859	52,579	52,401	53,5629	54,537	3.3%
White	185,847	184,667	180,435	178,140	179,232	178,346	0.9%

The CHE Report on the Extended Curriculum of August 2013 reported on the success rates in higher education:

- Approximately 25% of students at residential universities graduate in regulation time.

- Only 35% of the total intake, and 48% of contact students, graduate within five years.
- When allowance is made for students taking longer than five years to graduate or return to the system after dropping out, it was estimated that some 55% of the intake will never graduate.
- Access, success and completion rates continue to be racially skewed, with white completion rates being on average 50% higher than African rates.
- The net result of the disparities in access and success was that under 5% of African and coloured youth are succeeding in any form of higher education.

It is clear that higher education in South Africa must be transformed in alignment with the National Development Plan:

- The National Development Plan requires an agile and fit-for-purpose higher education system that can facilitate the migration from a skills-based to knowledge-based economy.
- The current levels of performance in meeting KPI are too low to realise the NDP.
- The overall quality of pre-tertiary education does not provide for an environment conducive to higher education.
- Although access to higher education has generally improved to the point where more than two-thirds of tertiary students are African, the levels of academic success of these students leave much to be desired

Role players who want to transform the higher education sector in South Africa need to take cognisance of the special challenges associated with this.

10.3.2 National initiatives for the transformation of higher education

The Department of Higher Education and Training has launched the following initiatives:

- Ministerial Commission into Transformation and Social Cohesion, 2009
- Higher Education Summit, 2010
- Round-table discussion on African languages, 2010
- Reform of NSFAS for increased financial aid support
- Charter for the Humanities

- Advisory Panel on African Languages
- Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation in South African public universities, 2013.⁴¹ In this regard, the Minister *“recognised the fact that transformation is an imprecise concept, and that the terms of reference of this Ministerial Oversight Committee, focusing on the elimination of discrimination and promotion of social cohesion, is a rather restricted one. This is intentional as the full transformation of the university system cannot be tackled by this committee. Such transformation involves the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning; the elimination of weak administrative systems, especially at historically disadvantaged universities; the elimination of discriminatory practices based on gender, race, class and historical imbalances; the provision of adequate infrastructure so that all universities can adequately meet their fundamental mandates of teaching, learning, research and community engagement in the context of social cohesion; the expansion and improvement of research throughout the system; the expansion of access to university education to many more students; and so on. Transformation in this broader sense must perforce be the aim of the entire system of governance and management at the national and institutional levels, and is beyond the scope of this Oversight Committee”*.⁴²

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) has launched the following initiatives:

- Transformation Strategy Group
- Transformation Managers' Forum
- Transformation workshops and colloquia (2012, 2013, 2014)
- Transformation Barometer
- Regional workshops
- Common campaign days
- Building the next generation of academics programme
- Higher Education Leadership and Management programme

10.3.3 Overview of some transformation initiatives at South African universities⁴³

Wits	Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER), an interdisciplinary entity
University of the Western Cape	Centre for Humanities Research (CHR)
University of Cape Town	Institute for Humanities in Africa (HUMA)
University of KwaZulu-Natal	Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRI)
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)	Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racism and Democracy (CANRAD)
UNISA	Support to the NRF's South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) aims at humanising modernity, and of making the university a celebration of what humans are and have been, and will be. Bring modernity's other into the curriculum, not to assimilate modernity's other into the categories the disciplines already have, but to transform the curriculum, transform research, transform community engagement. ⁴⁴
NWU	Graduate course in Indigenous Knowledge Systems
University of the Free State	International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice on the site of its Reitz Residence
University of Fort Hare	The Grounding Programme

10.3.4 The ongoing quest for the meaning of transformation⁴⁵

Prof Crain Soudien, who in 2008 chaired the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education, asked the following questions in the quest to understand the real meaning of transformation:⁴⁶

- *“Is it about race?”*
- *Is it about racial representivity?*
- *Is it about racial access?*
- *Is it about racial climate?*
- *Is it about knowledge and knowing?*
- *What one does with knowledge?*
- *How does one use knowledge?”⁴⁷*

The seasoned American journalist Donna Bryson launched her book *It's a Black-White Thing* on the University of the Free State campus in Bloemfontein during June 2014. With the transformation of the higher education sector in the spotlight, this book offers a story of hope on the long road to transformation on campuses and for a country thirsty for good news.⁴⁸

It was in Bloemfontein that she found answers to the question, *“Have South Africans changed in any significant way since 1994? Or are black and white simply repeating old patterns?”*

The reason was that in 2008 Bloemfontein was thrust into the international public eye by the racist video made by students from the Reitz residence at the University of the Free State. Ms Bryson came to investigate the story and, as she started speaking to students and university staff, including two former rectors, she realised that

the university campus was a microcosm of what was happening in the rest of South Africa. She uncovered inspiring stories about individual transformations,⁴⁹ and revealed that the attitudes with which staff and students have chosen to acknowledge continuing racial problems and to find ways to encourage conversation, indeed foster transformation. One of the many insights Bryson has taken from her book's research was that talk itself is a transformational action.⁵⁰

10.4 Institutional culture and climate

10.4.1 The process and conditions for institutional culture

The 1997 Education White Paper 3 prescribed the desired conditions for the institutional culture of higher institutions. The Ministry was concerned about institutionalised forms of racism and sexism, as well as the incidence of violent behaviour reported on many campuses. The promotion of institutional cultures was at stake, and so the Ministry proposed that universities should:

- develop core values that facilitate positive behaviours aimed at the peaceful functioning of the institution, reconciliation, respect for difference and the promotion of the common good
- create a secure and safe campus environment that discourages harassment or any other hostile behaviour directed towards individuals or groups on any grounds
- set standards of expected behaviour for the entire campus community, including but not limited to administrators, faculty, staff, students, security personnel and contractors

- promote a campus environment that is sensitive to racial and cultural diversity
- assign competent personnel to monitor progress in these areas.⁵¹

The first NWU Culture and Climate survey was conducted in 2005 among students and external stakeholders. By contrast, the 2007 survey concentrated only on the attitudes and perceptions of the staff members of NWU. This would enable management to understand the different perspectives and prioritise activities and initiatives for continuous improvement and transformation.

During the second semester of 2007, the NWU commissioned a second organisational Culture and Climate survey among staff. The Institutional Management appointed Victor Mothobi, Executive Director: Human Capital Development, to chair a task team.⁵² Together with What Works Strategic Consultants, this task team prepared a final report to Council, as well as a report communicating the survey results to NWU staff members.⁵³

Participation in the 2005 and 2007 surveys was voluntary and anonymous. There were only 379 respondents in 2005 and 711 in 2007, an increase of 37%. The response rates varied from 50% at the Institutional Office (out of 230 staff members) and 18% at Mafikeng (out of 491 staff) to 29.5% at Potchefstroom Campus (1 512 staff) and 29.9% from the Vaal Triangle (204 staff members).⁵⁴

The 93-page-long results of the November 2007 Culture and Climate study were tabled at the Institutional Management meeting of 31 January 2008. The results were integrated as specific interventions in the Institutional Plan, with the aim of strengthening the organisational culture in support of the NWU's vision, mission and strategic objectives. An especially encouraging trend noted in 2007 was the high survey response rate among staff, with 89% more staff participating in the 2007 survey than in 2005. Another promising trend was that the overall positive change in terms of "*culture quotient*" increased from 51, 8% in 2005 to 58%, and 3% in 2007.⁵⁵

The 2007 questionnaire consisted of five categories:

- Culture - transformation, vision and reputation
- Climate - the 'do-values', other values and work experience
- Core business - academic programme alignment
- Operational management - management focus areas and accountability
- Interventions and initiatives - importance versus achievement.⁵⁶

The results showed that Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle staff members' responses were noticeably more negative than during 2005; the Potchefstroom staff responses were at much the same level and Institutional Office respondents were more positive.⁵⁷

The consultants recommended seven interventions:

- Create clarity and transparency around management roles and responsibilities.
- Develop and implement appropriate support systems to support change in the organisation.
- Develop and implement an appropriate method for staff performance management.
- Obtain consensus on what constitutes "academic excellence" and communicate this to all campus staff.
- Obtain consensus on what it means to be a pre-eminent university in Africa and communicate to all staff.
- Involve all academic staff across all campuses in an exercise aimed at achieving buy-in to the alignment process.
- Establish a centralised function to approve, prioritise and coordinate major change initiatives across the organisation.⁵⁸

Dr Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, assured staff members that the Transformation Oversight Committee (TOC) of Council, and university Management would discuss the complete report. The TOC should report planned interventions on this issue to Council at the June 2008 meeting. Meanwhile, Management would ensure that the problem areas raised in the report should also be covered in the performance agreements of all staff so that they could be addressed as soon as possible.⁵⁹

NWU was in the process of establishing an overarching institutional culture, mainly through shared values and a human rights culture. At that stage, the NWU was the only university with a Human Rights Committee, chaired by an external senior counsel. Two annual inter-campus staff social days and two inter-campus student sports days were held to promote interaction and social integration. Once again, the distance and logistical arrangements made it extremely difficult to expand these events and establish joint sports teams, choirs and so on.

From the outset, one of the transformation objectives of the NWU was to normalise the student experience on all three campuses, given the inequalities of the past. The following table gives an indication of the progress made between 2004 and 2009.

Objective	2004	2009
Governance	3 SRCs, unaligned criteria for eligibility	One ISRC, 3 CSRCs, aligned criteria for eligibility
Admission criteria	0% aligned	100% aligned (phased-in process followed up to 2007)
Student funding (internal and external)	R50,4 million	R241,7 million
Facilities	Inequality in student facilities. Very few sports facilities on the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle campuses	Student centres had been completed at Mafikeng and Potchefstroom and a Vaal Triangle centre was at the planning stage. Sports facilities were available on all three campuses, differing in variety and number.

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Dr FH Kamsteeg, from the Free University in Amsterdam,⁶¹ had argued in 2008 that the university was still searching for an institutional identity that would unify the three campuses and promote a shared, unified identity for the university as a whole. He argued that the

significant differences between the various campuses in teaching, research performance and institutional culture had impacted negatively on the prospects for a merged identity, which was one of the principal merger goals.⁶²

10.4.2 Culture and climate surveys among staff ⁶³

Summary of the outcomes of NWU Culture and Climate surveys

2005/2007/2009 (What Works Strategic) n=513 ('05) n=711 ('07) n=981 ('11)	NWU average	Anchor topic		2005	2007	2009						
		1 Strategic leadership		48.2%	55.3%	56.4%						
		2 Work environment		48.8%	63.5%	68.7%						
		3 Effective organisations		52.5%	61.1%	63.6%						
		4 Staff values and attitudes		54.3%	53.4%	62.4%						
		5 Organisational competence		53.8%	60.2%	63.7%						
		6 Brand and image		60.1%	55.8%	64.9%						
		Overall NWU culture quotient (CQ)		53.0%	58.3%	63.3%						
2011 (Omnivor, Talent Emporium) n=629	Average engagement index: 67 (scale 1-100): [Mfk= 65; IO=66; VTC=67; PC=68] 25% of all respondents are at the 80 level of engagement or above. Only 16% of staff are below engagement score of 50.											
	Four categories of enquiry:											
	1 Institution (academic context and brand)			2 Management (perceptions of executive management and own manager)			3 Transformation (focus on race and gender)			4 Wellness (remuneration, job satisfaction and other hygiene factors)		
	Outcomes – Categories validity (RSMR⁶⁴, Tucker-Lewis Index⁶⁶, Cronbach Alpha⁶⁷)											
	1 Institution			2 Management			3 Transformation			4 Wellness		
	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha
	0.01	0.99	.92	0.04	0.88	.88	0.09	0.46	.66	0.02	0.98	.86
	Outcomes – Dimensions (sub categories) validity, measured by means of RSMR, Tucker-Lewis Index, Cronbach Alpha											
	1 Academic environment			2 Academic self-development			3 Brand integrity			4 Brand units		
	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha
0.02	0.98	.80	0.02	0.97	.82	0.03	0.94	.88	0.00	1.00	.71	
5 Broad agenda			6 Collegiality			7 Diversity management – race			8 Executive management – integrity			
RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	
0.04	0.85	.81	0.00	1.00	.66	0.09	0.58	.71	0.00	1.00	.92	

9 Executive management – general			10 Future			11 Inst. Plan			12 Job satisfaction		
RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha
0.02	0.97	.75	0.00	1.00	.82	0.00	1.00	.83	0.04	0.90	.82
13 My manager			14 Personal wellness			15 Recognition and reward			16 Talent management		
RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha	RSMR	TLI	Alpha
0.02	0.96	.91	0.06	0.83	.67	0.00	1.00	.85	0.00	1.00	.45

The preceding table makes it clear that institutional culture and climate (both being complex constructs that comprise a number of elements) comprehensively provide a view on the way in which the NWU has succeeded in growing social cohesion over the years.

The following table gives a broad overview of the

Comparing the outcomes of the NWU culture and climate surveys

Overall categories	2011 subcategories	Comparing the assessments			
		2005	2007	2009	2011
1 Strategic leadership	Broad agenda (5)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
	Executive management – integrity (8)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
	Future (10)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
2 Work environment	Collegiality (6)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Personal wellness (14)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Recognition and reward (15)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Talent management (16)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
3 Effective organisations	Effective management (general) (9)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Institutional Plan (11)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
4 Staff values and attitudes	Academic self-development (2)	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
	Job satisfaction (12)	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
	My manager (13)	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
5 Organisational competence	Academic environment (1)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
	Diversity management (7)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
6 Brand and image	Brand integrity (3)	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
	Brand image (4)	Green	Yellow	Green	Green

10.5 Social cohesion

10.5.1 Overall perception

According to Dr FH Kamsteeg South African higher education is still going through a transitional phase of transformation in which existing cultures and identities are strongly contested. He applied the theory of Victor Turner and alluded that the ambiguity and insecurity that came with such a process were demonstrated in the student unrest and crisis and the rather low levels of social cohesion of the merged and incorporated NWU. In the vocabulary of Turner, NWU's transitional phase of social, political, and organisational restructuring was

development of the NWU's culture and climate over time.

The table shows that notable progress was made between 2005 and 2011. An example is the marked improvement in strategic leadership (2005-2009 surveys), which changed from orange to green to show progress.

labelled a social drama, due to the breach in the normative order which caused feelings of insecurity of the “haves” and on the other hand frustration and hostility towards the slow pace of transformation by the “have nots”.⁶⁸

Dr Kamsteeg explained this viewpoint by saying that in the higher education sector, the transformation process was required and expected to lead to concrete changes in terms of equity and redress, and to institute practices that are no longer based on Apartheid ideology. In reality, at most institutions, this change meant introducing democratic governance structures, equitable admission criteria for students, and employment equity

and staff development opportunities, while also aligning curricula with the democratic government’s priorities and with South Africa’s position in the global academic environment.

The level and consistency of the transformation process was a topic of continuous debate. The Soudien report in 2008 produced a dim picture of the everyday life on campuses and contained distressing findings on the slow rate of transformation: *“It is clear that the process of coming face to face with all the problematic issues that the country has inherited remains a Herculean one.”*⁶⁹ Dr Kamsteeg based this evaluation on the disruption of the higher education sector since 2004. This meant a breach in the institutions’ established normative order and brought to the surface feelings of insecurity, hostility and crisis. Government tried to deal with all of this in a series of actions such as the Soudien task team, the aim being to enhance the reintegration process among participants in the higher education sector.⁷⁰

10.5.2 The social cohesion audit among full-time students

In 2008, the NWU Human Rights Committee commissioned an audit among all residential students’ at all three campuses. A total of 2 964 students took part in a pen-and-paper questionnaire administered in the last quarter of 2008. Mafikeng had 586 respondents, the Potchefstroom Campus 1 939 and the Vaal Triangle Campus 439.

The NWU Institutional Social Cohesion audit of 2008 was an attempt to define race and racism, and to explore overt and covert forms of intolerance at all campuses so that the NWU could strive for enhanced levels of social cohesion and equal dignity in a purposeful way.⁷¹

A social distance scale, as developed by Emery Bogardus, was used as a means *“to capture the greatest acceptable level of integration between one’s own group and another group defined by nationality, ethnicity, etc”*.⁷² A custom-made version of the scale was used, which accounts for the scope of relations and environments typical of a university environment.

Participating students were asked about their perceptions on the respect that fellow students showed towards the respondents’ own culture.

Question: I feel my own race is respected by fellow students at this campus.

Mafikeng Campus (n=586)

	Always	Usually	Usually not	Never	Total
Black	62.7%	28.4%	6.7%	2.3%	97.4% (n=571)
White	100%				0.2% (n=1)
Coloured	45.5%	27.3%	18.2%	6.7%	1.9% (n=11)
Asian and other	33.3%	33.3%		33.3%	0.5% (n=3)

A clear positive trend was evident.

Potchefstroom Campus (n=1 939)

	Always	Usually	Usually not	Never	Total
African/ Black	32.1%	32.1%	25.5%	10.4%	5.5% (n=106)
White	53.9%	43.3%	1.9%	0.9%	87.7% (n=1701)
Coloured	14.3%	50.4%	29.4%	5.9%	6.1% (n=119)
Asian and other	23%	61.5%	7.6%	7.6%	0.7% (n=13)

Although a positive experience among students was observed, a tendency towards dissatisfaction became apparent among black and coloured students.

Vaal Triangle Campus (n=439)

	Always	Usually	Usually not	Never	Total
African/ Black	20.2%	56.6%	18.7%	4.6%	59.7% (n=262)
White	20.82%	64.9%	14.3%	0%	35.1% (n=154)
Coloured	9.1%	54.5%	27.3%	9.1%	2.5% (n=11)
Asian and other	41.6%	33.3%	16.6%	8.3%	2.8.% (n=12)

A positive trend was evident. It was noted however, that although the number of coloured students who participated was small, it appeared as if they might have felt less accommodated by fellow students than the other race groups.

The following table provided indications of intolerance levels among students at the NWU.

Exactly how difficult it is to name or articulate racism ⁷³ becomes evident from the data:

Race refers to people... (n=2 995)⁷⁴

Race group	... who speak another language than I do	... whose faith differs from mine	... whose customs differ from mine	... who look different from me
Black	28%	8%	32%	33%
White	22%	20%	48%	58%
Coloured	23%	34%	36%	48%
Asian	14%	14%	64%	43%

Racism is when people look down upon others because (n=2 995)

Race group	... they speak another language than I do	... their faith differs from mine	... their customs differ from mine	... they look different from me
Black	27%	10%	25%	45%
White	19%	21%	48%	61%
Coloured	23%	24%	39%	65%
Asian	7%	21%	21%	71%

Indications of covert intolerances at the NWU ⁷⁵

Social distance scale: same race, another home language

		Mafikeng Campus	Potchefstroom Campus	Vaal Triangle Campus	
At NWU	More tolerant	84.4%	96.1%	93.2%	Observation: Respondents are more protective of personal than institutional space (all campuses) PC: Apparently the most accommodating in respect to people of the same race with another home language MC: Apparently most sensitive of all campuses of this construct VC: highest level of tolerance for integration up to room-mate level
	Less tolerant	15.6%	3.9%	6.8%	
This campus	More tolerant	80.5%	95.1%	92.5%	
	Less tolerant	19.5%	4.9%	7.5%	
My class	More tolerant	81.5%	93.4%	91%	
	Less tolerant	18.4%	6.6%	9%	
Friends	More tolerant	82.2%	91.1%	90.8%	
	Less tolerant	17.8%	8.1%	9.2%	
Room mate	More tolerant	79.8%	83.3%	84.9%	
	Less tolerant	20.1%	16.8%	15.1%	

Another race

		Mafikeng Campus	Potchefstroom Campus	Vaal Triangle Campus	
At NWU	More tolerant	82.9%	90.3%	91.2%	Observation: More protective of personal than institutional space MC: apparently more protective than other campuses of institutional space. PC: very protective of personal space VC: highest level of tolerance for integration up to room-mate level
	Less tolerant	17.1%	9.7%	8.8%	
This campus	More tolerant	82.2%	89.6%	89.8%	
	Less tolerant	17.8%	10.4%	10.3%	
My class	More tolerant	81.7%	89.3%	89%	
	Less tolerant	18.3%	10.7%	11%	
Friends	More tolerant	83.4%	75.4%	89%	
	Less tolerant	16.5%	24.6%	11%	
Room mate	More tolerant	76.3%	49.3%	78%	
	Less tolerant	23.7%	50.7%	22%	

Same race, another country

		Mafikeng Campus	Potchefstroom Campus	Vaal Triangle Campus	
At NWU	More tolerant	79.7%	94.7%	92.7%	Observation: <i>PC: demonstrates high levels of accommodation</i> <i>MC: shows relative sensitivity – this might indicate an ethnic view of the construct</i> <i>VC: highest level of tolerance for integration up to room-mate level</i>
	Less tolerant	20.2%	5.4%	7.4%	
This campus	More tolerant	80.8%	94.1%	93.4%	
	Less tolerant	19.2%	5.8%	6.6%	
My class	More tolerant	81.9%	93.6%	92%	
	Less tolerant	18.1%	6.4%	8%	
Friends	More tolerant	79.5%	91.1%	89.1%	
	Less tolerant	20.5%	8.9%	10.9%	
Room mate	More tolerant	77.3%	82.5%	87.3%	
	Less tolerant	22.7%	17.5%	12.7%	

Perceptions on social cohesion matters (open question)⁷⁶

Personal level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural sensitivity towards own culture and/or religion ▪ Discrimination, violation of human rights ▪ Xenophobia
University/Institutional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language ▪ Teaching-learning ▪ Organised student life ▪ Service delivery ▪ Management

This survey showed the levels of tolerance among full-time university students at the NWU in 2008 were acceptable.

10.5.3 The Social Cohesion Audit of 2008 and the findings of the Soudien Report ⁷⁷

A subtask team of the NWU Human Rights Committee compiled an internal report against the background of the so-called Soudien investigation⁷⁸, more formally known as the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions.⁷⁹

The final observations of the Soudien report ⁸⁰ were that the “*experience of feeling discriminated against ... is endemic within institutions*” and that “*disjunction between policies and real-life experience is apparent*”.

Practical recommendations on managing social cohesion at the NWU

It was evident from the final observation of Soudien that the further management of transformation at universities should focus on individual or micro level, and should strive to create circumstances conducive to the buy-in

of stakeholders to an institutional culture which shows respect for cultural diversity.

From an analysis of processes and procedures dealing with diversity management at the NWU, it appeared that mechanisms for dealing with overt instances of racism and racial discrimination were mostly in place.

The quantitative data derived from the Institutional Social Cohesion Audit of 2008 showed that learners did indeed perceive being culturally accommodated at all campuses of the NWU. However, it was evident from the qualitative data that instances of covert racism did occur.

It was imperative that further steps be taken to create an accommodating and open university environment in which all stakeholders could expressly be exposed to different realities. This would enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to embrace all these realities without a feeling of loss.

It was also important to compile a comprehensive document serving as a record of accomplishment to trace the transformation path of the NWU. This record should declare all related policy and procedure documents, as well as outcomes of events aimed at enhancing social cohesion and instances of facilitation-type interventions.

Reflecting on the recommendations by the Soudien report ⁸¹

Recommendations to the Minister of Education

The NWU had several general comments on the recommendations made to the Minister. Firstly, the university supported the recommendation of a transformation compact between various stakeholders within the higher education environment but did not support the idea of an external permanent oversight committee. Secondly, even though the NWU already had a strategic fund for staff development, it supported the recommendations

on staff development. The university also generally supported the recommendations on the learning and accommodation needs of students.

- In addition, the NWU was in favour of the recommendations on knowledge and governance, while at the same time recognising that the university was one of the few in South Africa that had a properly functioning Institutional Forum and was playing a leading role in implementing functional multilingualism as a language policy.

Recommendations to institutions of higher learning

The Soudien report also recommended that institutions of higher learning undertake initiatives to develop their staff, provide student support and accommodation, and enhance their governance, among other things. Here is a summary of the NWU's views on these.

- **Staff development:** in general, the NWU gave its support to these recommendations, bearing in mind that various measures were in place to help achieve these outcomes. These included the equity targets set in the Institutional Plans since 2006, the strategic funding allocated for the employment of staff members from the designated groups, the publicly published guidelines for promoting staff members, and the Vice-Chancellor's task agreement for achieving transformation and equity goals. Furthermore, the Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee of Council was responsible for overseeing the human resources management and employment equity management processes, and the Human Rights Committee had been established to deal with allegations of racism.
- **Student achievement:** the NWU supports the recommendations, again taking into account that the university has various measures in place to assist in the achievement of these outcomes. These include Supplemental Instruction (SI) programmes at the different campuses, enrolment planning, the official student reception programme by Student Services, the institutional training programme for new lecturers, and the NWU's disability policy and implementation.
- **Student accommodation:** the NWU supports the immediate abolition of initiation practices by students and a review of both the placement and residence management system to optimise a cohesive and integrated student environment.
- **Knowledge:** the university supports a process of constantly reviewing university curricula and adjusting these in step with the latest scholarly developments and the changing needs of society and industry.
- **Governance:** the NWU supports the recommendations, while acknowledging the best practices that it already applies. In particular, several Council committees (such as HREE and TOC) monitor transformation at the university and the Human Rights Committee fulfils an ombud function.
- **Size and composition of Councils:** If it is assumed that Section 27 of the Higher Education Act is applicable to all institutions of higher learning, the revisiting of the size and composition of university Councils would be redundant. The NWU does not support this recommendation.
- **Ministerial permanent oversight committee:** the NWU does not support this because existing structures within the South African higher education sector, such as HESA and CHET, could readily assume this role. Moreover, this function primarily resides within the Councils of universities. If transformation forms part of the task agreement of the Vice-Chancellor, the monitoring of the progress made remains the responsibility of the Council concerned. Furthermore, Section 31 of the Higher Education Act allows the Institutional Forum to participate actively in both the implementation and monitoring of the transformation progress at a particular institution.
- **Training of Council members by the Department of Education:** the university does not support this as training could readily be included in a transformation compact between various stakeholders. Furthermore, the training of Council members remains an institutional matter.
- **Transformation charter:** The NWU supports this and notes that it has made significant progress in drafting such a charter. A Council committee, the Transformation Oversight Committee, oversees the progress made with regard to transformation.
- **Right of student political organisations to participate in SRC elections:** the NWU supports this, provided that political parties do not interfere with the core student activities of an institution. This is currently the case at the

NWU. It is also proposed that a clear code of conduct be drafted to ensure focus on student affairs without fear of core student activities falling prey to the national agendas of political organisations.⁸²

These recommendations were part of an ongoing effort to cultivate the recommended attitudes among students.

10.6 Infrastructure development at NWU campuses since the merger

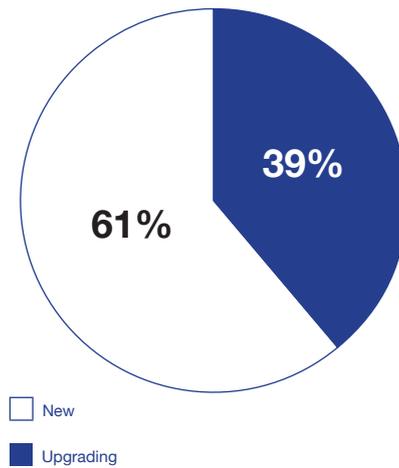
Infrastructure refers to the basic physical and organisational structures needed for the efficient operation of the university. The strategic intent and management plan on facilities and infrastructure development at NWU was as follows:

- continue to address infrastructure backlogs and redress on all the campuses in accordance with the schedule of planned investments and building priorities⁸³
- continue addressing infrastructure backlogs on campuses through a five-year infrastructure plan
- continually address growing intake and throughput in scarce-skills areas

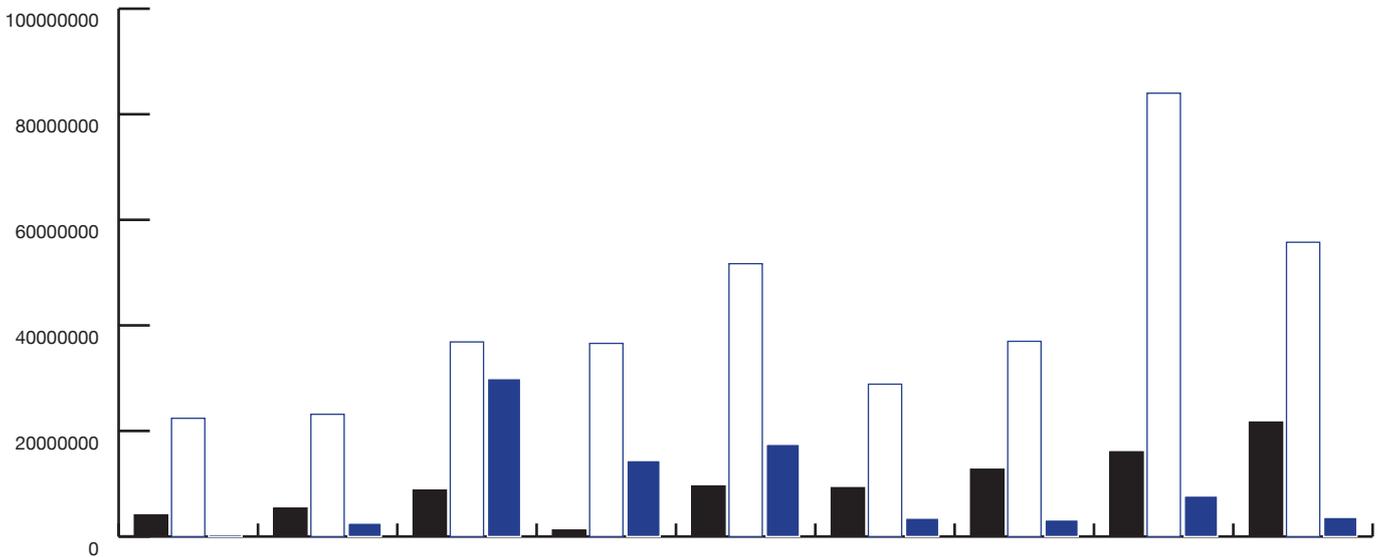
- invest in specific campus niche areas
- strive for financial viability to ensure sustainability
- implement the 10-year Infrastructure Plan of the NWU (2010-2020), using a yearly budget allocation.⁸⁴

The following diagrams show the Infrastructure expenditure since 2005.⁸⁵

Expenditure on new and upgraded buildings

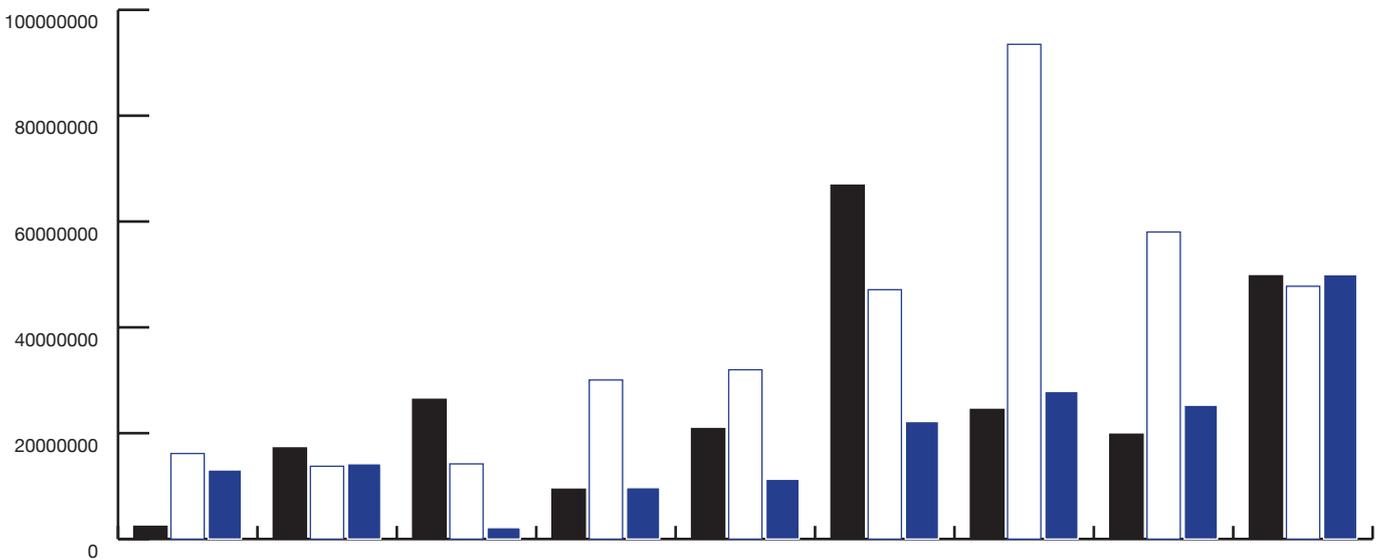


Expenditure on upgraded infrastructure per campus, 2005 - 2013



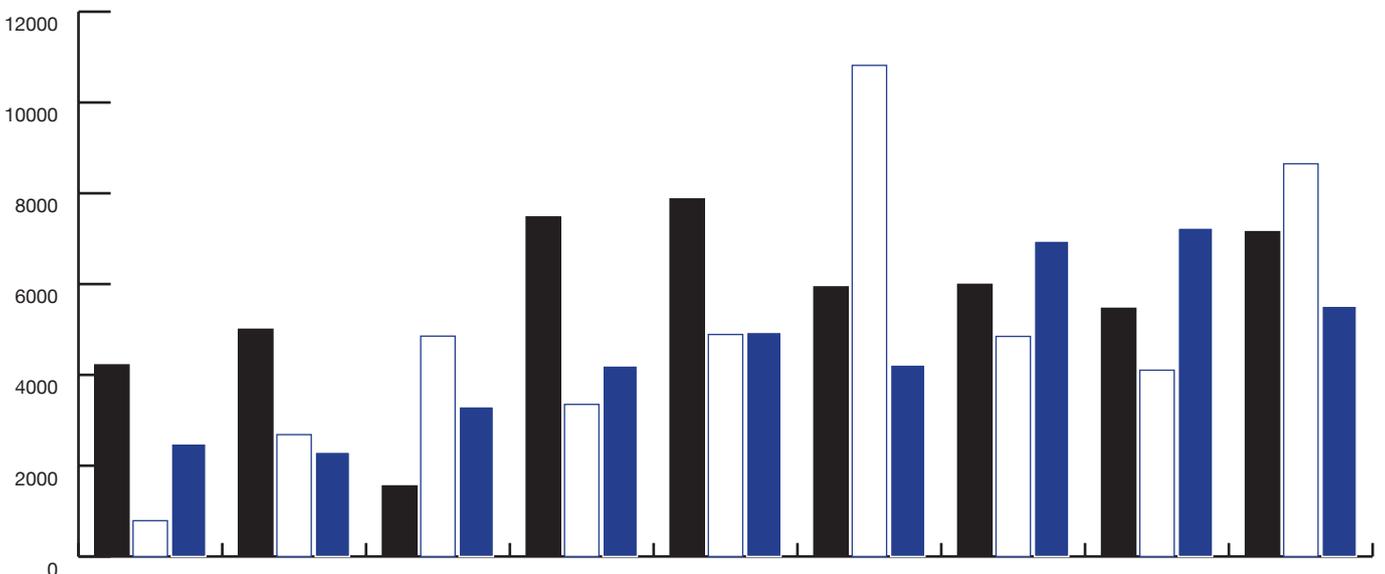
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mafikeng	R4 148 935	R5 435 512	R8 845 876	R1 278 927	R9 618 380	R9 292 185	R1 279 210	R16 088 161	R21 719 681
Potchefstroom	R22 436 897	R23 193 648	R36 890 284	R36 615 450	R51 704 890	R28 296 177	R37 009 034	R83 987 710	R55 764 659
Vaal	R420 000	R2 583 531	R29 952 921	R14 434 991	R17 501 299	R3 522 076	R3 195 525	R7 721 987	R3 669 300

Expenditure on new infrastructure per campus, 2005 – 2013



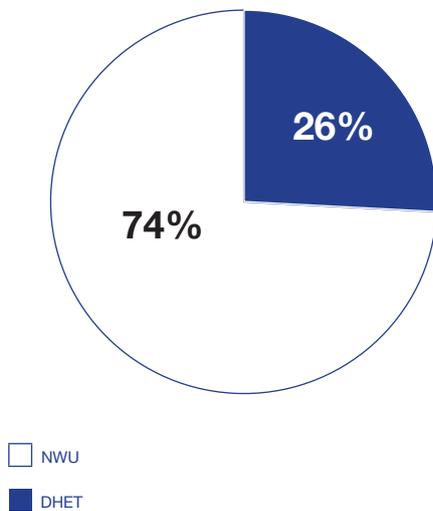
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mafikeng	R2 450 148	R17 256 207	R26 437 000	R9 456 723	R20 908 370	R66 880 981	R26 526 299	R19 844 760	R49 759 578
Potchefstroom	R16 194 967	R13 787 802	R14 232 645	R30 081 015	R32 010 091	R47 129 059	R93 479 576	R58 033 362	R47 783 382
Vaal	R13 095 901	R14 262 046	R2 190 774	R9 744 230	R11 329 921	R22 227 560	R27 903 873	R25 311 926	R49 972 127

Expenditure of funds disbursed per student on campuses



	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Mafikeng	R4 224	R5 008	R1 559	R7 481	R7 877	R5 941	R5 997	R5 469	R7 156
Potchefstroom	R 792	R2 687	R4 856	R3 353	R4 892	R10 817	R4 850	R4 106	R8 650
Vaal	R2 484	R2 300	R3 302	R4 201	R4 938	R4 221	R6 947	R7 234	R5 514

Total percentage of funds disbursed between DHET and NWU funds



10.7 Integrating and developing policies, rules and procedures

The process of aligning existing policies, rules and procedures across the NWU commenced with urgency in 2003. One of the reasons was that the NWU would have to cater for students at all levels from 2004, from first years to seniors. This meant that all aligned student administration matters had to be ready at the same time. That included policies, rules and procedures pertaining to the university almanac and faculty calendars, academic rules at institutional and faculty level, marketing of programmes and qualifications, student accommodation, rules for access, funding and fees, registration, transfer, progression, completion and graduation, as well as student governance and student discipline. In most instances, the alignment process was surprisingly smooth. This can be attributed to the application of the principles of transparency, mutual respect and consideration, augmented by practical steps such as joint or rotating chairing of meetings.⁸⁶

Just as student processes had to be aligned and integrated, so too did staffing matters, ranging from employment conditions and training to remuneration, trade union representation and staff discipline. As staffing would have to be made to fit the new university and its various campuses, various controversial matters had to be resolved, such as recognition agreements with unions, including the “*rules of engagement*” on matters pertaining to staffing, appointments, promotion and remuneration.⁸⁷

A number of task groups were formed to develop the policies, rules and procedures for financing, procurement and provisioning the infrastructure of the new

university. Their work was closely followed by the relevant committees at Council and management, at all the institutional, campus, faculty, student and divisional levels.⁸⁸

This work resulted in a number of fundamental policy directives that changed the shape and working procedures of the new institution. Here are a few examples of the policies attended to:⁸⁹

- Academic work: General Academic Rules; Science and Research Policy; Education Policy; Calendar Policy; Almanac Policy; Academic Dress and Ceremonies; Library Policy and Rules; ITC Policy and Rules.
- Institutional culture: Language Policy and plan; Human Rights Policy and diversity statement; Code of Ethics, Values and Rules; Flag Policy; Corporate identity, logo, marketing, colours.
- Human resources: Basic conditions of service and rules; Recruitment Policy; Remuneration Policy; Staff Development Policy; Academic staff Promotion Policy; Performance Management Policy; Employment Equity Policy.
- Student matters: Admission requirements, Student Disciplinary Rules; General Academic Rules and the constitution of the Campus and Institutional Student Representative Councils; Sports Policy and Rules, including all sports codes; Accommodation Policy and Rules, including Dormitories.
- Financial matters: Financial Policy; Investment Policy; Procurement Policy and Rules.

- Infrastructure and assets: Security Policy; Fixed Assets (Buildings and Land); Moveable Assets (eg vehicles) and Rules, Naming of buildings.⁹⁰

By 2012, more than 45 new policies had been thoroughly revised and adopted by Council. Through a consultative process, existing policies on the campuses were scrutinised and evaluated against best practice in the sector. Given the diverse working procedures on the three campuses, the implementation and alignment of operational processes was a huge challenge after 2004.⁹¹

10.8 Implementing the NWU organisational structure and management model

Organisational structures ensure that work is productively allocated, that authority is appropriately exercised and that there is accountability for results. In the case of the NWU, with its three campuses and limited centralisation, it was clear that a unique organisational structure and management model was needed. In a discussion on organisational unity, Dr Maarten Venter explained the philosophy behind the creation of the NWU's organisational structure.⁹²

10.8.1 Rationale for the proposed organisational structure⁹³

According to Dr Venter, to understand the NWU's approach to organisational unity, it is important to understand its composition as a unitary, multi-campus university. As such, the university would have to be managed in a way that promoted overall unity and integration, while also allowing a degree of flexibility at its three campuses. Against this backdrop, the NWU chose a management model that combined centralised and decentralised structures.

The centralised component of this management model was the Institutional Office (head office) in Potchefstroom, headed by the Vice-Chancellor and situated off the Potchefstroom Campus in a separate building. The decentralised components were the three campuses, each with equal status, and situated in Mahikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark. A Campus Rector would head each campus and be accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for day-to-day campus management.

**“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“to talk of many things: Of shoes – and
ships – and sealing-wax–of cabbages
– and kings –and why the sea is boiling
hot –and whether pigs have wings.”**

– Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*⁷¹.

Critics of this model claim that it is a federal structure that keeps campuses apart and hampers true transformation. This is not the case. The organisational model cannot be considered a federal model as the university has one Council, one Senate, one Vice-Chancellor and one set of values, policies and procedures. (It should also be said that federalism is not even a recognised concept in management sciences).⁹⁴

Functions such as finances, human resources, IT and coordination of teaching-learning, student administrative systems, research support and implementation of expertise, the secretariat and the legal office were centralised at the Institutional Office and overseen by an Institutional Management, of which the Campus Rectors were also part.

In essence, the management model is one used successfully by countless organisations around the world, including some leading universities.

Geographical distances add complexity

The physical distances between the campuses were a compelling factor in developing the specific governance and management model of the NWU. The distance from Potchefstroom to Mahikeng is 220 km; from Potchefstroom to the Vaal Triangle it is 110 km.; and from the Vaal Triangle to Mahikeng it is 330 km. This makes the challenge of creating a new unitary entity even more daunting.

One of the biggest challenges was to establish management capacity in an equitable manner on all the campuses, given the management vacuum at the Mahikeng Campus and the need to expand capacity at the Vaal Triangle Campus to accommodate potential growth.

Change ushers in new ideas

In early 2010, the NWU embarked on the post-merger phase.⁹⁵ This coincided with the appointment of new Campus Rectors for the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses and the expiry of the terms of office of the first senior members of management who had made the merger work. Two new leaders, who had not been involved from the outset, were appointed, setting the scene for new ideas and innovation.⁹⁶

10.8.2 Concepts in the management model debate⁹⁷

Towards the end of July 2003, most of the important parameters influencing decisions on the structure of the merged university had at least been discussed in the different negotiating forums. As a result, the NWU had clarified various and make their implied meanings explicit.

One of the most important characteristics of the NWU was that it would operate as a unitary, multi-campus university, and could thus be characterised as a divisionalised organisation. This structure was prescribed by the physical distances between the various campuses, which were learning sites of NWU. This implied the existence of an Institutional Office to execute certain organisational functions, and operating campuses to conduct the income-generating activities.

A second important characteristic was that the site of the Institutional Office would be Potchefstroom. This indicated that all Institutional Office functions would be executed from one central location.

A related feature of the Institutional Office was that it would be limited in size and staffing. During the discussions, it was stated that managers should clarify the optimal positions at various institutional levels.

Another related characteristic was that Institutional Management should utilise maximum decentralisation to allow the operating campuses to arrange their own affairs, within the negotiated framework for operations. In other words, the campuses should make their own operational decisions. The management model would only allow for the centralisation of functions (which might change over time) needed for the NWU to operate as a unified organisation.

10.8.3 Defining the management model ⁹⁸

Every organisation, regardless of its type or nature, needs to execute a number of well-understood functions to be able to function, survive and grow in future. The most important organisational functions of the NWU were defined as follows:

- **Production and implementation of knowledge and learning material**
The NWU accepted the “traditional” functions of a university as its domain, namely teaching and learning on the various levels (bridging, undergraduate, graduate); research in basic and applied modes; and the implementation of expertise in various forms and to various communities. Knowledge production and implementation spans all activities and processes involved in creating outputs in these three categories. The specific traditional administrative functions of the registrar, namely registering students and keeping track of their progress through courses for compliance purposes, should also be regarded as part of the teaching-learning production process.
- **Research and development**
The activities of designing and developing new curricula, courses and modules, choosing new

avenues for research, and applying knowledge in the world at large, are traditionally viewed as the domain of the Senate and faculty. University Management other than faculty management is seldom actively involved in this, except to determine the focus and boundaries of the NWU on a strategic level.

- **Marketing**

The marketing function is well understood at universities with respect to teaching and learning at undergraduate level, since a large number of prospective students often chose the university first and the specific course only vaguely. When it comes to research and innovation (or implementation of expertise), the situation is slightly different. Research-wise the organisational image should in most cases be subordinate to the researcher’s image, and likewise with implementation of expertise. Whereas a perception of institutional excellence could be useful, the reputation of the individual researcher should be fundamental. As a new institution, with no standing in the marketplace, the NWU would have a keen interest in the whole issue of institutional and local or campus branding.

- **Sales**

Sales is another well-understood activity at universities. It entails identifying prospects, and proposing and closing sales with respect to teaching-learning on both undergraduate and graduate levels. However, for research funding and implementation of expertise, this function is less standardised and formalised, and tends to be brand dependent.

- **Human resource management**

The traditional administrative functions of recruitment, administering structures, positions and remuneration, were well known, while areas such as performance management (including measurement) were not well developed at universities. Not all academic managers saw people management as their core performance area. For the NWU to have any chance of survival, this function would have to be a core performance area.

- **Finance**

The normal financial administrative functions of invoicing, debtors and creditors management, and transaction accounting, were well-known functions at universities. The finance function and financial control were mostly centralised. Budgeting was often centralised

and restricted to money stream 1 income, while expenditure was seen as the subsidy received from government. As such, it was not used as a management steering tool. A lack of management accounting expertise was often evident. Knowledge within the academic management cadre of financial management was often sparse, making Mode 2 thinking – entrepreneurial exploitation of the intellectual property of the university – a difficult option to implement.

- **Planning and product development**

Most universities have some form of “academic planning” or an “academic support” department that studies and to some extent advises on ways to implement innovations and improve the core business. Success with this function varied. Very little was done to design or optimise either the research or implementation of expertise process; a lack of structured management information also hampered management of research.

- **Quality**

Due to pressure from the HEQC, universities were forced to embark on formal quality processes. Peer evaluation was the best-known and traditionally used vehicle. Self-assessment was often used in an uncontrolled manner. Process control was used haphazardly. Performance measurement as a quality mechanism was reported but seldom used as a steering instrument.

10.8.4 Roles and responsibilities in the NWU’s proposed organisational structure ⁹⁹

It was agreed that the NWU should operate with an Institutional Office and divisionalised campuses with maximum decentralisation. These campuses would be the production units of the NWU. The campuses of the former PU for CHE and the UNW operated very differently with respect to processes, quality, focus, work ethic and, of course, their PQMs.

For these reasons, the NWU would have to align its operations to deliver comparable products on all campuses, since the market regarded the campuses as parts of the same integrated university. For organisational survival, convergence had to be achieved as quickly as possible. Thus, initially at least, the Institutional Office would perform a lot of oversight and enforcement authority to standardise processes and outputs. This coordination and alignment function would play an urgent, important and active role in the consolidation of the merger and incorporation process. Once an acceptable level of standardisation had been attained, the Institutional Office

could consider changing to a more direction-giving role, focusing on oversight, control and governance in the corporate sense.

Certain managerial functions would always reside at Institutional Office level, however. These functions would include giving strategic direction, branding and positioning, funding and broad-range allocation of resources with the financial controls that goes with it. Other functions that would be permanently centralised would be human resource policy development and management, NWU-wide performance management to maintain standardisation, labour relations and employment equity management, risk-management, quality management and the compilation of reports to Council and government bodies.

Certain support services, either by their very nature, or for reasons of economy of scale or cost-efficiency, would also always reside at institutional level: information technology, management information, management accounting, internal audit, salary and staff administration and records, legal office and consolidation of financial statements.

For legal reasons or to ensure standardisation, certain elements of the production function would also have to reside at the Institutional Office. The Department of Education viewed the NWU as a single institution, and for governance and subsidy purposes the Institutional Office had the infrastructure to collate, integrate and interpret the Hemis data. This would include the Institutional Registrar’s office and probably the integrated database driving student records, regulations, certification and Hemis reporting, as well as some planning and development functions necessary for institutional PQM management and institutional quality.

An immediate consequence of basing these roles and responsibilities at the Institutional Office was that its staff component would initially be larger than what ultimately may be necessary, since it would need to accommodate the staff who would bring about standardisation. At a later stage, the NWU could consider decentralising some of the functions carried out centrally at first. The need for certain core functions to steer the institution as a whole was obvious and these could not be devolved to a campus level.

The operating campuses should be accountable for their results, within the boundary conditions set by Institutional Management. This did not imply that Campus Rectors would be able to arrange the campus affairs according to their own wishes. The correct interpretation was that the Vice-Chancellor would be able to hold the Campus Rector accountable for all results contracted for on a campus, provided all supporting parties performed at agreed service levels.

This approach would allow maximum entrepreneurial creativity at campus level, while optimising performance at institutional level, where the ultimate accountability for results resided.

There were also quite a number of campus-bound “technical” support functions, mainly aimed at creating and maintaining infrastructure and security. For these functions, Institutional Management should develop essential central policies, procedures or standards that would apply on all campuses.

The management team of a specific campus would from the beginning be responsible for interpreting institutional strategy and translating it into local strategies and campus business plans. The main strategies would focus on attaining agreed-upon outcomes for teaching-learning, research and implementation of expertise. The campus must also be empowered, within the institutional framework, to manage its brand and market position, to allocate resources and control expenses, to obtain funding as per budgeted goals, to administer and manage performance of all staff, and to implement the agreed risk and quality management processes.

To execute these responsibilities, the focus on campus level had to be on managing the core production functions of teaching-learning, research and implementation of expertise. Distribution of activity around the three aspects was unequal at the various campuses, especially for research and implementation of expertise. The structure per campus should reflect this difference and the NWU should not seek symmetry in structure at all campuses.

The management philosophy of the NWU was based on individual accountability residing with specific managers. The application of this principle indicated that faculties should for all their activities report to a single individual, designated as the Campus Vice-Rector: academic on each campus.

To implement the steps needed to achieve standardisation, a number of functions would of necessity have to reside on campus. These were primarily, although not solely, administrative and operational functions, with the main strategic direction coming from the Institutional Office. This is a “dotted-line” relationship. For example, all campuses would need financial administration functions, the form and size of which would determine the level and intensity of activity on each campus.

The functions in this “dotted-line” arrangement on each campus were student enrolments and student administration; student activities and student affairs; financial administration control and reporting; IT installation and maintenance; staff appointments and administration; student recruitment and campus fundraising; campus communications; teaching-learning staff development; campus PQM management; technical services and student hostel management.

10.8.5 The final proposed organisational structure of NWU

While the specifics of the proposed organisational structure had changed with improved insight since 2003, the underlying philosophy was still the same. The proposed configuration of the NWU Institutional Office and campus structures was as follows.

Figure 1: in the proposed Institutional Management structure, an Institutional Management Committee of seven members would support the Vice-Chancellor: three Campus Rectors and four Institutional Managers. The titles had been chosen in an attempt to reserve the title of “registrar” for those functions to do with the traditional registrar’s work. A specific Deputy Vice-Chancellor position had not been proposed. If such a position became necessary at a later stage, one of the Institutional Director’s positions could serve and be renamed as such.

The Higher Education Act specifies the use of a Deputy-Principal or Vice-Principal, which could include positions such as a Campus Vice-Rector and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor.¹⁰⁰ Obviously many variations on the grouping of positions in the proposed structure were possible. It was considered more important initially to verify the completeness of institutional functions than to argue about the groupings.

Figure 2: This figure provided the first generalised organisational chart for a campus management. As stated previously, a number of campus functions had names similar to those of institutional functions. In general, the focus of these functions was on execution within the framework of policies and procedures developed by the Institutional Office. As with the proposed structure of the Institutional Office, it was considered more important to ensure completeness and level of function on the campuses rather than to debate the final grouping of positions.

Figure 1: Institutional Office

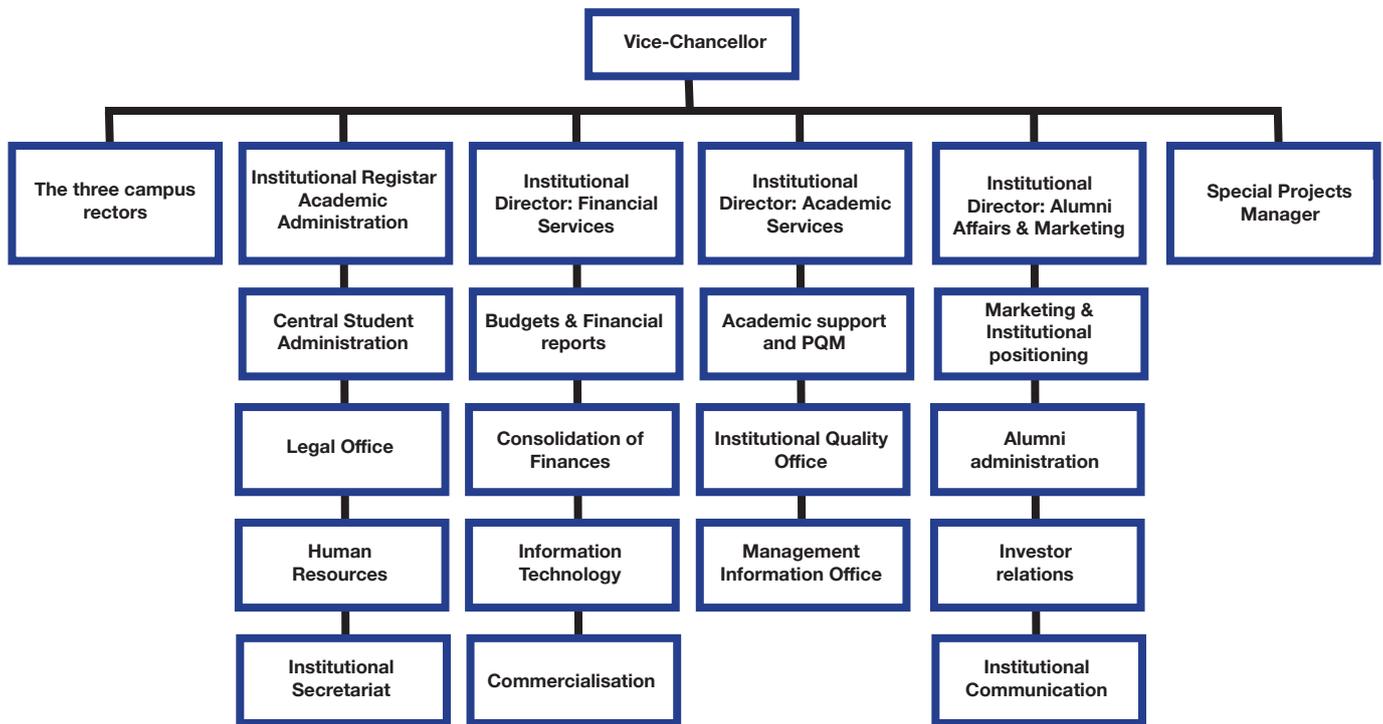
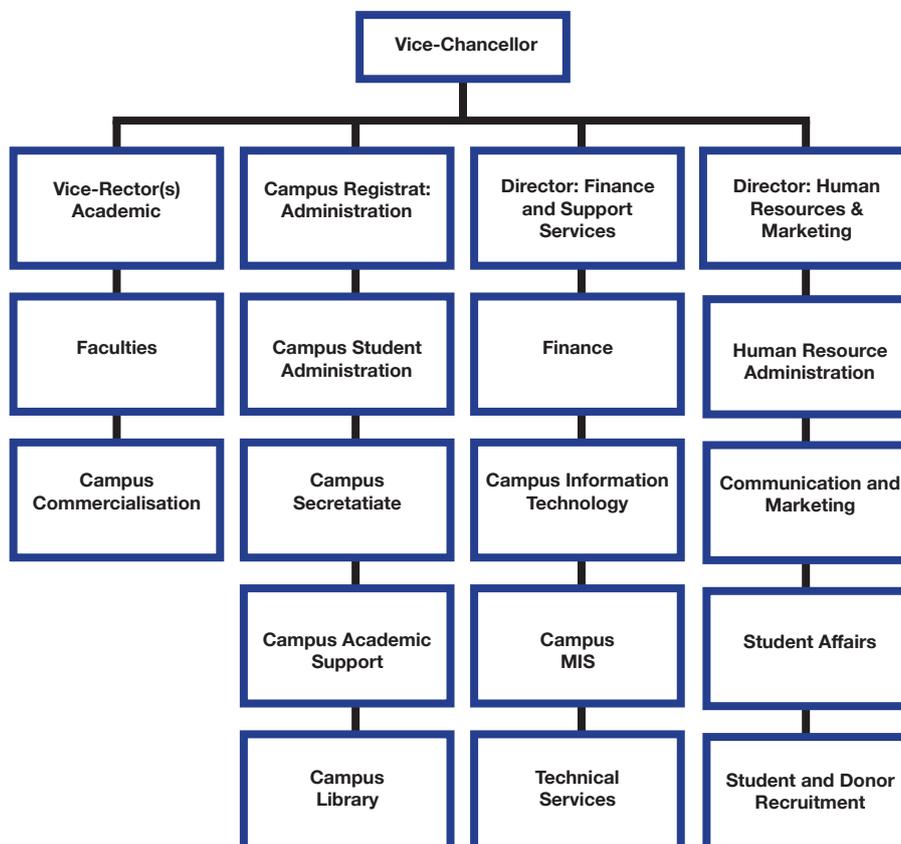


Figure 2: Typical Campus Management



10.8.6 How the organisational structures work in practice ¹⁰¹

NWU's complex functioning as a unitary, multi-campus and divisionalised institution called for proper planning and a clear understanding of the rationale for the preferred structure that was being implemented.

10.8.6.1 Reporting lines and functions ¹⁰²

By August 2004, the organisational structure had been revised. The structure to be implemented consisted of eight positions reporting to the Vice-Chancellor. This was a relatively small span of command compared to the trend in some organisations to have *flat* structures with 20 or more people reporting into a single position. An analysis of those structures showed that they lent themselves to organisations which had already achieved coherence and unity of purpose. They were less well suited to circumstances where there was a need to lead and manage a diverse and fragmented organisation towards greater coherence. Requests for special positions that "*have to report directly to the Vice-Chancellor*" had already appeared in the structure and it was not advisable to add to this number. The proposed eight direct reports were already stretching the maximum, bearing in mind their task of leading and managing the organisation. At the same time, many functions in the multi-campus university could not be coordinated at too low a level as decisions taken about such functions would influence large portions of the whole.

It was precisely for this reason that emphasis was placed on the "*general management*" nature of all the positions reporting to the Vice-Chancellor. A general manager is just that: a manager who does not manage a specific field, but who manages and leads other managers. Of course, this happens to a certain extent on every level of management: the HR manager probably manages managers of payroll, remuneration policy and industrial relations, which are functions that are all very different from each other. However, they all have to do with HR, and the HR manager would at least share a common occupational language with these subordinates.

A general manager often manages areas that have no traditional commonalities, not even terminology. In the planning of the NWU organisational structure, these extremes were avoided. For example, the Campus Rectors manage all activities on a specific geographical campus, while the Vice-Principal manages activities relating to the quality, coherence and techniques of the teaching-learning processes. Likewise, the Institutional Registrar manages all student, curriculum and general administrative processes, and the Institutional Finance Director all financial issues. There is little commonality in terms of technical task content.

What, then, does the job of a general manager entail? In the first instance, a general manager acts as a representative of the Vice-Chancellor by continually verbalising the vision and mission of the total organisation, assisting in interpreting these in goals and priorities, translating these goals into action plans and activities, and motivating and controlling. The second role of a general manager is to assist in creating a coordinated "*whole*" organisation. To do this, the general manager ensures that at least those elements reporting to her or him act in concert in producing the organisational outputs (intra-divisional), and ensures there is inter-divisional coordination with the activities of other general managers.

Although the NWU structure is divisionalised, no division may regard itself as an autonomous unit that can act independently of the others. Interdependence underpins the description of the NWU as one university with a head office and three campuses delivering products and services into a market. This view went hand in hand with the belief that, more and more, outsiders would see the institution as an integrated university. ¹⁰³

10.8.6.2 The line, staff and support functions ¹⁰⁴

The classical terminology of "*line*", "*staff*" and "*support*" functions is sometimes used to distinguish between functions: the line function of an organisation produces and sells the core products; some other functions are predominantly involved in analysing and creating policy and process, and still others render housekeeping and other services. The Mintzberg diagram (see overleaf) is useful in illustrating this concept:

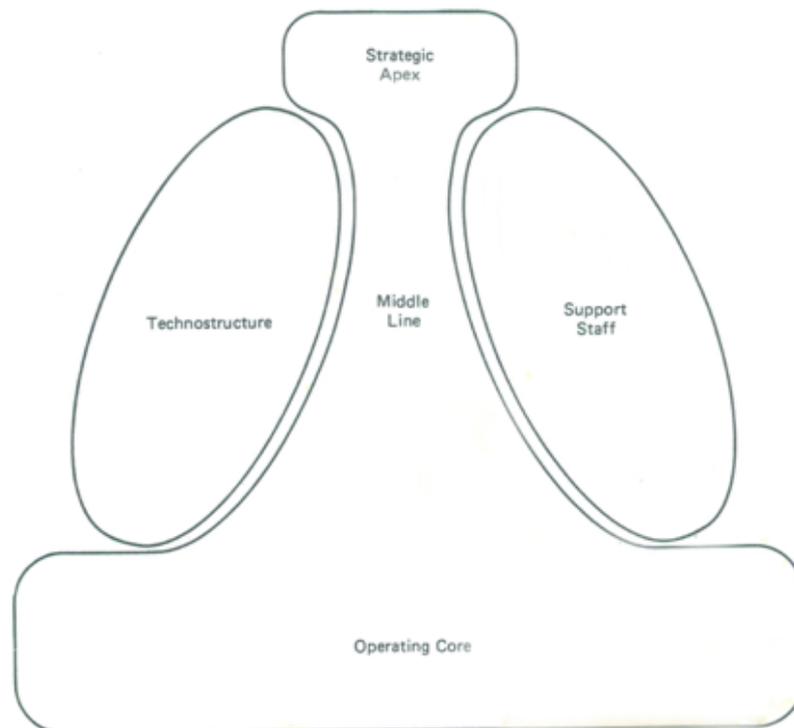
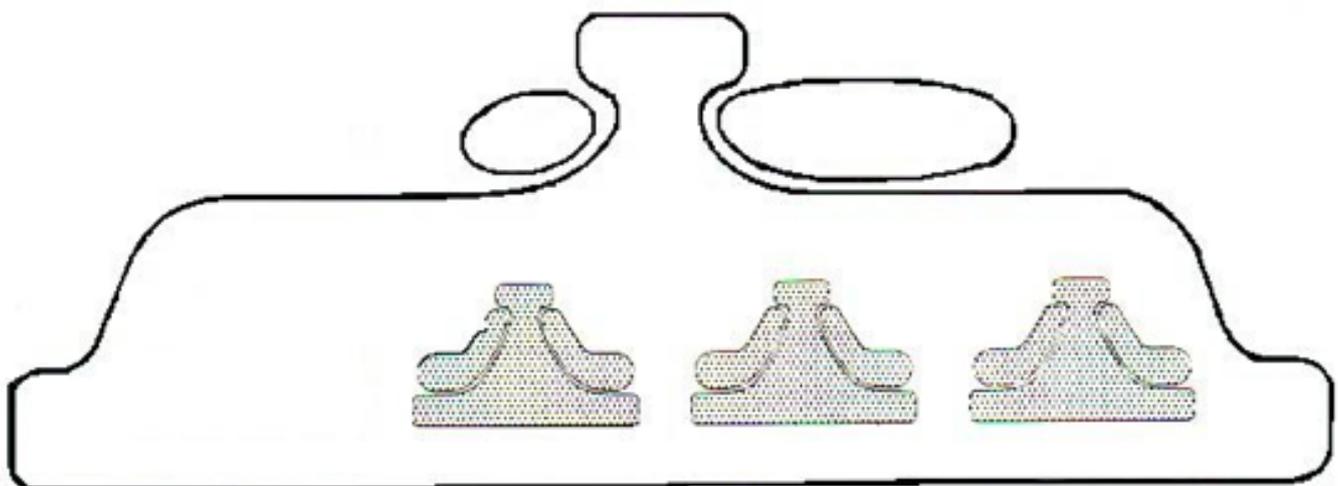


Figure 1-2. The five basic parts of the organization

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The three campuses lie in the Operating Core of the diagram, with the other General Managers performing functions in the technology and support structures. This diagram duplicates itself within a campus and, unless one continually emphasises the importance of cohesion and contribution of all, the Orwellian “Animal Farm” nightmare lurks in any organisation.

H Mintzberg rendering of the divisional form aptly illustrates that these functions are a unitary, cohesive whole:



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More terminological ambiguity is hidden in “line manager” or “line management”. The “line” in “line manager” has nothing to do with “line function” in the sense described above. Any manager is the line manager of the line of people reporting directly or through intermediaries to her/him, regardless of whether they are in the operating core of the organisation or not. A manager could directly influence and give orders or instructions to people whose line manager he/she is. Therefore, the proposal was made that the phrase “line manager” be dropped at the NWU in favour of the title of “manager”.

10.8.6.3 The purpose of campus management ¹⁰⁷

During the planning phase, the purpose and functions of campus management were identified as follows:

The core purpose

The three campuses are the units that would conduct the main business of NWU. This in turn implies that most effort should be on optimising the functioning of the campuses, assuring high levels of effectiveness and efficiency. It also implies that the campuses should recognise the necessity of an Institutional Office to ensure and (not only assist in) the cohesion that would make the three campuses one identifiable university.

In general, campus management should focus on three issues:

- creating and maintaining optimal circumstances for campus staff to perform the core functions
- coordinating actions from Institutional Office divisions aimed at standardising processes on the campuses
- coordinating projects aimed at creating and implementing joint products and services.

Simply put, the main job of campus management is to manage the campus for performance. Although many processes and procedures on the campuses would be identical for reasons of institutional quality, each campus had a different qualification mix and a different target market to serve. The implication was that the institution as a whole may have a competitive profile, but each campus would have a more directly identifiable, and probably different, competitor among universities. Consequently, campus management should focus on optimising performance in areas where the campus could compete most effectively.

Intra-campus coordination

Within a campus, there are faculties and support structures that are similar but not identical to those on institutional level. In the interests of coordination, the following structures were proposed: a Management Committee (consisting of the Campus Rector and direct reports such as Campus Vice-Rectors and Campus Registrars) and an Extended Management Committee. This would comprise the Management Committee and second-level direct reports such as Deans and senior Directors.

The value of this system of coordination proved itself at the universities that merged to form the NWU, hence the proposal that the new institution should retain these structures. Below the level of the Extended Management

Committee, campus management should see to it that proper and regular management meetings take place to assure effective information sharing, as well as regular one-on-one meetings between superior and subordinate. The glue holding everything together would be the performance management system, which had already been tested and was ready to implement.

When it came to academic matters, the Campus Senate Committee should not only consider academic policy but also systematically scrutinise all programme performance parameters and continually improve and rationalise the campus PQM.

Possible structure

Given that the Institutional Office would create and manage most business processes, support units on campus should be smaller and mostly carry out administrative functions.

10.8.6.4 The purpose of an Institutional Management ¹⁰⁸

The purpose and functions of Institutional Management (IM) were identified as follows:

The core purpose

The main purpose of institutional support was still to create and maintain a unified institution. Three campuses could not do this, being hundreds of kilometres apart and each acting in its own best interests. Management literature assigns the following functions to a head office or, in the case of NWU, the Institutional Office: it must manage the strategic portfolio of the organisation; it must allocate overall financial resources to the units in the organisation; it must design and manage the performance control system; it must appoint and replace managers of divisions; it must monitor divisional behaviour on an individual basis; it must provide certain support services common to the divisions.

Institutional Management does this primarily by creating and maintaining core business processes that the organisation could use, and by centralising certain processes for efficiency. A useful guideline for deciding whether or not to centralise a service and process, is this: if a service or product consists totally of bits of information, that is, it has no physical content that needs to be transported, and is utilised in more than one division, it should be centralised

An example is the payroll: all instructions about and payment of remuneration happen electronically and could be executed anywhere. If a service or product consisting of physical content needs to be present in the divisions, but the content is small and used sporadically, it could probably be better executed centrally.

For example, lecturer training happens on pre-arranged occasions during the year, and utilises a specialised skill. This should probably be centralised. On the other hand, if a service or product needs to be used on a regular basis in the divisions, it should probably be decentralised. Maintenance of the grounds or provision of library services are examples of services that are best left on campus.

Institutional Management also has an advisory role, both to the Vice-Chancellor and to campus management. This role recognises that scarce expert resources of the institution should not be fragmented but centralised. Often the nature of the advisory work translates into developing action plans. Institutional Management needs to be very sensitive about using inclusive planning processes and transferring ownership of the plans to the operating units, the campuses.

10.8.6.5 The support structure role and dotted-line management ¹⁰⁹

The purpose and functions of support structures and managers were identified and clarified

Discussions with colleagues indicated some confusion about the authority of the various managerial structures. Management authority, which is the right and obligation to give instructions to staff in the organisational chart under a specific manager, resides in that manager and could in no way be compromised. This implies that nobody from outside a specific campus could give a direct order to any employee of that campus, except of course the Vice-Chancellor, to whom the Campus Rector reports. It also implies that nobody outside an Institutional Director's organisation could instruct his or her employees.

If this is so, what is the extent of power and influence from the Institutional Director towards the campus, and vice versa? This power dimension is often called "*dotted-line authority*". An Institutional Director, mostly through his or her staff, has the authority to prescribe to the whole Institution "how" to perform particular functions, as well as to prescribe processes and standards. On some level, this prescription would happen *de facto* via a chosen computer system or paper-based procedure. On some other level, it would be sanctioned through a policy approved by the Institutional Management. The Institutional Director should also monitor adherence to the processes and standards. Censure for non-adherence happens through Campus Management, which is the normal management line.

In principle, the official reporting line for institutional services goes from the staff member up to the Institutional Director, then through the Institutional Management to the Campus Rector, to the campus

staff member. In practice, the authority to prescribe processes, standards, methods or procedures would go directly from the institutional staff member to the campus staff member, but both sides must be aware that there is an implied path.

Campus staff could, especially where services are rendered through centralised systems, also "*give instructions*" to institutional staff on the "*what*" or content of data and information pertaining to their specific campus. The implied path is the reverse of the one described above, and the day-to-day workings are again direct.

This proposed structure was not a matrix structure. Although an individual could receive instructions from two overseers, only the overseer should give a "*what to do*" instruction. All other instructions influencing the individual's performance could only be of a procedural type. In a matrix, it is typically the other way around. The proposed structure is a direct and simple structure, and should operate in a direct and simple way. ¹¹⁰

10.8.7 Coordination in the NWU organisational structure ¹¹¹

The coordination needs identified in the NWU organisational structure were coordination mechanisms and shortcomings.

10.8.7.1 Coordination mechanisms

The NWU's proposed structure was essentially a functional one. This implies that integration mechanisms would be added to the structure to ensure that an adequate level of integrated output could be obtained. In general, there are a number of coordinating mechanisms available to management to assist integration efforts.

The following two "*natural*" mechanisms are limited in scope and effect:

- Mutual adjustment as a coordinating mechanism is effective when groupings are small and in direct contact with each other.
- Direct supervision is relevant for coordinating output of subordinates.

The following standardisation mechanisms are more effective in assuring integrated and coherent results, but more difficult to implement:

- Standardisation of inputs are often used "*by implication*", through recruitment and skill specification standards, admission requirements and induction programmes.
- Standardisation of processes and outputs seldom happens unless the organisation takes a deliberate decision to utilise these

mechanisms, and then makes a huge effort, as the “transformation” to outcome-based programmes of the recent past showed.

The thinking was that the NWU should utilise the latter two mechanisms, if only because these were also the preferred focus of the HEQC.

When the coordinating mechanisms prove inadequate, it can be helpful to consider the linking of positions. Occupants of such positions are sometimes referred to as “*liaison officers*”. The financial administrator from the Finance department sitting full time with a large faculty has a similar position. Task teams, which are temporary, and standing committees, which are permanent, are also powerful coordinating mechanisms. By giving executive powers to a linking position, integrating managers are given the authority to compel coordination. Examples of these positions are programme managers, project managers, quality managers and brand managers. The most difficult, but often unavoidable, mechanism is implementation of a matrix structure.

There is no golden rule on what to apply when. All structures and mechanisms are trade-offs between the need to divide work into specialised skill packages, and to integrate the output into something larger than the “*package output*”. Organisational culture, history and experience of management all determine which instrument to use in what circumstances.

10.8.7.2 Coordination shortcomings in the proposed NWU structure in 2003 ¹¹²

The coordination shortcomings in the NWU organisational structure were identified and clarified.

Directional and policy authority

The proposed structure was based on directional and policy authority in management at the institutional level, and executive power at campus level. This is a proven and often-used configuration in geographically dispersed operations or operations that differ widely in nature. The implication of this choice was that whatever structures were needed to manage the institution, these should not undermine the ability to hold the rector of a campus accountable for the performance of that campus. This condition would be the decisive test for whatever structures were contemplated to run the NWU.

Teaching-learning

The structure should allow academics on a specific campus to focus on addressing teaching-learning challenges with the capacity available and feasible on that campus. A campus should be able to decide on PQM issues relevant to the campus and should for instance be able to decide on changes in the PQM via

the Campus Senate Committee, which would then send these to the Institutional Senate for approval.

However, the campuses could not function totally autonomously. Their performance would influence the brand of the whole institution, and thus the value of the other brands of the institution. More importantly, the institution could present certain programmes on more than one campus. This is evidently the case with “*general*” programmes related to the more popular BA, BSc and BCom degrees, but it could also be the case in other programmes. Hence, there was a clear need for coordination and alignment on PQM matters across campuses.

A second teaching-learning need was to standardise inputs across the campuses, such as admission and access, orientation programmes for newly appointed staff, study material and e-learning, assessment and recognition for teaching excellence. Since the campuses are all part of the same university, similar offerings should have similar environments. Discussions on these topics are typically the responsibility of a senate. Campus senate committees would discuss them, but where there might be interrelatedness, could not decide on a course of action without consensus from the Institutional Senate.

Research

The Potchefstroom Campus, which was by far the most active in research, decided some years ago to adopt a policy of only allowing research in a limited number of focus areas. After 2004, this policy was debated on institutional level. The reason was the implication that if this policy were to be adopted for the university, research on the other campuses would have to be conducted under the auspices of the focus area Directors at Potchefstroom. The academics and senates of the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle Campuses should not really consider matters of research until they want to approach Institutional Management to consider a revision of the policy. The most difficult possibility from a management perspective was how to approach research on the same subject matter on different campuses. If allowed, this would require careful coordination, at least to optimise funds and equipment.

Implementation of expertise

At first glance, implementation of expertise would seem to be a campus-specific activity, since it is very much tied to the expertise vested in specific individuals or groups, which are campus-bound. In most cases, this assumption would be correct. However, there may be occasions where campuses could affect each other. An example is where two campuses, independently of each other, are negotiating with the same project sponsor. .

From the point of view of the sponsor, the legal entity is the NWU, regardless of the campus. The institution should not allow uncoordinated action to jeopardise larger contracts, at least not without a deliberate decision. This underlined the need to devise a mechanism to expose expertise-activities to all campuses and to allow early warning on and resolution of potential conflict of interest.

Support services

All campuses would utilise a wide variety of support services, the most important of which would be overseen from the Institutional Office, such as student registration, financial procedures, IT, academic support, quality and management information. In these cases, the Institutional Management would determine the framework for these processes but the campus would still be in control of the content within the processes. The Institutional Management would review the coordination of support services periodically.

10.8.7.3 Proposed coordination mechanisms ¹¹³

The faculties and Senate would be key coordination mechanisms in the NWU organisational structure.

Faculties and Senate

In a multi-campus structure, each campus would require a senate-like structure to allow for discussion, debate and decisions on academic matters. These matters would from time to time affect similar discussions on the other campuses. Before being introduced on one campus, such matters should at least be discussed with the other campuses. Senate-like structures on each campus would arguably be the most appropriate “clearance channel” for such matters. An obvious coordinating mechanism is cross-membership or even observer membership for one or two colleagues from the other campuses. Compulsory distribution of minutes before they are approved would be another way of addressing clarification or clearance issues. The Senior Management of the campus would be the best avenue since, in the event of a conflict of interest, they would be able to evaluate the possible impact of such decisions and convene the correct coordinating bodies if deemed necessary.

Institutional level structures would not affect campus accountability if these matters were the only grounds on which decisions may be challenged. The positive consequence of such a coordinating mechanism would be the systematic accumulation of a consistent set of policies and a coherent and well-articulated strategy.

Best practice in the large multi-campus universities seems to indicate that a hierarchical senate structure

is adequate to ensure consistency in policy decision through the system. In this kind of structure, functionaries of the lower senates would be members of the upper senate, with a small number of elected non-functionaries.

PQM

Although senates are the designated vehicles for resolving PQM issues, these issues are normally complicated and often contain an element of organisational politics. This calls for a mechanism to untangle the issues before presenting the case to senate at any level. Coordination is needed from two angles. Firstly, an institutional PQM strategy review should be conducted from time to time to verify the soundness of decisions on which elements of the PQM should be common throughout the Institution, and which elements would be campus-specific. Such strategic reviews should take account of changed markets and circumstances. On the other hand, like-minded academics from the different campuses should frequently discuss issues of curricula, study guides, assessment and access. A possible way to identify these discussion groups could be the CESM categories. In principle this would be ideal, but in practice it is well known that the current CESM categories are out of date and in urgent need of revision.

10.8.7.4 Proposed coordination structures within a support service arm, 2004 ¹¹⁴

Support services, being of a general management nature, would not necessitate a major coordination effort within individual service arms. An Institutional Office general manager would have little need for a regular “managers meeting” with all his/her subordinates together. One-on-one meetings with direct reports would be the normal pattern. When dealing with a number of support divisions, coordination can be critical.

10.8.7.5 Proposed coordination structures between support services, 2004 ¹¹⁵

Apart from normal consultation when developing policy, or when designing a new process, there is no need for regular coordinating activities between the various support divisions. There is rather a need for communication and visibility on the number and impact of interventions, eg “*HR would introduce a new system exactly when we have to start the annual budget cycle, which could create malfunctioning of both interventions.*”

A regular meeting between the Vice-Chancellor and the Institutional Directors would enable the Vice-Chancellor to coordinate support initiatives and interventions on campuses. Care would have to be taken with the format and agenda, though. These meetings should not replace the Institutional Management meeting, which

includes the Campus Rectors. A viable option would be a periodic meeting of the Institutional Directors and their direct reports to evaluate support to the campuses.

10.8.7.6 Proposed coordination needs between support arm and campus, 2004¹¹⁶

The coordination needs between an NWU support arm and a campus were taken into account. This was important given the impact of support services on university activities.

The main coordinating mechanism would be the regular Institutional Management meeting, consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, Campus Rectors and Institutional Directors. This meeting, held at least monthly, would consider all main strategies, approve all core policies and determine the development pace and rhythm of the university.

There would also be regular extended management meetings (bi-monthly or quarterly) to include the Campus Rector's direct reports such as Campus Vice-Rectors and Campus Registrars. The main purpose would be to ensure proper distribution of information about goals, strategies and action plans; the meetings could also be useful for generating ideas and debate about difficult institutional issues.

Although the Institutional Office would be the policy-making unit, it would mainly make its presence felt through process interventions on the campuses. Processes would often have to be implemented simultaneously on all campuses, but the timing might not be convenient for a specific campus. Coordination mechanisms between a support arm and campus management would therefore be essential. A simple coordination mechanism would be a regular meeting between operational counterparts on campus and at the Institutional Office. Examples are a meeting between campus and IT from Institutional Office; between Campus Librarians; and between the people who plan campus calendars.

The regular meeting of the Institutional Senate is the coordination mechanism for core academic matters and advice on university-wide academic activities. The institutional academic planning activities would be the main support structure to inform Senate.

10.8.7.7 Proposed coordination needs between campuses, 2004¹¹⁷

Most inter-campus coordination would either be governed by formal inter-campus agreements, for instance, where one campus formally contracted the other campus to present specific course material, or be *ad hoc* in nature. The latter could be specific student or sport activities, or possible joint academic offerings.

10.8.8 Comments on the NWU structure as a divisionalised organisation

The NWU's chosen organisational structure (or "*management model*") as it is commonly known) has been the subject of intense debate and scrutiny since it was originally conceived as appropriate for a divisionalised organisation. It was often criticised for the wrong reasons, eg that it did not deliver on the suggested political goals, and often defended with inappropriate arguments, eg using governance arguments to explain a structure.

By July 2009, Dr Maarten Venter, who developed the above mentioned organisational structure, said that it would serve the university well, if used properly. "*If not, the structure initially will become more costly to operate (as all inappropriate structures do) and eventually will be replaced by another one which, not being appropriate will ultimately be more costly to operate.*"¹¹⁸ Dr Venter based this evaluation of the initial main motives for the chosen structure on geographical circumstances and market arguments.

The geographical motive will be important as long as lecturing stays in a "*classroom*" mode and has "*economy of scale*" implications. The distance in kilometres between Mahikeng and Potchefstroom, as well as between Mahikeng and the Vaal Triangle, would rule out most opportunities (at least on undergraduate level) for sharing lecturers, except for an occasional video-linkup or guest lecturing.

The sharing of cultural experiences would also be difficult except for occasional inter-campus days or cultural activities that needed little joint preparation, or sharing sporting experiences and facilities except for individual sport where there is no need for regular team training. The distance between Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle is less daunting but in the long-term, the cumulative cost and time loss would erode the perceived benefits. The history of providing lectures from Potchefstroom to the Vaal as a satellite campus before the 1980s is proof of this negative effect.

The possibility of implementing a transformed market division could be difficult as a merger strategy due to the separate histories and the baggage associated with the campus identities. By 2009, there were still strong elements of an implied market division. The Potchefstroom Campus catered for a predominantly traditional white Afrikaans market with a preferred Christian element among some of its students. Mafikeng Campus was serving a predominantly black and even Setswana market, and had a cultural identity conveying the message: "*This is our university; we contributed our money toward its creation.*" This kind of cultural identity

and sentiment associated with the two campuses was a strong driving force in their development. By contrast, the Vaal had traditionally served the Vaal Triangle region and communities in the close vicinity. Thus for the short-term future, the nature of the market share of each campus probably would not escalate the geographical division to any strong extent.

More to the point was whether market factors were sustainable in the longer term. As time goes by, the market forces supporting divisionalisation could become weaker. Whether this happens because the Afrikaans market shrinks, the Setswana market grows, the political situation around Afrikaans as a language of tuition deteriorates or the transformation goals for the rainbow nation materialise, over time the potential clientele for the three campuses could start to converge. It would therefore become much more difficult to differentiate the campuses from each other based on the current market definitions, which were biased towards race, language and culture.

The lesson learned from this approach was that it could become gradually more difficult to “market to” or select or admit students based on the current geography and market arguments for a campus. In the longer term, the only sustainable strategy to allow NWU to manage the existence of the three campuses would be to differentiate the various campuses by product. After choosing the university, students must choose their campus for reasons related to the academic offerings they want to pursue and see other factors as secondary.

The implications of a product *raison d’être* could be significant but simple: NWU must maximise the differences in programme offerings per campus. It is true that there could be certain programmes or modules that anyone could reasonably expect on any campus. For a long time to come universities should support access to higher education by having a significant menu of programmes available on all campuses to assist students in the proximity of the campus to attend university and lower the cost of study. However, this factor must be minimised over time, and replaced by students wanting to receive higher education from the NWU and then choosing one of our campuses based on its programme offerings. The NWU management must be aware of this trend otherwise NWU campuses could compete with each other to gain students, rather than competing with other universities.

Cross-divisional coordination or integration is central to the effective functioning of a divisionalised organisation, but somehow does not seem to get the requisite attention. From the outset, it was clear that maximum intra-site coordination of outputs, such as campus accountability, would affect inter-site coordination

negatively. Inter-site coordination could be obtained by formally establishing permanent inter-site coordinating mechanisms.

Most of the support areas have created such coordinating mechanisms in the form of standing meetings, for example the regular meeting of the Institutional Registrar with Campus Registrars. What was lacking was similar formal meetings pertaining to our core business. The Institutional Senate was seen as the perfect vehicle to legitimise such meetings because it oversees the core academic business.

10.9 Developing an NWU framework for strategic planning ¹¹⁹

10.9.1 Determining the meaning of concepts in strategic planning for NWU

Planning is considered extremely important at the NWU, which has invested considerable intellectual capacity and time in ensuring that Institutional Plans are well formulated, that implementation is properly monitored and measured, and that “stretch targets” are set, combining attainability with sufficient challenge.

The university’s ability to execute according to plan has stood it in good stead. As Dr Theuns Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, told colleagues in November 2009, there was appreciation in the higher education sector for the stability and success of the NWU as a merged university. The backbone of this positive perception was the fact that the university reached the targets set in the Institutional Plan.

As the NWU’s approach to planning is the cornerstone of its success as a merged university, a discussion on the development of its planning framework, and how it compares to other planning approaches, is warranted

In the planning environment, there are numerous strategies with about as many meanings as there are authors using the words. This could lead to a lot of confusion and conflict, and more importantly, to thwarted expectations. Words in contention in the narrow planning sense are strategic planning, long-term planning, institutional planning, operational planning, budget planning and academic planning, with their outputs being strategic plan, long-term plan, institutional plan, budget plan and academic plan.

For example, here are the general meanings of these terms:

Strategic planning: this is used as a synonym for long-term planning, implying some sort of rolling five- or ten-year plan, albeit compiled after some type of SWOT exercise or environmental change forecast has been taken into consideration.

Institutional planning: this is a synonym for strategic planning or long-term planning, or long-term planning with some atypical subjects added, such as transformation, ethics or values.

Operational planning: this is a detailed plan for the next year, setting the tone for the actual operational or performance plans.

Budget planning: this refers to the translation of the operational plan into cost.

Academic planning: this entails planning for the introduction of new academic offerings and the phasing out of old ones, including what to do with pipeline students and estimates of student numbers.

10.9.2 Creating an NWU vocabulary in strategic planning

As the NWU considers planning to be one of the most critical factors for success, it has developed a standardised vocabulary for and understanding of strategic planning concepts.

Strategic planning: Strategic planning is the formal review of the institution's growth vector, competitive advantage and synergy, following a significant change in the current competitive advantage or synergy.

G Hamel and CK Prahalad defined strategy as "*inventing the future*" and said this required four components:¹²⁰

- an understanding of how competition for the future could be different
- finding and gaining insight to take hold of future opportunities
- an ability to energise the organisation from top-to-bottom for what may be a long and arduous journey toward the future
- outrunning competitors and seizing future opportunities first, without taking undue risks. An institution should first unlearn much of its past behaviour before it can find strategies to seize future opportunities.¹²¹

Product-market-scope: this is a two-dimensional matrix with all the current courses or expertise on the one axis, and all the current markets on the other axis.

Growth vector: this is the same two-dimensional matrix, but instead of the current situation, it gives an analysis for the next year. The analysis focuses on:

- plans to increase market share for the next year
- plans to acquire knowledge of market opportunities, courses and expertise in the marketplace

- product development plans to prepare the product launch into the market during the next year
- plans to manage the diversification of products.

Competitive advantage: this entails determining in detail how to position products in the market.

Synergy: determining in detail how to combine, recombine or change resources to deliver the product into the market to obtain long-term profitability.

Long-term planning: this is an annual process to analyse the institution's current strategy and confirm or update the consequences of the current strategy for next year's activities. This exercise verifies and assures a coherent continuation and flow of activities in the execution of strategies over time.

Institutional planning: this is a synonym for long-term planning.

Operational planning: This entails expanding the first year of the long-term plan, using enough detail to provide work instructions and a detailed budget.

Budget planning: this is the formal calculation of the financial consequences of the operational plan, and the allocation of fiduciary accountability attached to these funds.

Academic planning: this implies a host of activities to ensure that the university would have relevant programmes, modules, research and implementation of expertise of an appropriate quality in future.¹²²

10.9.3 A proposed strategic planning process on institutional level

The Institutional Plan is the NWU's long-term plan and informs the Institutional Operating Plan.

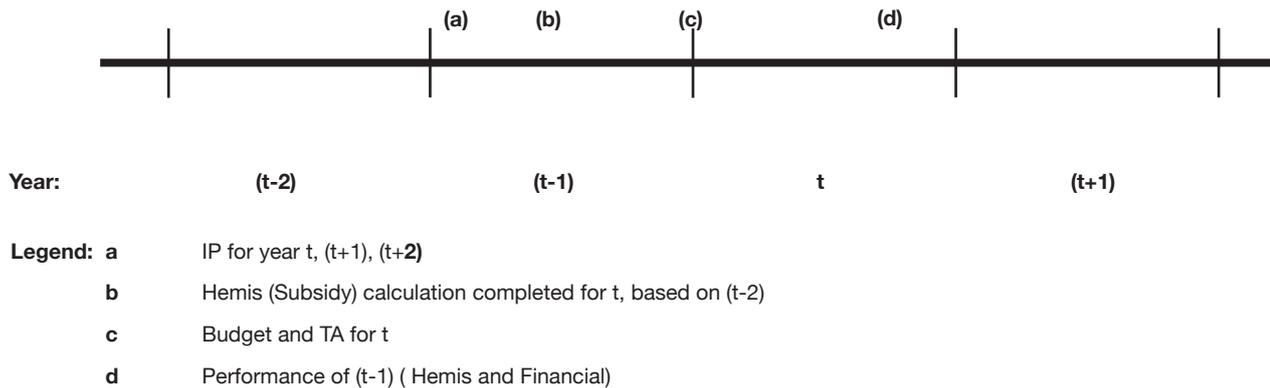
Briefly, the university uses the following strategic planning process:

- The first step is to update the existing Institutional Plan by formulating or reviewing the university mission and goals, and then to come to an understanding of internal and external factors that may influence the university in the long run. Next, the university analyses the various options for matching resources with strategic needs. After choosing the most appropriate option or options, the university sets long-term objectives.
- The next step is to update the Institutional Operational Plan in line with the revised Institutional Plan.

- The annual budget is compiled to execute the Operational Plan.
- The Operational Plan is cascaded through the organisation in the form of task agreements.

Progress is formally reviewed during mid-term and adjusted if necessary. The diagram below shows the timing of strategic planning at the NWU. ¹²³

Figure 1: Sequence of year-on-year activities



10.9.4 Evaluation

The process described above provided a framework for strategies on institutional level.

10.9.5 Setting a vision and mission

The Council approved a formal process for setting a vision and mission.¹²⁴ Leading up to this, Council determined that the overarching strategic objective for 2004 was to consolidate and increase the momentum of the merger-integration process. In this way, the university would achieve a sense of permanency in terms of the effective functioning of structures and the smooth continuation of the core business, and in making a start in aligning or establishing policies, processes and systems. The Interim Management developed a six-month perspective on operational matters, and after the first Council meeting, the focus shifted to the establishment and filling of management structures.

Effectively, the period of full merger implementation began after the Council had appointed a Vice-Chancellor (May 2004) and the senior management (September 2004). Following these appointments, the full merging of all policies, processes and procedures commenced, as did the establishment of the Institutional Office.

In 2005, the focus was on completing the merger integration and incorporation, improving the quality and output of the core business, improving staff development and performance management, and finalising a vision and

mission statement. The period up to November 2005 saw the NWU moving from the technical merger stage to the transformation stage. Related processes included Council's adoption of the Vision, Values and Mission Statement on 10 June 2005, after a fully inclusive and extensive process involving all role players. ¹²⁵

Vision

To be a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation.

Values

The North-West University subscribes to the values of human dignity, equality, freedom, integrity, tolerance, respect, commitment to excellence, scholarly engagement, academic freedom and justice.

Mission

To realise the vision, we will:

- Position the North-West University as a value-driven university, striving to make a difference, through the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, and by being locally engaged, nationally relevant and internationally recognised
- Develop, educate and empower through quality teaching-learning well-rounded graduates able to think laterally and critically and to serve the country and its entire people.

- Produce high-quality, relevant and focused research, basic as well as applied, supplying innovative solutions to challenges faced by the scholarly community, the country, the continent and the world.
- Implement research results and expertise, both commercially and community-directed, for the benefit of the country, the continent and the world.
- Aspire to be recognised internationally as a well-managed and innovative university, with a client focus and a quality focus, by creating an enabling environment that would enhance and improve its core business.
- Create a financially viable institution able to transform continually to meet the country's social and economic needs
- Be sensitive to the environment and the country's social needs, and to promote sustainable development.¹²⁶

Mission elements

The NWU's vision stated that the NWU wanted to be a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation. The mission stated the aims of becoming a balanced teaching learning and research university and implementing its expertise in an innovative way. The institution wanted to achieve its mission as it lives its values, strives for sound management and pursues transformation, while being locally engaged, nationally relevant and internationally recognised. The mission elements comprise the following fundamentals:

- **Mission element 1:** Work towards increased unity as a value-driven, multi-campus institution with diversified niche markets that transforms continually in terms of positioning, academic profile, equity and redress in order to help meet the needs of Southern Africa.
- **Mission element 2:** Develop, educate and empower through innovative and high-quality teaching-learning, well-rounded graduates who are able to think laterally and critically in their service to the country and its people.
- **Mission element 3:** Develop and maintain high-quality, relevant and focused research, aligned with national priorities, supplying innovative solutions to challenges faced by the scholarly community, the country, the continent and the world.
- **Mission element 4:** Expand the implementation of expertise, both commercially and

community-directed, for the benefit of the province, the country, the Southern African region, the continent and ultimately the world.

- **Mission element 5:** Be an accountable, effective, well-managed, financially viable and innovative university, with a strong client focus to enhance and improve the quality of the core business.¹²⁷

10.9.6 Institutional Plans show the way forward¹²⁸

This section provides insight into the internal thinking process of developing a good foundation for the effective functioning of NWU.

10.9.6.1 The negotiated agreements

During the merger negotiations, role players reached consensus that they should resolve certain issues speedily, and deal with others after the establishment of the new university and the appointment of its Senior Management. One of these issues was the adoption of a vision and mission for the NWU, as well as a medium-term strategic plan¹²⁹.

Not all the managers fully supported this approach. Since October 2002 and during the 2003 deliberations of the Joint Operating Team, the UNW delegation continually emphasised the urgency of formulating a clear vision and mission right from the outset, and that structure should follow strategy.¹³⁰

The Councils of the merging universities and the Interim Council Elect agreed during 2003 that in order to achieve the gazetted objectives for this merger, it would be critical to ensure a smooth transition during 2004. To this end, a stable environment for the university to continue with its core business of teaching-learning, research and the implementation of expertise would be of critical importance. This interim working approach guided the decisions of the Interim Council, the Council, Interim Management and the NWU Management cadre during 2004, and helped to maintain stability and minimise uncertainty (and consequent demoralisation) during the transition period.

The approach was to limit the uncertainty inevitably associated with mergers and maintain stability. This applied especially to the duration of the interim period and the life span of the Interim Council. The aim was to establish the full Council as quickly as practically possible. In this, the merger process went further and faster than the Minister of Education expected. For example, Government agreed that the Interim Council could formally constitute itself after 1 January 2004; however, the Interim Council Elect scheduled several meetings towards the end of 2003 to decide on

restructuring issues. Agreements at these meetings (among others the draft Statute) made it possible for the Interim Council to hold only two formal meetings on 9 and 31 January 2004. The first meeting of the new NWU Council was convened on 12 February 2004.

The agreements reached by the Interim Council Elect, ratified by the Interim Council and presented to the full Council on 12 February 2004 could be summarised as follows:

- The new university would be a unitary, multi-campus institution with a decentralised management system.
- It would have one set of policies, systems and standards at an institutional level.
- It would have a single set of constitutionally based values and one vision and mission. The Interim Council agreed to conduct a full, participatory vision and mission process after the appointment of the Senior Management.
- The language policy, in line with ministerial policy, would promote access, integration, and a sense of belonging, and would redress the language imbalances of the past. In line with this policy, the campuses would develop campus language plans, which would take into account the language needs of students and the language realities on the ground.
- The university would have a unique institutional culture and ethos that would promote unity within diversity at all levels, along with tolerance and respect for all perspectives and belief systems, thus ensuring a stable environment for teaching-learning, research and community service. It would have one Senate (with campus committees), one Institutional Forum (IF), one Institutional SRC and Campus SRCs.

The Interim Management gathering from 21 to 23 January 2004 developed a six-month perspective on operational matters. The meeting also agreed that management should compile an Institutional Operating Plan by November 2004.¹³¹

After the first Council meeting, the focus shifted to establishing and filling management structures. Effectively, the post-merger stage or period of full implementation of agreements began after the Council had appointed a Vice-Chancellor in May 2004 and the Senior Management during September 2004. Following these appointments, the merging of policies, processes and procedures, as well as the establishment of the Institutional Head Office commenced.

10.9.6.2 Conceptualising an Institutional Plan

Work started on an Institutional Plan in August 2005 when Council had a special workshop, with the assistance of a facilitator, Mr Eric Mafuna. Subsequently, a joint task team consisting of members of Senate and Council commenced with work on an Institutional Plan, using the following broad terms of reference:¹³²

- clearly articulate the roles, functions and responsibilities of the Council Committee and Senate Task Team (in terms of the Higher Education Act and the Statute)
- arrive at a common understanding and institutional definitions of critical terms and concepts
- articulate, in a balanced way, guidelines on greater efficiency and the academic transformation of the university's core business, within the context of the vision and mission, and bearing in mind the academic realities of delivery after 2004
- develop a contextual framework to cater for strategic programme needs of the various campuses, in line with the institutional mission
- facilitate the development and finalisation of guidelines and a framework for the Institutional Plan, for Council's consideration on 18 November 2005
- consolidate and utilise inputs from various stakeholders, in particular Senate and Council
- monitor processes to secure role players' involvement and participation in implementing strategies, and facilitate processes for trust building.

A report entitled *Institutional Transformation Framework and Guidelines (Transformation Plan)* was tabled at the Council meeting of 18 November 2005,¹³³ and a transformation strategy was adopted. Detailed aspects of the transformation framework (technical, structural and behavioural transformation agenda) would be included in the Institutional Plans.¹³⁴

10.9.7 Core strategies established in the Institutional Plan 2006-2008¹³⁵

The first Institutional Plan was for the period 2006-2008 and focused on the overall strategy of moving from a tuition-based university with focused research towards becoming an effective, transformed and balanced tuition and research university. Although the Institutional Plan was updated and amended annually, this core strategy remained the same.

The first plan, which Council approved in principle on 24 March 2006, also described the NWU’s intention to position itself over the next three years as a “stable, vibrant and entrepreneurial university”.

It is important to note that right from the outset, the NWU Council adopted a comprehensive approach towards meeting the merger objectives and transforming the NWU. Specific strategies to transform continually in terms of positioning, unity, equity and redress, and the academic profile were incorporated into the Institutional Plans from 2006 onwards.¹³⁶

The core strategy of the first Institutional Plan (2006-2008) was to focus on transformation, quality and efficiency, and relevance and impact. This focus was expressed through six main goals articulated in the plan:

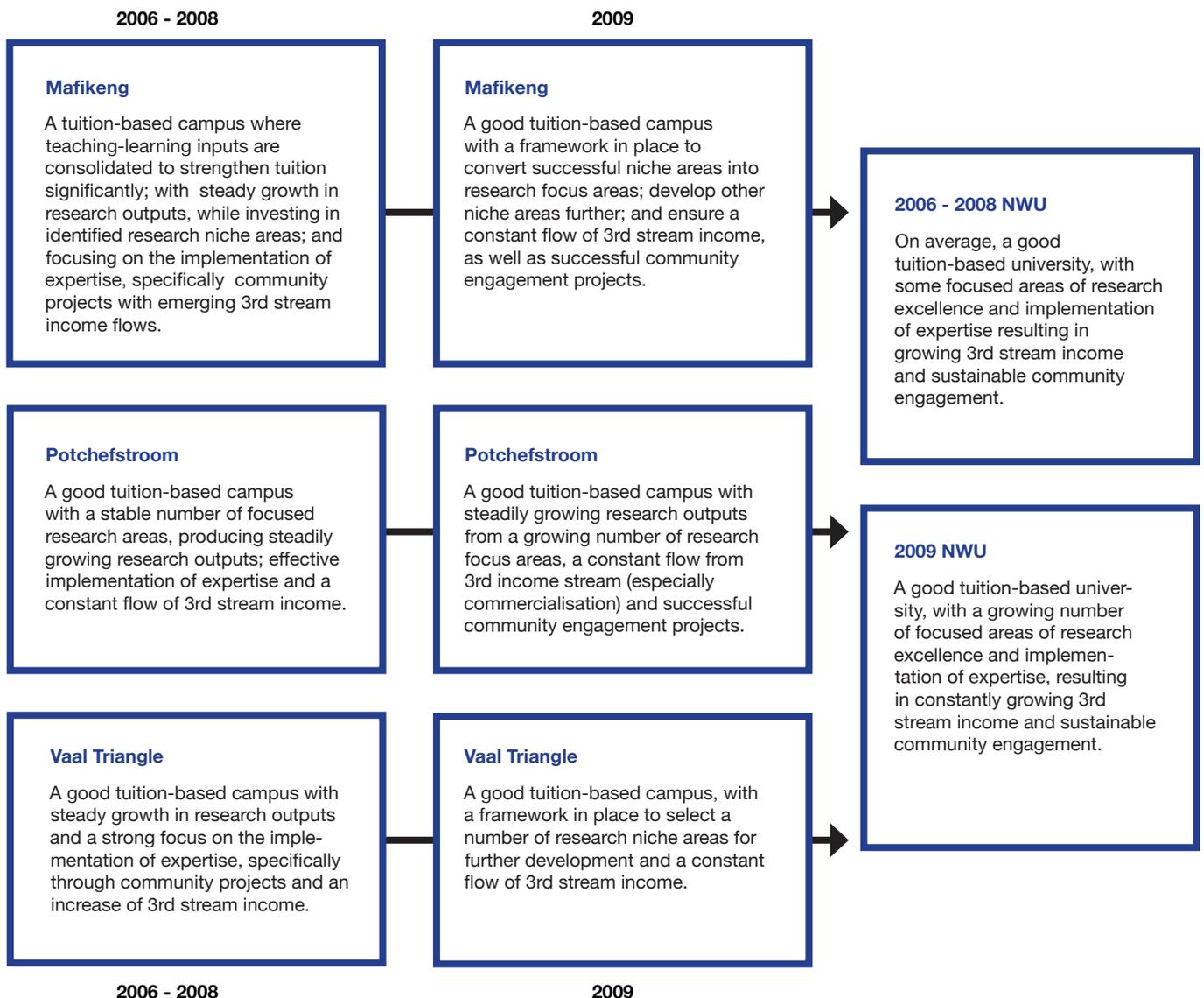
- achieving the intended objectives of the merger process, especially for transformation, equity and redress
- managing the NWU as a unified institution, taking into account the strengths and

weaknesses of the various campuses, and working with campus-specific plans based on the overall Institutional Plan

- continuing to be a well-managed and innovative university in the context of being a unitary, multi-campus and financially viable institution
- consolidating teaching-learning in such a way that the institution will grow into an accessible and viable entity that attracts students from all over South Africa and the sub-continent
- investing in and expanding research and innovation activities to a higher level
- improving the implementation of expertise, both commercially and community-directed.¹³⁷

The following diagram shows how the NWU envisaged the transition from a tuition-based university to a balanced teaching and research university that implements its expertise effectively.¹³⁸

The NWU growth trajectory



The next table gives more detail about each phase of the transition to a balanced teaching-learning university ¹³⁹:

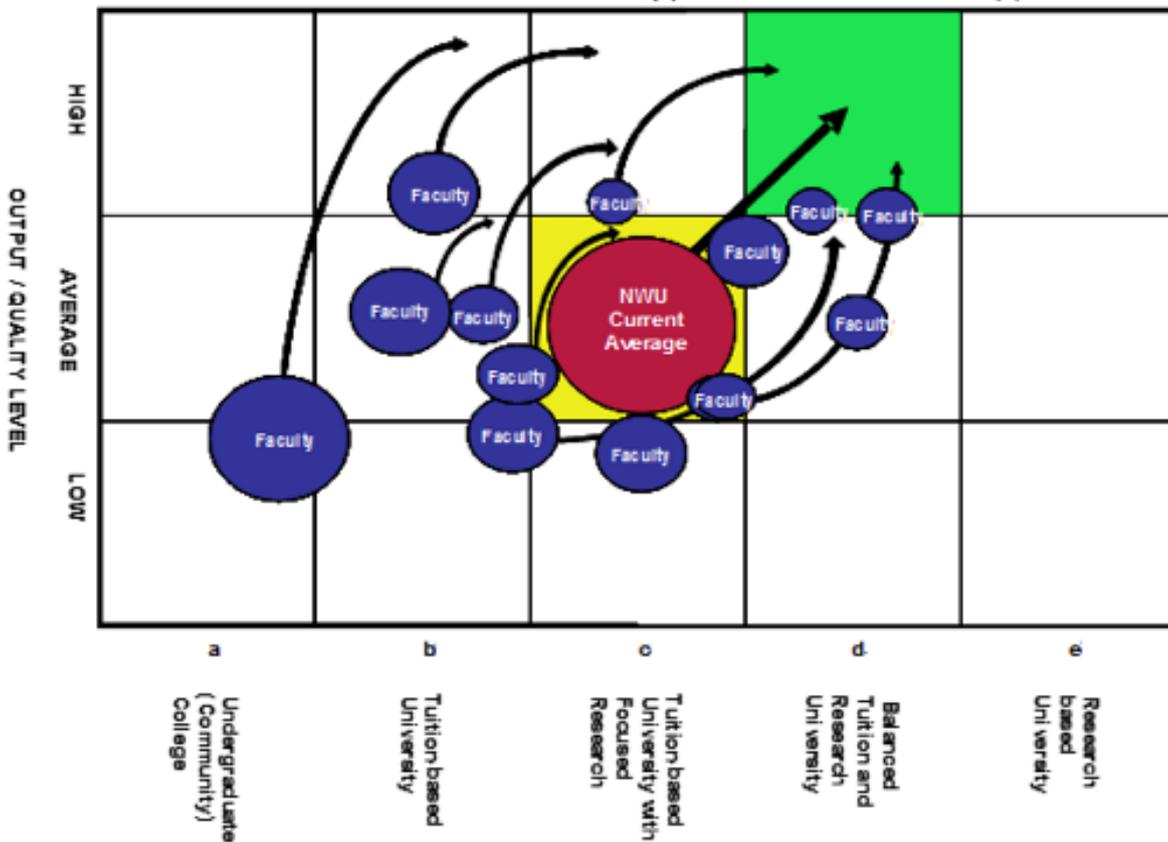
The trajectory towards a balanced tuition and research university

Typical characteristics	Tuition-based university with focused research (state: 2005)	Towards a balanced tuition and research university (state: 2006)	Balanced tuition and research university (future state - chosen strategy)
1. Tuition	>50% of time for tuition; interventions will be needed if a further reduction in tuition time is wanted	50% of time (estimated) for tuition; in many faculties tuition totally dominates activities	40/40/20 time for teaching / research / other; some bureaucratic impediments to sustain.
	Throughput rate optimised	Throughput rate optimised	Throughput rate optimised
2. Student profile	4% -8% of FTE students are postgraduate FTE students in focus areas	5% of FTE students are postgraduate FTE students in focus areas.	> 10% of postgraduate FTE students in many focus areas
	Small postdoctoral programme (number of post-doctoral fellows ~ represents 2-3 % of staff)	21 postdoctoral students (3% of academic staff)	Number of post-doctoral students exceeds 10% of staff
	Less than 1% of students are international	Less than 1% of students are international	More than 5% of students are international
3. Academic offerings	General academic; humanities dominate (over 50%), growing natural sciences profile; professional education in selected areas	First-year intake: progress towards increased SET component	General academic; humanities, natural sciences and commerce (40:30:30); extensive professional education
4 Staff profile			
4.1 Qualifications	Less than 38% / 55% of academic staff with M / PhD qualifications respectively	Percentage of academic staff with master's degrees - 33% and with PhDs - 44%	More than 55% of academic staff with PhD qualifications. None without at least an M qualification
4.2 NRF rating	Scientists with NRF rating ~ 5% - 10% of staff	Scientists with NRF rating: 9.8% of staff	Scientists with NRF rating > 20% of staff.
4.3 Networks and participation	Subject group participation; in selected areas staff are leaders and policy makers	Subject group participation; in selected areas staff are leaders and policy makers	Subject group participation; in many areas staff members are leaders and policy makers
5. Market attractiveness			
5.1 Students	Quality of education; regional market unless supplemented with niche markets (language, safety, student life, rural setting)	Still a regional market with niche market attractiveness	Quality of education and research; large market (national and limited international)
5.2 Staff	Excellent focus areas attract staff	Excellent focus areas attract staff	Excellent focus areas attract staff
5.3 Industry	Quality of education and research in focus areas; limited innovation output	Quality of education and research in focus areas; limited innovation output	Quality of education and research; good innovation output
6. Research investment			
6.1 Time allocation	<30% of time for research; many bureaucratic impediments to sustain; if growth to more research wanted: interventions needed	30% of time (estimated) for research; many bureaucratic impediments to sustain; many faculties far behind	40/40/20 time for teaching/ research/other; some bureaucratic impediments to sustain. Self-sustainable research environment
6.2 University funding	Own resources available only for focused research: Less than 1% of turnover for research (excluding bursaries and equipment)	Own resources available only for focused research: More than 1% of turnover for research stimulation (excluding bursaries and equipment)	Significant resources apportioned for research: More than 2% of turnover for research (excluding bursaries and equipment)
6.3 External funding	Capacity to generate external research funding in some focus areas: less than 5% of turnover generated	Capacity to generate external research funding in some focus areas: 7% of turnover generated	Wide capacity to generate external research funding in many focus areas: more than 20% of turnover generated
6.4 Faculties and equipment	Limited in focus areas (total replacement value of equipment less than 10% of turnover)	Total replacement value of equipment still less than 10% of turnover. Investment cycle started	Extensive in many research fields (total replacement value of equipment more than 20% of turnover)

Typical characteristics	Tuition-based university with focused research (state: 2005)	Towards a balanced tuition and research university (state: 2006)	Balanced tuition and research university (future state - chosen strategy)
7. Research output			
7.1 Publications	Low; limited to focus areas; 0.4 to 0.8 SAE/SLE	0.41 SAE/SLE	High; 0.8 to 1.5 SAE/SLE
7.2 Impact factor	Low in general; increasing too high in focus areas	Low in general; increasing too much in focus areas. Incentives to improve instituted	Increasing too much in more areas of research
7.3 Number of MA and PhD degrees	Less than 8% of FTE students enrolled for M degrees and PhDs	5% of FTE students enrolled for M degrees and PhDs	More than 10% of FTE students enrolled for M degrees and PhDs with significant research content
8. Application of competitive edge (Mode II)			
8.1 Tuition	Short courses include lifelong learning	Practice regarding short courses being assessed	Short courses needed by market, including lifelong learning
8.2 Research	Stimulated scientific innovation output around focus areas and individuals	Innovation output becoming sustainable in a number of focus areas A number of individuals are recognised for the national and international work. Limited success	Sustainable scientific innovation output around large number of focus areas and individuals
8.3 Implementation of expertise (including community service)	Community service supplemented with implementation of expertise in nearby community	Community engagement framework being developed	Community service supplemented with implementation of expertise in wider region

At a macro level, the shift towards becoming an effective, transformed and balanced tuition and research university can be illustrated as follows.

Higher Education activities moving from tuition to research: primarily tuition (a) to primarily research (e)



Revising the process and implementation efficiency of the university's performance management system was part of the core strategy. The challenge was to ensure alignment of individual staff performance agreements with the strategies and priorities of the Institutional Plan, and to ensure efficient implementation and process management in all of the four business units of the university.

From 2008 onwards, the performance management system was used to establish the all-important link between the vision, mission and Institutional Plan on the one hand, and execution of the core business of the university on the other. All academic staff, and all support staff down to middle-management level, work according to individual annual performance agreements with measurable targets, based on the goals and targets set in the Institutional Plan. All these performance agreements are rolled upwards through the management levels, ultimately converging into the Vice-Chancellor's performance agreement with the Chairperson of Council. In a sense, the performance agreement of the Vice-Chancellor is the Institutional Plan in practice.

The outcomes of the performance agreements are formally assessed at the end of the year by means of self-evaluation (by the particular staff member), followed by an evaluative discussion between the staff member and the relevant manager. Thus, the performance management system continues to ensure that the strategies, priorities and targets in the Institutional Plan are practically addressed in the everyday work of the university.¹⁴⁰

Also in 2008, Institutional Management identified the need to quantify progress in implementing measurable outcomes, and started to work on the following benchmarks:

- **Teaching-learning**
 - Throughput rate (undergraduate and postgraduate)
 - The ratio of graduates to permanent academic staff
- **Research**
 - Total research output (research master's, PhDs-times-three and article equivalents)
 - The ratio of total number of article equivalents to permanent academic staff
 - The ratio of total number of NRF-rated staff to permanent academic staff

- **Implementation of expertise**
 - Income: the ratio of subsidy income + student fees/total income
 - Income from commercialisation as a percentage of third stream income
- **Managerial and administrative efficiency**
 - Finance: The ratio of total actual cost per income statement to the total number of graduates
 - Support structure: The ratio of permanent non-academic staff to permanent academic staff
 - Percentage of income from Department of Education funding
- **Student activities and support**
 - The ratio of the total actual IT and library cost to the total number of graduates
 - Average SA Student Sport Union position on selected sporting codes (soccer, rugby, athletics, cricket, netball, hockey)
 - National position on selected cultural activities (national choir festival, national serenade competition)

From 2009 onwards, this approach ensured that more measurable concepts were included as targets in the Institutional Plan.¹⁴¹

10.9.8 Institutional Plan 2007–2009¹⁴²

The Institutional Plan for 2007-2009 was the most comprehensive yet. It commenced with an in-depth analysis of the broader higher education landscape and the NWU's place within it, and then set out the university's detailed three-year Institutional Operating Plan. This was built around the NWU's three strategic imperatives, namely transformation, quality and efficiency, and relevance and impact.

A thorough review of the Institutional Plan was part of the planning process, and this was a task that posed certain challenges, being not only a rational, analytical process but in a sense an emotional one too. This was because of the effort made to engage staff in the creation of the plan. Some authors say this is the most important part of long-term planning: the more staff interaction there is, the more likely staff members are to live the plan.

Another planning challenge was to review the NWU mission and goals. Experts in the field say that an organisation's mission should not change at all or very little. Goals should not change substantially from one planning period to the next. However, one should assure that

the mission and goals interplay is always top-of-mind with senior management. It is thus appropriate to review the mission and goals.

Care was taken with the interpretation of the goals in the Institutional Plan 2007–2009. The normal meaning of goal is a measurably reachable target. The challenge was to guard against bringing too many goals into the plan, to agree on how progress against goals should be measured, and to ensure that goals were not in conflict with one another.

10.9.9 Institutional Plan 2008–2010

Since 2008, scenario development has been an integrated part of the Institutional Plan. Discussions in 2009 refined the parameters of this process, which was included in the Institutional Plan for 2009–2011 as the “*idealised design*.”¹⁴³

The goals set in the 2008-2010 plan were based on the revised mission and mission elements agreed on at the end of 2007. While the first four years after the merger necessitated a strong inward focus on the merger and the effective management of the NWU, the era from 2009 onwards focused more on initiating, renewing and strengthening external strategic alliances, such as internationalisation activities and institutional advancement initiatives.¹⁴⁴

An important issue in this Institutional Plan was to align the mission elements with the performance agreements of NWU staff members. During the first quarter of 2008, management completed a comprehensive revision of performance agreements. The aim was to ensure that the mission elements, objectives and targets in the Institutional Plan 2008–2010 were cascaded into performance agreements with managers at all levels, and eventually also with all academic staff. The performance agreement of the Vice-Chancellor captured the combined result of this process.

Another priority for 2008 was to drive performance against the targets set in the Institutional Plan. In addition, there was a strong focus on quality in the context of the HEQC audit, as well as unity. Here, the emphasis was on alignment, synergy and the building of a sense of unity.¹⁴⁵

The table below shows the timeframes for reviewing the Institutional Plan.¹⁴⁶

Month	2008	2009	2010
January		Management training	Management training
February		Vision, Mission review	Vision, Mission review
March		Vision, Mission review	Vision, Mission review
April	Environmental scan	Council approves Vision, Mission	Council approves Vision, Mission
May	Rewrite IP and Campus plans	Rewrite IP and Campus plans	Rewrite IP and Campus plans
June	Complete IP 2009	Complete IP 2010	Complete IP 2011
July	Budget 2009	Budget 2010	Budget 2011
August	Environmental scan 2010 – 2015	Environmental scan 2011 - 2016	Environmental scan 2012 - 2017
September	Environmental scan 2010 – 2015 Council approves IP 2009	Environmental scan 2011 – 2016 Council approves IP 2010	Environmental scan 2012 – 2017 Council approves IP 2011
October	Task agreement 2009	Task agreement 2010	Task agreement 2011
November	Task agreement 2009	Task agreement 2010	Task agreement 2011

The Institutional Plan 2008-2010 was approved by Council on 23 November 2007 and submitted to the Department of Education.¹⁴⁷

10.9.10 Institutional Plan 2009–2011¹⁴⁸

In 2009, Council adopted a revised 2020 “*idealised design*” for the NWU. The highlights of this design were as follows:

- The NWU will be a unitary, multi-campus, multilingual university with well-functioning campuses.
- The university will be distinguished from its competitors through its management of diversity, innovative use of technology and institutional culture of excellence.
- It will focus on quality teaching-learning, quality research with developmental relevance, and the implementation of expertise.
- The NWU will have a management model that is efficient, flexible and relevant for its operations.
- It will have dynamic, innovative, agile and flexible leadership, fit to govern within its

multi-campus management model.

- It will manage its finances well, be affordable and have a strong endowment fund.
- The university will be relevant in terms of its programme and qualification mix, fit for its developmental role, but internationally recognised as a leading institution.
- The NWU will have a Southern African footprint and be an institution well adapted to its urban and rural roles and constituencies.
- It will be sensitive to its student composition and stakeholder community in terms of very dynamic demographic trends and patterns.
- The NWU will be a university where size and ratios will be determined by efficiency and strengths.
- The university will have a specific value-driven culture.
- It will be a leading institution in terms of its transformation balance, linked to national priorities, innovative designs and diversity needs.
- Within the NWU's multi-campus environment and diversified campuses, niche, markets will be developed and served.
- The NWU will be the leading institution that has moved away from E-learning to "I-learning", by exploring the modalities of "Innovative learning" as a new future concept.
- The university will be an internationally recognised university with a unique composition, serving South Africa's needs with its own unique culture-value mix.¹⁴⁹

During this period, the NWU kept its core business on course without any compromise. There was no decline in the quality of teaching-learning or research; on the contrary, improvements in quality and quantity were achieved (even though sometimes from a low base).¹⁵⁰

Against this background, the Institutional Plan for 2009-2011 described the specific and unique role of the NWU:

Through its core business, the NWU could:

- Develop, educate and empower through quality teaching and learning, well-equipped graduates who are able to think laterally and critically in their service to the country and its people. Develop and sustain high-quality, relevant and focused research, supplying innovative solutions to challenges faced by the scholarly

community, the country, the continent and the world. Expand the implementation of expertise, both commercially and community-directed, for the benefit of the province, the country, the SADC region, the continent and ultimately the world.

Through the quality of its governance, operations and efficient and effective core business, the NWU would also contribute to the national project:

- Aspiring to be recognised internationally as a well-managed and innovative university, with a client focus embedded in quality. The university seeks to achieve by creating an enabling environment that would enhance and improve its core business and remain financially viable.
- Transforming continually in terms of positioning, academic profile, unity, equity and redress. In doing this, contribute to the transformation of the South African higher education system to help meet the country's social, economic, developmental and environmental needs. In all of this, the NWU would remain a value-driven university, striving to make a difference in the pursuit of our mission.
- The NWU, by virtue of its founding as the result of a merger, as well as through its statute, vision, value and mission statement and its management philosophy, is fully committed to achieving this contribution.¹⁵¹

10.9.11 Institutional Plan 2010-2012¹⁵²

During 2010 and 2011, it became clear that the approach of setting realistic stretch targets in the Institutional Plan was paying off through excellent core business results. However, Management identified the need to schedule a transformation colloquium. As an outcome of this, the transformation process was managed in a more coherent way. Furthermore, a new mission element was added in the 2012 Institutional Plan to place more emphasis on transformation objectives, specifically through 10 transformation elements.¹⁵³

Various environmental constraints and opportunities determined the context of this Institutional Plan.

One serious constraint was the deep decline in the South African economy, which was weathering the first formal recession in 17 years. This would undoubtedly have an influence on NWU students, staff and stakeholders.

Then there was the watershed national election that took place in April 2009 and which saw the ruling ANC maintaining its large majority (65.9% of the vote). Consequently, Government made a number of policy adjustments. The two that were likely to have the

biggest direct impact on the NWU were the creation of two departments of education, one for primary and secondary education (Department of Basic Education) and one for tertiary and skills training and education (Department of Higher Education and Training).

Demographically, an important trend was the declining median age of the population, which was down from 58 to 51. While the population under the age of nine years was not growing, the general South African population had increased from 46 million to 48 million.

Other trends pertinent to the NWU were the country's higher skills shortage, especially of engineers, medical doctors and nurses, and high unemployment and poverty.

On the national policy front, Government had published its Medium Term Strategic Framework in July 2009 and these strategic guidelines would determine budget spending and priorities for the next five years. Although higher education was not specifically mentioned in the Medium Term Strategic Framework, the infrastructure and efficiency grants for 2010 – 2011 represented a significant new financial contribution to the higher education sector. This new grants should benefit the infrastructure needs of NWU.¹⁵⁴

Against this backdrop, the NWU added the following additional targets to the core strategy:

- In 2010, the NWU should be an above average tuition-research balanced university, with a growing third income stream from commercialisation, and making a significant impact through community engagement.
- By 2015, the NWU should be a higher than average tuition-research balanced university, with a constant third income stream from commercialisation, and making a significant impact through community engagement.
- By 2020, the NWU could be a high quality tuition-research balanced university, with a sustainable third income stream from commercialisation, and making a significant impact through community engagement.¹⁵⁵

10.9.12 Institutional Plan 2011–2013

The introduction to this plan highlights how far the NWU has come since the merger. *“Seven years into the merger, the NWU has grown from a fledgling merged entity to a leading and respected university, the fourth largest in the country in terms of student heads and one of the most stable and successful of the mergers. Our mission to become a balanced teaching-learning and research university while implementing our expertise in an innovative way is within sight.”*¹⁵⁶

This claim is substantiated by the university's success in meeting the targets set in the Institutional Plan. Meeting targets has been a strength of the NWU from the outset in 2004.

The overarching strategic objective for 2004 was to consolidate and increase the momentum of the merger-integration process and through that, to achieve a sense of permanency across all areas of the NWU's operations.

In 2005, the focus was on completing the merger-integration and incorporation, while improving the quality and output of the core business, taking care of staff development and especially performance management, and finalising a vision and mission statement.

In this context, the first Institutional Plan for the period 2006–2008 focused on the overall strategy of moving from a tuition-based university with focused research to become an effective and transformed balanced tuition and research university. To this end, the NWU focused on transformation, quality and efficiency, and relevance and impact.

At the end of 2007, the mission and mission elements were thoroughly revised. Accordingly, goals were set in the 2008–2010 Institutional Plan to enable the NWU to become a balanced teaching learning and research university and implement its expertise in an innovative way.¹⁵⁷

This Institutional Plan for 2011–2013 focused on the future positioning of the NWU, specifically in the areas of student enrolment, distance education programmes, internationalisation and quality assurance.

For the period 2011–2013, the NWU planned to raise the first-time enrolments by 15.9% (1 083 heads). This was in line with the Government's target to accelerate access to the higher education sector.

The table below summarises the student enrolment plan.

Mode	Campus	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Contact	Mafikeng	6 633	6 6240	7 081	7 131	7 777	8 386
	Potchefstroom	15 875	16 953	18 030	18520	19 215	20 063
	Vaal	3 232	3 660	4 354	5 022	5 492	5 894
	Total	25 740	26 853	29 465	30 673	32 484	34 343
Distance	Mafikeng	1 457	1 583	1 220	568	603	638
	Potchefstroom	19 299	21 307	30 863	24 000	24 720	25 462
	Vaal	512	846	887	370	370	370
	Total	21 268	23 736	32 970*	24 938	25 693	26 470
Grand total		47 008	50 589	62 435	55 611	58 177	60 813

In the case of distance education, the plan focused on the possibility of expanding the distance programmes and targeting the growing adult learning market. In 2011, after UNISA, the NWU was the second largest provider of distance teaching-learning programmes in South Africa, with almost 24 000 enrolled distance-learning students. It awarded more than 6 000 diplomas and degrees in 2009.

Moreover, lessons learned from international quality audits of the distance programmes indicated that the NWU's off-campus programmes compared very favourably with the best similar programmes in the world.

Management was also convinced of the workability of the NWU model: as a residential university, building on its proven strengths, the university was well placed to diversify and expand its offerings through distance delivery. Distance learning has a key role to play in raising the low participation rate in higher education in South Africa and enhancing access to and success in higher education. Through its distance programmes, the NWU could contribute significantly towards addressing the skills shortage.

In addition, the Institutional Plan 2011-2013 highlighted the importance of improving the NWU's international profile and giving its academics the opportunity to position themselves better internationally and establish the necessary support structures.

Other important issues were to optimise operational processes, including information technology and management information, and to ensure the sustained improvement of quality assurance processes. This would include finalising and implementing the quality improvement plan resulting from the NWU's gap register and the recommendations from the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) audit report.¹⁵⁸

10.9.13 Institutional Plan 2012–2014

The NWU's well-developed strategy of 58 specific goals described in the Institutional Plan for 2012-2014 was in support of its mission. This was to increase the quality and quantity of research through focus in terms of campus niches, appropriate incentives and capacity building and development, while strengthening the quality of teaching-learning through an improved client focus, e-learning, innovation and diversity.¹⁵⁹

The development of a performance management framework was an important part of this strategy to put plans into action on all levels of the organisation.

10.10 A framework for performance management at NWU¹⁶⁰

The purpose of this intervention was to analyse the issues involved with the annual collective performance management discussions and to propose an appropriate process that would enhance productivity.

10.10.1 The original philosophy on performance

When the PU for CHE created the so-called "*November discussion*" process during the 1990s, the original goal was to close the budget/performance loop. At that stage the Vaal Triangle Campus was essentially a faculty of the university, not really differently managed than the other eight faculties, and using the same processes. This included academic performance contracting and control, which was primarily executed between the Campus Vice-Rector and Deans, and then the Dean and faculty staff. In support functions, performance discussions were limited to Chief Directors responsible for finance and facilities. However, progress was being made in establishing service level agreements, which had performance management implications for support staff.

These procedures worked well, but, while the top management of the university was excluded from these contracting discussions, they forfeited an integrated view of the performance, dreams and ideals of the academic core. To regain this unified view, two measures helped: some top management members were included in the budget committee, and the November (forward-looking) and March (backward-looking) discussions were introduced. The discussions were not to set or control performance at all, but to exchange views bilaterally between Deans and top management, which was accountable to Council.

10.10.2 Complications: the utilisation of data

Even before the merger, it had become clear that it was extremely difficult to manage the discussion process so that it would not become a substitute performance contract discussion. The easy way to avoid this was not to utilise hard data, but then the discussion degenerated into generalities and homilies. However, once hard data were used, the inevitable debate on the quality and correctness of data followed. The forward-looking November discussion was less prone to this, but data became the stock red herring for the performance-evaluating and backward-looking March discussion. Since the Hemis cycle, which depends on exam marks finalisation, only concluded in June/July, March data would always be open to debate. This dilemma remained unresolved, although a suggestion was made that the two discussions be collapsed into one around August/September.

10.10.3 Complications: multiple campuses and Institutional Management involvement

Following the merger, a second and even more difficult issue surfaced. The original discussions were designed for a single campus university (at that stage Vaal Triangle Campus was treated as one additional faculty), and these discussions attempted to extend the total picture of core academic activity that a Campus Vice-Rector had, to the Rector and his/her management team. In the post-merger structure this need still existed on each campus: the Campus Vice-Rector who works with faculties would have an overview and understanding of the core business that needed to be extended to the other members of the Campus Management team who support the core business. If the data issue could be addressed, a variation of the original discussions could still be utilised per campus. This did indeed happen in some form or another on the campuses in 2005, but without any coordination or involvement of the Institutional Management.

Facilitating that involvement was the most difficult part of the performance discussion process. Members

of the Institutional Management wanted to continue being involved in discussions with Deans on campuses, presumably arguing that they should understand (and influence) the way faculties executed the core business. If this argument was correct, then in principle it was workable to schedule the campus meetings to allow Institutional Management members to be present, and thus expose them to all 14 faculties of the NWU.

In 2004, November discussions were held between the recently appointed Institutional Management (including the two Campus Rectors) and Deans at the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses. These were essentially in the standard pre-merger format, and were not replicated on the Mafikeng Campus (which had neither a Campus Rector nor Executive Deans). No such discussions were attempted in March, primarily because the focus of the March meetings was on the budget process, which started at the same time. Another reason was the less-than-optimal experience management had with the March discussions in previous years.

In practice this situation led to a number of complications. The most obvious one was scheduling the meeting dates: it was extremely difficult and time consuming to decide on dates where all members of Institutional Management and Campus Management would be available. Another potential complication was the focus of the meeting: with two parties with different interests present, chances were that the interest of the “senior” party, Institutional Management, would dominate the meeting at the expense of a campus overview, which should be the focus of the meeting. In fact, this pattern presented itself in the November 2004 discussions, when Institutional Management members were much more involved in the discussions than Campus Rectors, and the rest of Campus Management were not even present.

10.10.4 Complications: the budget cycle

Yet another challenge was the budget cycle, and the format of the discussions to determine the budget. These discussions were conducted via an Institutional Management-driven committee, with a mix of some IM members, Campus Vice-Rectors and Deans as members. These discussions focused on faculty plans, aspirations and problems, and how these feature in the proposed budget. This happened round about March or early April, with a repeat around July or August. It was not easy to separate the content of this discussion from those taking place in March or November, causing a lot of recycling of the same sets of numbers. Participants took the budget discussions seriously, since this was the instrument to determine the size of next year’s operations.

Management changed the budgeting process in 2005 to a process where Campus Management took charge of campus budgets. This was only partially successful, especially during the crucial second round, resulting in the central budget committee still making detailed recommendations on faculty and department level, and not primarily on campus level, as was envisaged.

10.10.5 Analysis and synthesis

Since the inception of the original discussions, two important documents or processes surfaced:

- The NWU vision and goals, which represent the overall institutional dream.
- The first three-year rolling Institutional Plan was drafted, translating the vision into action in both monetary and other performance numbers.

Any new process should thus incorporate at least the following goals:

- operationalising the Institutional Plan as the frame of reference
- allowing for a managerial task agreement process within this framework
- translating the Institutional Plan and task agreement dreams into a budget
- creating a holistic view of the Institutional Plan interpretation through the task agreements.

Designing a unitary and comprehensive process to reach all of these goals would overcomplicate things. A number of separate but interrelated and coordinated processes were proposed. The two primary ones were the task agreement process and the budget process. The holistic view process was a secondary process in support of the primary processes.

The key to designing the processes was to define the primary purpose of the specific process:

- The purpose of the task agreement process was to translate the synthesis between management's dreams and aspirations as represented in the Institutional Plan and the individual's dreams and aspirations, into a firm commitment and contract between every manager and her/his subordinates, with emphasis on the individual output during the year at hand.
- The purpose of the budget process was to cost these aspirations, resolve the dilemma of aspirational cost versus equitable and strategic distribution of feasible resources for the year at hand, and translate this into a two-way commitment: management committing

resources on condition that units should meet individual outputs.

- The purpose of the holistic view process (on various levels) was to collectively understand the fulfilment of the Institutional Plan via cumulative task agreements and the essential interrelationships and risks in this fulfilment.

10.10.6 The task agreement process

The nature of any task agreement is twofold. On the one hand, it is a very personal contract between an individual and the organisation, typically represented by the individual's manager, setting out the expectations of the organisation and the deliverables by the individual. On the other hand, it is part of the collection of all task agreements, extracted from the Institutional Plan and cascaded from the top of the organisation. The sum of these agreements must describe all activities that the organisation plans for the year to maximise performance for the year.

The essential input to the task agreement process is also twofold. First, the Institutional Plan must be known and understood to the extent that people can see their (or at least their work unit's) place in and contribution to the plan. The second input is availability of enough concrete performance data to allow work units and individuals to quantify their activities.

10.10.7 The budget process

The purpose of the planned budget process was to cost the different aspirations and resolve the dilemma of aspirational cost versus equitable and strategic distribution of feasible resources for the year at hand. These two dimensions were translated into a two-way commitment: management committed resources on condition that individual outputs could provide the necessary income.

Any budgeting process is iterative: the summation of the "*How much do you want?*", would lead to an answer "*So much could you get?*" Even if one starts the other way around by telling people what they would receive, there would still be discussions on "*I need a bit more*". The process design should take cognisance of and allow for this. Iterations could go on forever, and the process should not allow this kind of horse-trading.

To ensure disciplined budgeting, the NWU followed a clear-cut budget process. First, the Institutional Office prepared an overview of priorities for the budgeting year, as extracted from the Institutional Plan, as well as an overview of the financial performance of the organisation and the individual campuses for the past few years. The Institutional Office Directors and Managers then prepared a crosscut overview of performance and cost

of the functional units. These overviews were discussed and approved by the full Institutional Management as a base document for the budget process.

Next, by no later than mid-March of the year, the budget synopsis would be distributed so that the campuses and the Institutional Office could prepare their budgets within this scope for submission to the budgeting unit by the middle of May. These budgets were then analysed and discussed at Institutional Management during mid-June for final revision until mid-August. Institutional Management finalised the budget at the beginning of September. It would then be forwarded to the Finance committee of Council at the end of September for approval and submission to Council during the November meeting. Finally, the budget was distributed as approved for the forthcoming year.

It should be noted that, in an effort to promote accountability, the university moved away from an allocation approach to budgeting. This accountability was based on full information sharing on earnings and expenditure, and followed the “*budget committee*” approach used at the previous PU for CHE. The NWU version of this would entail a representative campus or Institutional Office committee hearing presentations from all organisational units. This budget committee could advise, evaluate and decide on the estimates based on its holistic view of all the results and understanding of the Institutional Plan.

An important aspect of the budget process was that it honoured campus accountability, as well as the dotted-line accountability from the Institutional Office (IO) to the campus.

In the case of the campuses, the institutional budgeting support unit would supply basic budgeting parameters and planning information, but would not (unless invited) be involved in campus budgets. When all the campus and head office budgets were ready, the institutional budget staff would analyse the result and prepare recommendations for review (and cutbacks), but the detail would again be left to the units to effect.

To honour the dotted-line accountability extending from the IO to a campus, each Institutional Office Director or Manager held joint functional grouping meetings between the IO unit concerned and the same campus units. (For instance, the IO Director for HR meets with the campus HR Directors). In this way, everyone developed a proper understanding of the scale of the effort and where budgeting for the task should take place.

10.10.8 Fostering a holistic view of the university

The purpose of the holistic view process was to collectively understand the fulfilment of the Institutional Plan and the associated risks and interrelationships.

Here is how the holistic view process worked at the campuses. Once a year, the Campus Senior Management team would visit all faculties and groups of campus support units. At these sessions, the participants would analyse past performance, assess the probability of realising future dreams based on performance history and skills, and, most importantly, judge how these dreams would support and enhance campus and the overall university vision. This process should result in decisions on curtailing certain plans and enhancing some others.

At the Institutional Office, the five Directors or Managers held a similar, joint review of the five IO portfolios, using a process similar to the campus one. The difference was that they would also look at how the planned actions would strengthen support to campuses and steer the organisation towards its vision. In keeping with their dotted-line responsibilities toward the campuses, the five Directors/Managers also held an annual review of the efficiency and effectiveness of each function.

Essentially, the role of Institutional Management was to focus their effort on creating a holistic dream. This revolved around translating the Institutional Plan into digestible chunks and empowering the rest of the organisation to achieve a proper common understanding and sharing of vision.¹⁶¹

10.10.9 Conclusion

This business-like approach was the basis of the former PU for CHE construction of its core operations and is believed to be the reason for its reasonably strong performance. This method was the foundation of the combined effort to develop the mechanisms of NWU’s organisational structure, and was partly responsible for the allegation from some role players at Mafikeng Campus referring to the “*Potchefication*” of the merger process.

10.11 Promoting redress¹⁶²

10.11.1 Building infrastructure

Prior to the merger, the last major capital expenditure on Mafikeng Campus was done in 1996. Expenditure on three campuses since the merger could be summarised as follows:

Mafikeng Campus	R57 million (R12,362.00 per student)
Potchefstroom Campus	R83 million (R8,062.00 per student)
Vaal Triangle Campus	R46 million (R22,000.00 per student)

Student residences (number of beds available per campus and percentage of on campus students residing in residences):

2004	2008
Mafikeng: 1 506 (18%)	Mafikeng: 2 298 (36%)
Potchefstroom: 4 510 (31%)	Potchefstroom: 4 502 (25%)
Vaal: 181 (0.6%)	Vaal: 822 (22%)

10.11.2 Information technology and systems

The former universities had diverse IT infrastructures, systems and processes. They also had unique management and provisioning models. The ICT merger process had to deal not only with technology, but also with structures, processes and procedures. Hence, ICT across the campuses had to be unified and standardised into a single, harmonised ecosystem, a single ICT policy had to be established, and efficient and effective support structures, processes and procedures had to be put in place for all campuses. Past discrepancies had to be eliminated and integrated systems implemented for human resources, finance and student administration.

10.11.3 ICT achievements

Progress in standardising ICT across the university was rapid. A comprehensive service audit was conducted in 2008 to establish equality and availability of services across all campuses. The audit indicated very few differences, and most of these have since been removed.

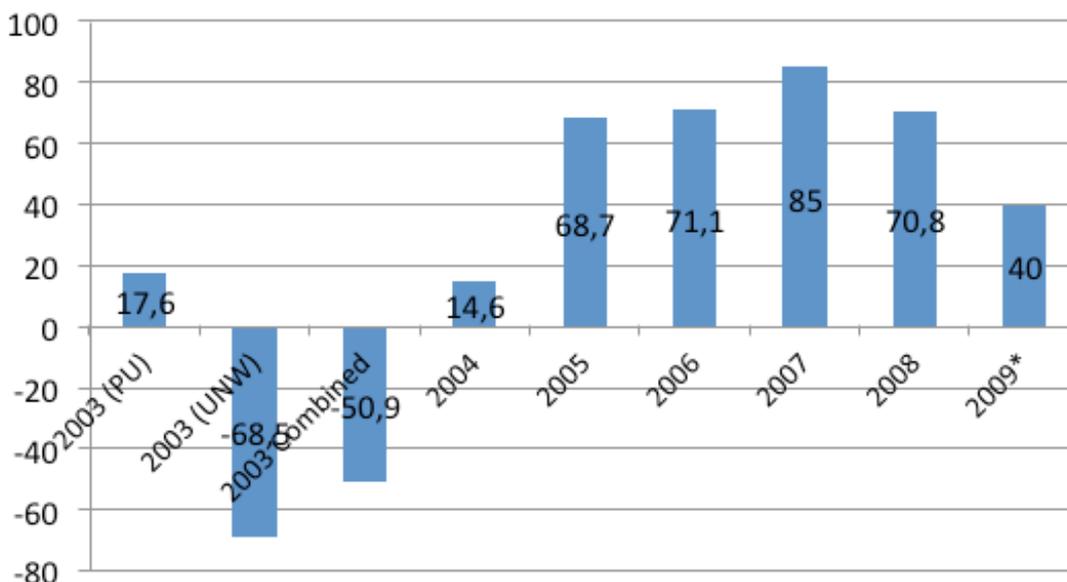
A major merger-related achievement was the successful integration and standardisation of the ICT infrastructure

for the entire NWU, including data centres, networks, telecommunication systems and support structures. Other milestones were the implementation of integrated, standardised information systems for all campuses, except where no need for a particular system was noted, and the migration and merging of separate databases into centralised, common databases. IT support departments and service portfolios were restructured across all campuses, removing redundancies and centralising support wherever feasible. The university also implemented a single system for identity management and security, standard procedures for procuring ICT equipment and software, and standardised cost recovery systems. Users received extensive training in using the new systems correctly, all platforms had capacity upgrades to accommodate growth, and internet connectivity was upgraded on all campuses.

10.12 Attaining financial viability ¹⁶³

The NWU was grateful for the support received from the then Department of Education, but the R83,8 million received from the department could not do justice to the merger objectives, leaving the university to shoulder some significant costs. For approved merger claims only, the NWU had to carry R9,3 million as an unclaimed portion for over-spending.

Although the new university started out with some financial challenges, its financial position soon stabilised and at 2009 the NWU was indeed a viable entity. The following diagram summarises the net surplus/deficit during the years 2003 - 2009.



Promoting equity ¹⁶⁴

Council approved a policy that serves as a framework for employment equity implementation. While this was in line with the provisions of the Employment Equity Act, the NWU's stance on employment equity was that it was not merely about complying with the provisions of the

Act, but also realising that it made good business sense to embrace equity in employment. The goal from the beginning was to set realistic "stretch" targets for equity, reach these by growing internal capacity, and recruit the best staff and students available. The table below shows the targets set for 2010 to 2012, and the actual staff profile as at September 2009.

	2010 target - percentage			2011 target - percentage			2012 target - percentage		
	Blacks	Whites	Women	Blacks	Whites	Women	Blacks	Whites	Women
Mafikeng Campus	91.70%	8.30%	47.10%	91%	9%	47.10%	90.75%	9.25%	47.10%
Potchefstroom Campus	28.95%	71.05%	55.40%	30.35%	69.65%	55.40%	31.55%	68.45%	55.40%
Vaal Triangle Campus	38.90%	61.10%	54.00%	39.90%	60.10%	54.00%	40.60%	59.40%	54.00%
Institutional Office	19.00%	81%	55.70%	20.30%	79.70%	55.70%	21.60%	78.40%	55.70%
NWU summary	40.24%	59.76%	53.05%	41.21%	58.79%	53.05%	42.11%	57.89%	53.05%
	Baseline (*Recalculated)			Current profile – September 2009			2009 target - %		
	Blacks	Whites	Women	Blacks	Whites	Women	Blacks	Whites	Women
Mafikeng Campus	93.99%	6.01%	44.09%	91.17%	8.83%	43.74%	91.44%	8.56%	47.10%
Potchefstroom Campus	24.85%	75.15%	55.77%	22.85%	77.15%	58.49%	25.90%	74.10%	55.40%
Vaal Triangle Campus	29.17%	70.83%	55.21%	31.80%	68.20%	59.41%	35.35%	64.65%	54.00%
Institutional Office	9.91%	90.09%	60.85%	15.94%	84.06%	62.32%	17.47%	82.53%	55.70%
NWU summary	38.14%	61.86%	53.76%	35.38%	64.62%	56.28%	37.81%	62.19%	53.05%

In addition, the NWU had a specific internal target for the representation of black managers and women. The aim was to have at least 30% black managers and 30% women in any specific section by the end of 2010. In Mafikeng, the challenge was to appoint more female (and white) managers. In Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle, the greatest challenge was to appoint more

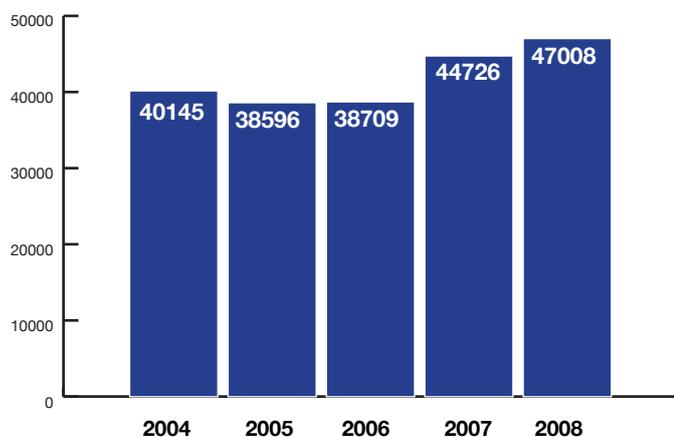
black managers, especially black female managers.

The Institutional Management set an example in this regard. Of the nine executive managers reporting to the Vice-Chancellor during 2010, 55% were black and 30% female. Very few South African universities could claim that degree of diversity in their executive management teams!

10.13 The academic profile ¹⁶⁵

10.13.1 Student enrolment (*increased student numbers or size*) ¹⁶⁶

The merger objective of “*sustained viability through bigger numbers*” did not really apply to the former PU for CHE or the former UNW. In 2002 the PU for CHE had more students than ever before (25 000 heads) and the UNW (7 500 heads) had more students than Rhodes University (which in the end did not merge with Fort Hare). However, the merger created its own momentum and in 2008 the NWU was the fourth largest university in the country by head count. The diagram below shows the enrolment figures for 2004 to 2008.



10.13.2 Teaching-learning

Based on the statistics on all campuses, teaching-learning improved from 2004 to 2008. The undergraduate pass rate for contact and distance students rose from 75.2% to 81.2%, and the graduation rate (degrees as percentage of total heads) increased from 24% to 26%. The total number of degrees increased over the same period by 21.7% (to 12 337).

10.13.3 Academic programme alignment ¹⁶⁷

The alignment of academic programmes across the campuses was the most difficult and the most profound of the merger processes. Different qualification structures, different credit allocations to modules and different content (depending on campus-specific niches and expertise) all contributed to the complexity of aligning programmes.

The objectives of the programme alignment process were to comply with directives from the Department of Education as to the outcomes of the merger process, encourage mobility of students across campuses at different levels in their studies, and ensure comparability of programmes across campuses, enabling quality

control and management of perceptions about qualifications conferred on different campuses.

The Institutional Senate approved the policy for Academic Alignment in May 2006, after which structured discussions were conducted in the coordination, alignment and rationalisation (CAR) committees. These committees, which represented all three campuses, focused on the Economic and Management Sciences; Educational Sciences; Humanities; and Science, Engineering and Technology.

The task of these CAR committees was to evaluate all programmes, taking into account the type of qualification, available expertise and national imperatives (of professional bodies such as SAICA). Their work entailed three types of alignment:

- The first type was absolute alignment, with identical qualification structure, identical module configuration and identical study guides and study material. In terms of the requirements of the national body, this type of alignment would also necessitate similar or identical examinations and tests, preferably written at the same time across the different campuses. In this type of alignment, one would typically include the BCom Accountancy leading to the Chartered Accountant (CA) qualification, as well as Engineering.
- The second type of alignment was less rigorous and made provision for more variations across campuses in terms of focus and available expertise. This would typically include some types of professional training (involving a professional body), such as Law, Education, Social Work, Pharmacy, Nursing and Dietetics, as well as four-year programmes such as Language Technology and Graphic Design (both Potchefstroom Campus only). In these instances, the curricula were largely prescribed, with little possibility of including electives.
- The third type of alignment involved the generic qualifications, especially the BA and BSc degrees, where the structure of the qualification could be aligned and agreement reached on the core modules, but where the electives would depend very much on the availability of modules on different campuses. In this instance, the focus of the alignment process was very strongly on the exit-level outcomes of the entire qualification, as stipulated in the SAQA standards for these generic qualifications. In these qualifications, agreement was reached across campuses about aligning important modules such as Chemistry, Physics and

Mathematics, because these modules were included in programmes across faculties and across campuses.

Following in-depth discussions in the CAR committees during a two-year period, the particular undergraduate programmes, curricula and modules had to be submitted to the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) for formal approval by June 2009. This would make it possible to implement the programmes in 2010 (full implementation across the board would take place at once). This process was largely completed on time.

After completing the formal part of programme alignment at undergraduate level, faculties began finalising their detailed plans for the implementation process and worked on the very important issue of communication to students. The possible legal implications were also kept in mind and care had to be taken to ensure that students were not disadvantaged in the process. With this in mind, the university initiated once-off actions such as additional assessment opportunities and careful counselling about curriculum construction for students taking modules that were being phased out.

To manage the anticipated difficulties, the university used the following principles or points of departure to underpin the process:

- Module owners would be responsible for ensuring that changes were fully and effectively communicated to students. This applied to information about changes in module codes, the replacement of modules by others, any other changes in the curricula of programmes, and final decisions that might have an effect on the curriculum and prolong a student's programme of study or make it more expensive..
- Programme owners were responsible for informing students in good time about programmes being phased out from 2010 and the handling of alternatives.
- Where modules were being phased out, re-assessment opportunities would be created for students who did not complete these modules in the first and second semesters of 2009. This would enable them to make a smooth transition to the new programme or curriculum without incurring extra time or expense.
- Once their programmes or curricula were consulted on and finalised for 2010, students would be required to sign a document indicating that they understood and accepted the changes.

For 2010, the focus was on monitoring all aspects of the implementation of the undergraduate programme alignment and continuing with postgraduate programme alignment in accordance with the HEQF.

10.13.4 Access

The NWU has a uniform admissions policy, and used an M score mechanism from 2005-2007 (with provision for phasing in the raised requirements at the Mafikeng Campus). The latter was replaced by a uniform admission points score (APS) model in 2008.

Although the pool of students with higher-than-average matric marks remains small, the NWU made considerable progress with the following access programmes:

- Ikateleng, for grade 12 learners from disadvantaged schools
- Whole Schools Development programme (15 schools in North-West Province)
- support to seven Dinaledi schools in the North-West Province
- Foundation programmes at the Mafikeng Campus
- In addition, extended programmes would be offered on the Vaal Triangle Campus from 2010.

Even so, it remains a huge challenge to close the gap between the schooling system and readiness for university study.

To assist students, programmes such as Supplemental Instruction and student support systems were put in place and in 2007 alone, a total of 12 290 students on all campuses made use of this support. The graduation rate for 2006 in the category "undergraduate" (including diplomas) was 24%, and was the second highest in the country. In 2007, this fell slightly to 23%, mainly due to steep growth of almost 6 000 heads. It rose to 26% in 2008, however.

The 2010 target for first-time entrants across campuses was as follows:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mafikeng Campus	1 436	1 311	1 124	1 251	1 530
Potchefstroom Campus	2 851	2 834	3 143	3 119	3 477
Vaal Triangle Campus	665	634	669	856	1 066
NWU total first-time entrants	4 952	4 779	4 936	5 226	6 073

The funding made available by NSFAS increased marginally, but was still not enough, as the Vaal Triangle Campus in particular regularly has to turn away many academically deserving but poor students.

10.14 Research and postgraduate education ¹⁶⁸

Research and postgraduate education improved markedly between 2004 and 2008. The number of PhDs awarded rose by 13% to 100, and 583 master's degrees were awarded in 2008. Similarly, the number of published article equivalents increased by 85% over the same period, from 275 to 509, and the number of NRF-rated scientists increased by 29% to 103.

In 2004, total research outputs (articles, research master's and PhDs time three) were very low on the Mafikeng Campus, but this increased dramatically in 2008:

Total research output:

2004	2008
Mafikeng: 11	Mafikeng: 86
Potchefstroom: 712	Potchefstroom: 885
Vaal Triangle: 85	Vaal Triangle: 94

10.15 Implementation of expertise

The implementation of expertise, both commercially and community directed, also improved between 2004 and 2008. The number of registered increased by 61% from 18 to 29, and self-generated income increased by 108.7% from R311 million to R649 million. As for community engagement projects, the NWU was running more than 200 projects on its three campuses.

10.16 Organisational development of the Vaal Triangle Campus after 2004

Five years after 2004, the NWU's Vaal Triangle Campus completed its metamorphosis from a satellite to a fully-fledged campus of the university.

The transition started on 1 January 2004, when the Vaal Triangle Campus, previously a satellite of the PU for CHE, was officially established. All staff and new first-year students from Vista University's Sebokeng Campus were relocated from the Sebokeng Campus to the NWU Vaal Triangle Campus. Pipeline students remained on the Sebokeng Campus due to limited space on the Vaal Triangle Campus. This meant the transfer took place under difficult circumstances.

Due to the merger and incorporation instructions of the Minister of Education, the Sebokeng Campus grounds and buildings were transferred to the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) in 2004. The Minister granted a three-year simultaneous use of the Sebokeng Campus to

VUT and VTC for the pipeline students up to December 2006. The relocation of the staff, students and moveable assets from the Sebokeng Campus was completed two years earlier in December 2004.

Development of buildings and infrastructure

Five new academic buildings were erected on the Vaal Triangle Campus and seven existing buildings were upgraded to a new standard set for the NWU. All academic staff of the former Vista University and the Vaal Triangle were housed in excellent facilities with modern technology available for teaching-learning and research.

The campus library, which had been a branch library of the former PU for CHE, became a fully functional library, complete with 45 000 books from Vista University and a full range of library services.

Network systems connected all the campus units, including all off-campus facilities.

As student numbers grew, so did the campus's academic and support infrastructure. An ABSA ATM was installed next to the library and a new security control room was built and equipped with modern security systems, including closed circuit television systems. This improved vehicle access control at the gates and entrance control to buildings, enhancing safety on campus.

Facilities to improve student life

The bathrooms in Vergelegen and Jasmyn Residences were modernised, as were the ablution facilities in the academic buildings. New offices were made available for the Student Representative Council and student leaders. All six blocks making up the Faranani Residence were upgraded to the same standard as on the Potchefstroom Campus, and various facilities were added, including a television room, multi-purpose hall, gymnasium, new cafeteria and a computer room.

All the sport fields were upgraded to meet the demand for modern facilities for the various sports codes on campus. A third soccer field was developed and the sports clubhouse upgraded. A new cricket field and clubhouse were provided, as was a modern gymnasium with state-of-the-art equipment. A Lotto grant paid for the new sports facilities. Meanwhile, various fund-raising projects were initiated in aid of a student support fund.

More improvements followed when the Vaal Triangle Campus acquired the Water Tower Training Centre and the Sasol filling station using money from third-stream income activities. Similarly, the Emfuleni Conference Centre was purchased, renamed Quest Conference Estate and managed as an off-campus training site.

Completing the transition

By 2009, student numbers on the Vaal Triangle Campus had grown to 4 579, including about 700 off-campus students, mainly educators who were improving their qualifications.

Alumni from the Vaal Triangle Campus were decentralised from the system in Potchefstroom, and the campus celebrated the launch of the NWU Vaal Alumni and arranged an SRC reunion. By the end of 2009, the alumni database consisted of over 9 000 names of former students.

The corporate identity and branding of the Vaal Triangle Campus was aligned with the Institutional Plan and brand roll-out plan, and all signage was completed

Capital expenditure for the Vaal Triangle Campus's first five years

Total expenditure on new buildings and infrastructure, as well as upgrading and maintenance of existing buildings	R105,750,000.00
Merger funds from the Minister (for three new buildings)	R24,000,000.00
Costs carried by North-West University	R81,750,000.00

10.17 A closer look at the issue of the Mankwe Campus ¹⁶⁹

The NWU Council received a report about the future of the Mankwe Campus on 8 October 2004 and realised that all the options available were likely to affect staff positions.¹⁷⁰ Council requested the Institutional Management to inform all affected staff about the possible impact of future developments, subject to compliance with the Labour Relations Act.¹⁷¹ On 26 November 2004, Council established a Network task team, consisting of external Council members, to liaise with stakeholders about the future of the campus.¹⁷²

A thorough study was done on the viability of the campus and the NWU entered into lengthy negotiations the local Moses Kotane Municipality, the national and provincial departments of Education, and staff and students. Next, in September 2005, the NWU Council took the following bold decision about the future of the Mankwe Campus: *“The Mankwe Campus will not be closed down. Instead, the Provincial Government has been requested to take over the maintenance of the land and buildings and consider using it as a campus for an FET college. In addition, the North-West University will retain a visible higher education presence at Mankwe, by using it as a delivery site for selected programmes. Management will now implement this decision. This will include engaging the staff and students in respect*

*of further processes and preparations for 2006, and engaging the Provincial Government once a response had been received on the request mentioned above.”*¹⁷³

The negotiations about the future of the Mankwe Campus provoked emotions because of its educational role in a close-knit rural community and integrated part in the development plan of the Moses Kotane Municipality.¹⁷⁴

The decision of the NWU Council was ultimately implemented by transferring the property to the Orbit Further Education and Training College with its head office in Rustenburg. All Mankwe students voluntarily relocated to the Mafikeng Campus, while the majority of the 16 permanent staff members obtained new positions on the NWU's campuses. In terms of this agreement, Mankwe became a successful FET college that met the needs of the communities around Mankwe. The NWU continued to utilise the site as a presentation venue for its teacher further training programmes, as well as to contribute towards meeting the educational needs of the greater Mogwase/Bojanala region.¹⁷⁵

10.18 An NWU learning site in Rustenburg? ¹⁷⁶

From 2005, the NWU held informal discussions with various role players about ways to harness the Mankwe Campus to contribute to formal higher education in Rustenburg, which was one of the fastest growing districts in the country.

A “*first principles*” type investigation was conducted in April 2007 into the possibility of setting up a learning site with a substantial presence in Rustenburg. At that stage, no fieldwork was done and the assumption was that due to the growth of the region there would be enough potential students in Rustenburg to sustain a university campus at least the size of the Mafikeng Campus.

In developmental terms, all organisations must grow in one way or another. Non-profit organisations like universities must also continue to grow, but what the term “*growth*” implies was not at all straightforward in the circumstances that prevailed in 2007. It could probably imply “*growth in the eyes of stakeholders*”, but this singular metric would not necessarily be interpreted in the same way: for some stakeholders, growth might mean more students, for others better throughput, and for others more campuses.

It was also doubtful whether the Department of Education would in the light of the mergers and incorporations be comfortable with a growth-in-size strategy for a newly merged and incorporated institution, unless NWU had already demonstrated a significant growth-in-quality result.

The idea was to concentrate on teaching-learning when extending educational services in a Rustenburg learning site.

To evaluate the viability of expanding to Rustenburg, the university used its growth vector until 2010, detailed in the Institutional Plan, as its point of reference for the investigation of a learning site in Rustenburg.

As the diagram below shows, the viability of extending teaching-learning activities to Rustenburg would depend on growth vector drivers such as concentration, market development, product development and diversification.

		Products	
		OLD	NEW
OLD	MARKETS	Concentration Market share Efficiency	Product development
	PRODUCTS	Market develop- ment	Diversification

The NWU then used its 2007 vision and mission to assess whether or not the growth drivers were in place in Rustenburg:

Vision: To be a pre-eminent university in Africa, driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation.

Strategic goal: To become, by 2010, an effective and transformed balanced teaching-learning and research university, with a growing third income stream from commercialisation, and making a significant impact through community engagement.

Mission 1: Producing well-rounded graduates able to think laterally and critically and to serve the country and all its people, through quality teaching-learning (knowledge driven).

Mission 2: Producing high quality, relevant and focused research, basic as well as applied (knowledge driven).

Mission 3: Implementing research results and expertise, both commercially and community-directed (knowledge and innovation driven).

Mission 4: Aspiring to be recognised internationally as a well-managed and innovative university, with a client focus and a quality focus (pre-eminent and innovation driven).

Mission 5: Creating a financially viable institution able to transform continually to meet the country's social and economic needs (innovation driven).

Mission 6: Being sensitive to the environment and the country's social needs, and promoting sustainable development (innovation driven).

Mission 7: Positioning the NWU as a value-driven university (pre-eminent).

2007 Priority foci:

Continue with interventions to improve the throughput rate and to achieve the targets with regard to the alignment of programmes.

Research (including innovation), with the focus on the building of research capacity and the effective management of resources.

Ensure the optimal utilisation of systems and processes at all levels to promote the success of the core business.

Ensure that the management philosophy and practices within the unitary multi-campus context were promoted and practiced at all levels.

A strong focus on quality assurance and preparation for the Institutional Audit.¹⁷⁷

Except for the general statement to “*be sensitive to the country's social needs*”, none of the mission or vision statements indicated any need for a product development, market development or diversification strategy to extend services in Rustenburg. Furthermore, very little spare capacity was available for innovative activities beyond the scope of staff members' day-to-day functions on the campuses. What's more, at least four universities and the Orbit FET College were actively offering various programmes in that region. Therefore, NWU management did not see any compelling reason to enter the Rustenburg market.¹⁷⁸

10.19 Language matters

Although linguistic diversity is typical of African societies, Christa van der Walt argued that the challenges of multilingual approaches in higher education grow bigger when the discourse of education is understood in market terms. Consequently, linguistic diversity is then seen as a liability rather than an asset.¹⁷⁹ If this situation is coupled with political issues, language becomes a concern and even a barrier in the debate to transform higher education. This was the somewhat challenging setting for the development of the multilingual language policy at NWU from 2004. .

The university's language policy is based on functional multilingualism, celebrating the richness of a diverse

society. Functional multilingualism means that the choice of a particular language in a particular situation is determined by the context in which it is used and variables such as the envisaged outcome of the communication concerned. The levels of language proficiency of the people engaging each other also influence the choice of a particular language code or codes. This implies that while it is not necessary to use all the official languages to communicate at the NWU, sensitivity should be shown towards the main regional languages used in the provinces where campuses are situated.¹⁸⁰

From the time of the merger, this commitment to multilingualism was made tangible in terms of the use of Setswana, English and Afrikaans in the daily operations. In line with ministerial policy, a language policy was developed with the aim of promoting access, integration, a sense of belonging, and the redress of language imbalances of the past.¹⁸¹ As a result, the NWU was leading the way with this functional multilingualism policy as a powerful transformation tool, driven by the Language Directorate. The effective implementation of this policy has undoubtedly made the university a role model for multilingualism in the higher education sector.

From 2007 on, good progress was made in establishing a multilingual working environment. The Language Directorate completed the development of *TransTips*, an innovative comprehension tool that makes the staff intranet available in four working languages, namely Afrikaans, English, Setswana and Sesotho. In addition, the first NWU staff newsletter, *Eish!*, was published in Afrikaans, English and Setswana.

Functional multilingualism is also being applied in the teaching-learning environment. Apart from the educational interpreting service rendered in certain niche teaching programmes offered mainly at the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, good progress has been made in making undergraduate study guides available in more than one of the working languages of the NWU.

In 2007, in response to external demand for its services, the Language Directorate established a separate business unit, known as *TransVox*, to offer interpreting services and training to clients at various educational and public sector institutions. The Directorate also undertook continuous action research, resulting in several research papers being read at scholarly conferences and the publishing of articles in popular and scholarly journals.¹⁸²

The university's language policy is based on a functional language plan with the following aims:

- to give due regard to the linguistic realities, that is to say, the linguistic demographics of interest

groups both within the institution (students and staff) and outside (alumni, donors, research partners, regional role players, provincial and national government, statutory bodies, civil service)

- to strive to achieve the optimal functionality of the languages on offer through the effective and systematic management of the corpus and the proper use of the languages
- to approach and deal with the management of language matters pragmatically, apolitically and without ideological bias
- to set parameters for determining language usage in internal and external communication
- to revise the plan regularly, for example, at three to five-year intervals, based on a sound situational analysis and on a clear external and internal process of alignment.¹⁸³

10.20 Branding and corporate communication¹⁸⁴

The NWU brand or visual identity comprises consistent use of the logo, swoosh, corporate colours, style guides, visual language and concepts approved by the Institutional Corporate Branding and Identity Committee. These guidelines are set out in the Corporate Identity Manual.¹⁸⁵

10.20.1 Brand highlights since 2004

- **Links in the value chain:** an interim logo was used for the first three years after the merger, from 2004 to 2007. It consisted of two links of a chain, illustrating the merger of the two former universities.
- **Shaping the brand:** stakeholders who took part in a full brand audit in 2006 had the opportunity to influence powerful university symbols such as the logo. Altogether, just over 2 000 students, staff, donors, alumni and members of management participated.
- **Adding the missing link:** in 2007, a third link was added to the chain in the logo, representing the NWU's three campuses, namely the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses.
- **Short and sweet:** the pay-off line, "*Innovation through diversity*" was introduced in 2008 after a competition for staff and students. It was inspired by the competition entry of Ms Malebo Matlala, who was then a second-year master's student on the Potchefstroom Campus; she

won a cash prize of R5 000 for her contribution.

- **Taking the next steps:** in May 2009, the NWU took brand management to the next level by appointing a Brand manager to oversee the further development of the brand and corporate identity.
- **Brand rollout gained momentum:** strides were taken with the development of the brand identity policy, and the corporate identity manual provided guidelines for stationery, systems templates, ceremonial regalia, signage, promotional items and advertising, among others. Campus signage and interior graphics were designed for some buildings.
- **Creative concept:** from 2010, the university introduced a shared image bank and added graduates' attire to the ceremonial regalia. PhD gowns and headgear were added later. The NWU also embarked on a journey to inform the visual language.
- **All singing the same song:** the university anthem was reworked twice to capture the evolving brand and image of the NWU. In 2011, the lyrics of the anthem, called "*Bless us oh Lord*", were revised through a collaborative effort and the result was recorded by the singing group Flip a Coin.
- **Taking a strategic view:** in 2011, the university prepared for a strategic view of brand management and corporate identity. External specialists were appointed to conduct a stakeholder reputation perception audit, the results of which would be used to refine the brand positioning.
- **A new pay-off line:** in 2012, market research revealed that the pay-off line (*Innovation through diversity*) had a functional, internal focus, when what was needed was a pay-off line that would position the NWU externally. Consequently, a new payoff-line, *It all starts here*, was developed and was approved by the Institutional Management in August 2012.
- **Staff rally around the brand:** an internal brand awareness campaign was launched in 2012 with the involvement of McCann World Group, encompassing an online quiz, game show, flash mob and other activities. Brand Ambassadors were appointed to assist with corporate identity compliance.
- **Advertising campaign:** to position the NWU among key external stakeholders, an

advertising campaign was conducted in selected publications throughout 2012. This was followed by an even more extensive campaign the following year, including radio, print, digital media and outdoor billboards. Approximately 800 000 readers and 7 300 000 listeners were reached in 2013.

- **Standing out:** the first edition of the NWU's internal staff newsletter, *Eish!*, was published in March 2007. Today it rates among the best in-house publications in the country. This was confirmed at the South African Publication Forum's award ceremony in September 2014, when the *Eish!* was a finalist in the categories for *Best internal newsletter* and *Best publication with a smaller budget*. A certificate was also received for excellence in communication. In the Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Higher Education (MACE) competition, *the Eish!* received an excellence award and was also one of four finalists for the Top Achiever Award.

10.20.2 Finding our voice, we sing from the same page ¹⁸⁶

The NWU has found its voice, so to speak. A rich, powerful voice has been evolving since 2004 by harmonising the distinctive melodies of the university's three campuses.

This musical metaphor describes the journey the NWU has taken in composing a brand that resonates with its stakeholders.

That composition has not been completely without discordant notes. When the NWU was born in 2004, it brought together two universities with different identities. On the one hand, there was the University of North-West (UNW) in Mahikeng, whose students were mostly Setswana-speakers from poor rural communities. On the other hand was the PU for CHE in Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle satellite campus, with a predominantly white, Afrikaans-speaking student base.

Both universities had their own, much-cherished identities, which went deeper than having different logos, corporate colours, signage, communication and marketing departments, and academic and ceremonial regalia.

At the risk of oversimplifying the situation, the former UNW had strong struggle credentials and African ethnic traditions. In contrast, the erstwhile PU for CHE was historically committed to Western Christian principles.

Poles apart from each other, the two had to come together under a single, cohesive brand that would

strike the right chords with stakeholders.

After all, in the higher education sector, branding that is strategic, focused and relevant is the driver of reputation, student enrolment and access to funding sources. *“Great positioning makes us stand out from the rest and aligns and inspires the entire institution”*, says Mrs Phumzile Mmope, who at the time was Executive Director of Corporate Affairs and Relations. *“It also provides strategic vision for what we want to stand for in the long term in the hearts and minds of our stakeholders.”*

In 2004, therefore, the university set out on a journey to discover and shape a brand that would make the NWU stand out for all the right reasons.

10.20.3 What's in a name?

Deciding on a name for the new university was the easy part. With most of its multi-campus operations in the North-West Province, it made sense to link the name with the general geographic location. Therefore, North-West University, abbreviated to NWU, was a natural choice that met with little if any resistance.

A more difficult decision was what logo and corporate identity to use for the merged university. Both former universities had been using traditional, heraldic symbols to brand themselves, as follows.



The shield from PU for CHE featured candelabra and the logo words *“In u lig”* (In your light).

The University of North-West had a bird perched on top of its shield, which featured bold geometrical designs and the motto *“Excellence through wisdom”*.



These symbols had served their purpose but times had changed. What was needed for the newly merged university was a single, unifying symbol.

10.20.4 An interim logo as the best solution

The Interim Council of the new university was well aware that a logo could be a powerful symbol of internal unity and a way of achieving instant recognition in the market. On the other hand, it could become a cause of disagreement if rushed through without proper consultation or if seen to favour one constituency's preferences at the expense of another. Council decided that an interim logo would be the best solution.

Ms Lana Faasen, a graphic design lecturer in the School of Communication Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus, was asked to design the interim logo. Guided by key words such as cooperation, integration, merge and liaison, she came up with a concept that was strikingly different from what had gone before.

Instead of a shield, Ms Faasen designed an icon that was easily recognisable as two links of a chain in the royal blue and maroon legacy colours of the former institutions, portraying the merger process between the two parties.

The two links of the chain also represented the “n” of North-West and the “u” of university, adding depth to the meaning of the logo.



However, the rich heritages of the merger partners were not forgotten. Their shields were used as sublogos on either side of the chain links, the former UNW on the left and PU for CHE on the right.

This arrangement was used for the first three years of the NWU’s life. It then became clear that the university and its stakeholders were ready for the next step in the logo’s evolution.

10.20.5 How stakeholders helped shape the evolving brand

In October 2006, a full brand audit survey was conducted among staff, students and other stakeholders, including alumni. The aim was to find out how stakeholders perceived the existing interim logo and corporate identity, what they liked the most and least about the university, and what they believed should change.

“The first brand survey was a major milestone for the NWU because it gave our stakeholders the opportunity to influence the shaping of powerful university symbols such as the logo,” said Mrs Mmope of Corporate Affairs and Relations.

The brand audit attracted 2 073 respondents, of whom just over half were students, slightly more than 25% were alumni and about 21% were staff members from all three campuses. Interviews were also conducted with Council and Senate members, Campus and Institutional Management members, donors, alumni and students.

The findings were illuminating. For the first time since the merger, the NWU had a clear picture of what stakeholders saw as its strengths, weaknesses and competitive advantages.

In their eyes, the NWU’s greatest strengths were high academic standards, the well-rounded education offered and the quality of teaching-learning. Also highly rated was the university’s commitment to producing graduates able to think laterally, as well as its financial viability and stability.

When it came to the logo, opinion was mixed. Students were by far the most positive, with 70% of those who responded saying they liked the logo. Staff members were next, giving an approval rating of 60%. Positive

comments were made about the logo’s clear and simple style and the qualities it radiated, especially tolerance, strength and unity in diversity.

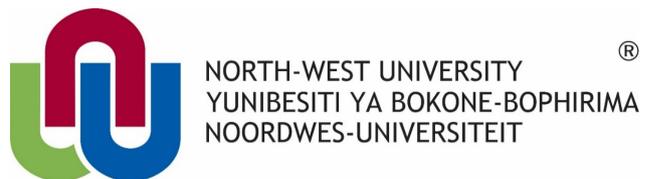
Alumni, however, generally took a dim view of the logo as it was then. Only 18% of alumni who responded to the survey said they approved of the logo and 56% said they disliked it.

The university took all this feedback seriously and decided to take the NWU logo to the next level.

10.20.6 Three links in the chain

The changes saw the two shields of the former universities disappearing and the two chain links becoming three to represent the three campuses of the NWU. The Vaal Triangle Campus, which used to be a satellite campus of the PU for CHE, thus became a fully-fledged NWU campus.

The revised logo also took the lettering formed by the links in the chain a step further. Whereas the two-link logo only contained an “n” and a “u”, the three-link version introduced a “w” too.



As for the colours of the links, they were matched to the colours that were being used before the merger: blue for the Mafikeng Campus, maroon for Potchefstroom and green for the Vaal Triangle.

Now the scene was set for a more concerted approach to managing the brand of the NWU and encouraging greater collaboration among the three campuses – without sacrificing the unique characteristics that make each campus special.

Innovation through diversity

One of the main challenges that the NWU has encountered as a unitary, multi-campus university is promoting unity among its component parts. Another challenge has been to overcome the negative connotations attached to merged universities, even though they have much of value to offer.

In the early years after the merger, the NWU’s thinking was that unity could be encouraged and negativity overcome by igniting a sense of excitement in stakeholders over the creative potential that the merger had unleashed. With this in mind, the university sought to position itself in the minds of stakeholders as an “*established, vibrant, innovative and entrepreneurial university*”.

Sights set on a clear, simple and consistent way to convey that message to stakeholders, the NWU tapped into the creative potential of its people. This took the form of a competition in which staff and students were asked to suggest a pay-off line to replace the existing one: “*Getting it right, Ons doen dit reg, Re dire sentle.*”

The competition attracted 231 entries, one of which turned out to be the inspiration for the new pay-off line that was introduced in 2008 – “*Innovation through diversity.*” The winning entry was from Ms Malebo Matlala, then a second-year master’s student on the Potchefstroom Campus, who won a cash prize of R5 000 for her contribution.

“*Innovation through diversity*” highlights how the combination of unique talents, expertise and qualities of the diverse NWU community often sparks off progressive ideas and projects. It also underlines the university’s resolve to treasure its diverse cultures and harness diversity in pursuit of knowledge and innovation.

Meanwhile, the Institutional Corporate Branding and Identity Committee was formed to manage the brand strategy and its implementation. Part of this was to roll out the brand identity on all three campuses and the Institutional Office. It was used on unifying symbols such as the university flag, lectern cloth, signage, stationery, certificates, promotional items and communication tools.

It all starts here

In 2012, market research revealed that the pay-off line “*Innovation through diversity*” had a functional, internal focus, while we needed an external, positioning-focused pay-off line.

Consequently, a new pay-off line, “*It all starts here/ Dit begin alles hier / Gotlhe go simologa fano,*” was developed, portraying the NWU as an institution that enables people and makes things possible for them. It speaks of a place where dreams are born and where people can visualise their aspirations and future success.

10.20.7 Converged communication

Another priority was addressing the need for better inter-campus collaboration in marketing and communication.

After the merger in 2004, all three campuses continued to run their own internal and external communication units, independently of each other and of the Institutional Corporate Affairs and Relations Office.

Apart from duplicating efforts, this scenario increased the chance of mixed messages going out to stakeholders. For the sake of consistency and coordination, all campuses joined forces in 2005 to form the Corporate Communication Forum.

As time went by, teamwork improved between Corporate Affairs and Relations and the three campuses’ communication and marketing teams. Together, they identified areas of cooperation and collaboration that supported the Institutional Plan and targets.

Working together, the campus and institutional communication teams put in place a range of effective channels to position the university internally and externally.

Internally, the emphasis was on fostering a sense of belonging among staff and raising awareness of the NWU’s positioning as an established yet innovative university through internal media such as:

- *Eish!*, the internal newsletter, which was initially published four times a year and later seven times. *Eish!* is still a relevant and viable internal newsletter
- Electronic media, including the staff Intranet, the Vice-Chancellor’s newsletter and his video streaming messages, a daily electronic notice for staff and various department-specific newsletters.

Externally, the focus was on positioning the NWU as an established yet innovative university – a stance that gained great credibility in 2008 when the university won the Most Technologically Innovative Higher Education Institution award in that year’s National Innovation Fund Competition.

To reach external stakeholders, the university introduced a comprehensive array of print and electronic communication tools, including:

- a national advertising campaign in the Sunday press and major daily newspapers, timed to coincide with the publishing of the NWU’s annual report in June each year
- two versions of the annual report, one for the Department of Higher Education and Training in compliance with reporting requirements and a full-colour version for stakeholders
- the NWU corporate profile, published in English and Afrikaans with a summary in Setswana from 2009 onwards
- the twice-yearly alumni magazine, *NWU and U*, published for the first time in 2009
- the NWU website, starting with the launch in 2008 of the domain address www.nwu.ac.za and an integrated landing page. The website then evolved to fully reflect the university’s unified, multicultural and multilingual environment.

Stakeholders, particularly staff, students and alumni, have had various opportunities to influence the direction that communication tools have taken.

A case in point is the NWU website and intranet, which underwent extensive redevelopment from 2007 after a survey was held to pinpoint stakeholders' needs and expectations.

The web survey saw almost 1 000 respondents telling the NWU what information they wanted to see on the website. A university-wide task team then evaluated the survey results and incorporated stakeholder feedback into the revamped, fully integrated website, which went live in 2010.

Never one to stand still, the university continued to adapt its communication tools to match the changing needs of stakeholders.

The latest touches on the website, for example, are a virtual tour of all three campuses and new content for all the NWU's academic faculties and support departments.

10.20.8 The journey continues

In 2011, Corporate Affairs and Relations commissioned an independent stakeholder reputation perception audit to find out how stakeholders perceived the university and how they believed the NWU could further differentiate itself in the marketplace. This comprehensive audit also assessed the symbolic value of the NWU logo and corporate identity. The findings of the audit informed the new logo (as a symbol of both the essential unity and the practical diversity of the university), as well as the branding strategy that was accepted by Council.

Here are some of the audit findings:

- Some stakeholders felt there was a distinction between the reputation of the university as a whole and the reputation of their particular campus. There was a strong feeling that this kind of diversity should be acknowledged in the revised brand strategy.
- Stakeholders on the Potchefstroom Campus tended to see the university as unified and transformed, while those on the Vaal Triangle Campus and Mafikeng Campus felt that cultural and racial divides existed
- Differences emerged from campus to campus in how staff perceived the organisational culture. Vaal Triangle Campus staff used the key words "*principled, value-driven and self-starter*", while the Potchefstroom Campus respondents chose "*flexible and curious*" as their key words. The key words at the Mafikeng Campus were "*transparent, humble and respectful*."

- Asked to comment on the NWU's reputation at the time, respondents highlighted quality (especially in teaching-learning and research), valid contribution (in the sense that the university is contributing positively to the economy) and stability.
- Other attributes that came up were innovation and creativity, efficiency and good management, competitiveness, and striving to grow, transform and internationalise.

This feedback was then incorporated into the development of a refined brand positioning strategy. To help with this, a transparent pitching process was followed to select a suitable partner, resulting in an award-winning advertising agency being appointed

By December 2011, the NWU's new brand philosophy had been defined, based on insights into the unique challenges and opportunities facing the university, as well as a market analysis of trends and competitor positioning.

10.20.9 An enabler that unlocks the future

The new brand manifesto stated that the role of the NWU goes beyond the traditional role of a university that transfers knowledge. *It's no longer about the "knowledge, it's what you do with that knowledge,"* said Mrs Phumzile Mmope of Corporate Affairs and Relations. *The NWU offers more than just an education; we enable the future by offering our stakeholders a place in the world.*

The nature of that place in the world depends on who the stakeholder is. *"The new brand strategy states that for students, the NWU is the perfect environment to become what they want to be. For employers, this is the place to find the employees they want. For government, this is a university that can and is addressing the needs of the community through relevant research and teaching-learning."*¹⁸⁷

10.20.10 Attractions of a three-campus environment

The revised brand strategy has turned the perceived differences between the three campuses into a competitive advantage for the NWU.

The new approach suggests that the NWU is crafted to accommodate modern-day learning and that, within its three-campus environment, individuals can find the field of study or research that stimulates them.

At the Mafikeng Campus, for instance, the physical setting has a peri-urban profile that lends itself to a rural development focus in terms of academic offerings.

The Potchefstroom Campus, on the other hand, is a bustling environment with a strong focus on multidisciplinary research development.

As for the picturesque Vaal Triangle Campus, it focuses on being an asset in Gauteng, contributing to the skills and knowledge of the region and acting as a catalyst for economic growth.

*“So, whether you are looking for a better future, or looking to make a difference in people’s lives, or you simply want a solid foundation for your future, the NWU is the place where potential is nurtured, where ordinary becomes extraordinary and anybody can be somebody. It all starts here”.*¹⁸⁸

10.21 Student experience

With three campuses far away from each other, spread across two provinces, the NWU draws students from widely different socio-economic, cultural and language backgrounds. This diversity is a competitive advantage for the university in that it enables students from various walks of life to learn and interact in an environment that closely reflects the dynamics of South African society. It also offers an exciting opportunity for the NWU to engage in transformation that respects differences while building a common frame of reference with which all students, existing and prospective, can identify.¹⁸⁹

The 41 270 students enrolled during 2004 experienced a new university with relatively well-functioning processes, because it operated by agreement under the admission requirements that prevailed in the former institutions. The Work Study Programme at Mafikeng Campus provided an environment in which students from disadvantage communities were afforded the opportunity through internal and external internships and mentoring to develop into professional graduates. Student unrest at Mafikeng and Mankwe campuses was due to dynamic tension between the different student organisations and the uncertainty about the merger implications, and required lengthy consultations. On the Potchefstroom Campus, 2 576 students had written the compulsory Test for Academic Literacy (TAL test) for all new entrants at first-year level and 644 (26%) enrolled for the relevant remedial module. The 2004 Welcoming Week for first-year students at the Vaal Triangle Campus was well attended and the new student leaders benefited from various development programmes.

The Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC) became operative after Council approved its constitution in June 2004.¹⁹⁰ During 2005, the ISRC ensured that a balanced mix of student activities was maintained, while catering for the needs of a diverse student population on all campuses. The ISRC enjoys representation on all governing bodies of the university, affording an

opportunity for the NWU’s main clientele, students, to be heard. The various Campus SRCs promoted an active student life involving numerous student organisations and organised student activities.¹⁹¹ The Vaal Triangle Campus took a major step forward in 2005 by dividing the original department of Student Affairs into two distinct new units: a department of Student Development and a new department of Student Affairs, both headed by a director reporting to the Campus Registrar.¹⁹²

The NWU recorded moderate growth in the number of first-year students, owing mainly to the “cap” of 5 100 placed on the 2006 intake. Although first-year registrations were slightly lower than expected on all campuses, the quality of students was higher. During this year, the NWU accelerated efforts to achieve integration on all levels. These activities included implementing a single, centralised system for student administration, as well as integrated systems for financial management and human resources. Policies, rules, and procedures were aligned across the university, ensuring a level playing field for all staff and students.¹⁹³

The student wellness activities on all three campuses were particularly active in the area of HIV/Aids prevention. Working committees and HIV/Aids offices have been up and running on all the campuses since 2006, with the active involvement of students. The Health Centre at the Mafikeng Campus continued to play a pivotal role in the well-being of students and staff members. Overall, the usage rate among students increased by just over 17%, underlining the value that the Centre offers the Campus community.

Through culture and sport, the NWU promotes the all-round development of students so that they are well prepared to embark on successful careers, contribute to society and live balanced, purposeful lives. While academic excellence is important, it is not the only attribute that the university seeks to nurture. Campus life is for that reason geared to holistic growth and development, as is clear from the wide range of cultural and sport activities in which students are encouraged to participate.¹⁹⁴

On student governance level, the campus representatives of the Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC) experienced a difficult start in 2006. A number of students did not want to accept certain clauses in the ISRC constitution, even though the constitution had been negotiated and agreed on by members of previous SRCs from all three campuses, and approved by the NWU Council. To overcome this obstacle, the Student Offices and Campus Rectors launched an intervention that culminated in newly elected ISRC members agreeing to amend the constitution. Consequently, the

ISRC was successfully constituted in April 2006 and was able to fulfil its commitments and obligations. These included taking part in negotiations on student fees and conducting new ISRC elections for the following year.¹⁹⁵

The pressing need for the coordination of student affairs and sports activities across the campuses of the NWU resulted in the appointment of an Institutional Director: Student Affairs and Sport from October 2007. This director convened the ISRC and oversees the institutionalised student activities across campuses.¹⁹⁶

10.22 Institutional Forum (IF)

The genesis of the IF was laid down during the 1990s with the demand for the establishment of Broad Transformation Forums (BTFs) with influential duties:

“At their best, they have emerged as structures in and through which institutional stakeholders can unite to determine collectively the agenda, timetable and strategies of transformation, to prepare codes of conduct, agree and implement dispute resolution procedures, and draft new legislation.”¹⁹⁷

The Higher Education Act made provision for this role. An Institutional Forum contemplated in section 31 of the Act,¹⁹⁸ which describes the role, functions and duties of the IF in advising Council on issues affecting the institution, including:

- the implementation of the Act and the national policy on higher education
- race and gender equity policies
- the selection of candidates for Senior Management positions
- codes of conduct, mediation and dispute resolution procedures and
- the fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning.¹⁹⁹

The inclusion of the IF in this Act was a vehicle for applying the principle of democratisation, as stated in paragraph 1.19 of the Education White Paper:

“The principle of democratisation requires that governance of the system of higher education and of individual institutions should be democratic, representative and participatory and characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and the maintenance of a well-ordered and peaceful community life. Structures and procedures should ensure that those affected by decisions have a say in making them, either directly or through elected representatives. It requires that decision-making processes at the systemic,

institutional and departmental levels are transparent, and that those taking and implementing decisions are accountable for the manner in which they perform their duties and use resources.”²⁰⁰

Although this role was given effect in the Higher Education Act, there was one significant departure from the original 1990's demand from the student movement, namely that the IF was not given any decision-making powers, but was established as an advisory body to Council. It seems, however, that after an initial flurry of activity, the IFs have been marginalised and their role and status eroded. Either they have stopped functioning on some campuses or, where they do function, Councils have a tendency to ignore their advice.²⁰¹

The Institutional Registrar of the NWU facilitated the process of establishing a permanent NWU Institutional Forum (IF) in February 2007, and the IF had its first constituting meeting on 1 March 2007.²⁰²

During 2007, the IF created the framework to ensure it fulfilled its mandate as an advisory body. The IF comprised 18 members, representing the three campuses. One of its first tasks was to elect the members of the IF Executive Committee, consisting of a chairperson, deputy chairperson and secretary. Mr TP Venter, a member of the NWU's administrative staff, was elected as chairperson, while Dr MSM Molefe acted as deputy chairperson and Prof C de W van Wyk as secretary. When Dr Molefe resigned as an employee of the NWU, Prof Van Wyk was elected deputy chairperson.

The seven groups of stakeholders who were represented on the IF in 2007 were as follows:

- Council: Dr CJ Smit
- Management: Prof ND Kgwadi
- Senate: Prof R Roos, Prof LM Vermeulen and Dr MSM Molefe
- Academic, non-Senate employees: Prof C de W van Wyk and Dr RFA Maarman
- Non-academic employees: Mr TP Venter, Mr JA van der Walt and Mr VL Mothobi
- Unions: Mr PJM van Niekerk and Ms J Pires-Putter
- Students: Mr GH Jefthas, Mr IC Swartz, Mr M Mofolo, Mr M Tebakang, Mr G Ncebeshe and Ms L Bosiamé²⁰³

The Rules of the NWU IF were translated into Afrikaans, English and Tswana.²⁰⁴ Members of the IF took part in several selection committees to appoint Senior Management staff.²⁰⁵ The IF resolved that there should be four IF meetings per year, which would run concurrently with the four annual meetings of Council from

2009 onwards. The motivation for this change was that IF meetings should be scheduled three weeks before Council meetings so that the IF could report to Council on a regular basis.²⁰⁶

In September 2008, in the interest of continuity and practicality, the IF resolved to change the term of office of the IF Exco from one to three years. At the same meeting, the IF took note that Advocate Solly Sithole SC (a former member of Council) had agreed to act as chairperson of the NWU Human Rights Committee as from 1 September 2008.²⁰⁷ The Exco of the IF resolved that the Human Rights Committee, as an independent structure of the NWU, should report within the line function of the Executive Director: Human Capital Development and would no longer serve as a subcommittee of the IF.²⁰⁸

The IF formed a new task team in November 2009 to revise the NWU Code of Ethics and Codes of Conduct and therefore invited Ms Azima Batcha (General Manager: Culture and Transformation at Transnet) to present the Transnet success story on developing the Transnet Culture Project.²⁰⁹ IF members were also involved with the Transformation Colloquium from 18-20 April 2010, scheduled by the Transformation Oversight Committee of Council. Members gave positive feedback on the Transformation Colloquium in general.²¹⁰ The IF also took note of the 10-point plan for diversity and transformation at the NWU, formulated by Dr Ingrid Tufvesson, the university's transformation officer.

This 10-point plan was known as DAARE RISSQ, which stands for:

- D for Diversity
- A for Access
- A for Alignment
- R for Redress
- E for Equity
- R for Resources
- I for Increased unity
- S for Student/Staff experiences
- S for Success
- Q for Quality²¹¹

The Human Rights Committee task team compiled a report on the Report of the Ministerial task team into the affairs of the NWU. The Human Rights Committee's report was submitted via the Institutional Forum to Council at its meeting of 19 June 2009.²¹²

10.23 Official communication by the Vice-Chancellor and Council

10.23.1 Council communication

The NWU Council resolved on 12 March 2004 to give management the task of developing a communication strategy for approval. Campus Rectors were tasked to convene a report-back meeting with staff and students after each Council meeting, and the Interim Vice-Chancellor was instructed to issue a newsletter after each Council meeting.²¹³

10.23.2 Vice-Chancellor's newsletters

Dr Theuns Eloff, the chief executive officer responsible for the management and administration of the NWU, reported to the NWU Council for the university's overall performance. From 2004 on, at least four editions a year of the Vice-Chancellor's newsletter were sent to all staff members to keep them informed about developments at the NWU.²¹⁴

In November 2012, Dr Eloff referred to the challenging times being experienced at NWU and mentioned a number of burning issues.

These issues included the unrest, violence and vandalism on the Mafikeng Campus,²¹⁵ the racist Facebook issue on the Potchefstroom Campus (and the fact that the majority of students rejected racism)²¹⁶ and the theft of ballot boxes for the Vaal Triangle Campus SRC elections. He also referred to the national climate that led to the Ministerial Committee's investigation on social cohesion and racism and the Ministerial task team that had investigated the affairs of the university.

Despite these challenges, he expressed optimism about the future of the NWU, saying that the way staff and students had faced the challenges, "*gives me hope for the future. Clearly, some of the underlying issues would remain with us for some time, but I am confident that with the goals that we have set for ourselves to transform the NWU, we will also overcome these*".²¹⁷

Looking ahead to 2009, Dr Eloff asked staff members to focus on challenges such as the institutional audit, conducted in March 2009, and the need to constantly improve the core business and increase the pace of transformation in terms of equity, redress and the normalisation of student experiences on all the campuses. Other challenges were to improve the process of internationalisation and quality assurance after the HEQC audit, and to keep on balancing the issues of unity and diversity, as well as centralisation and decentralisation.²¹⁸



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- 17 NWU IP (2012-2014 rolling over to 2013-2015) departing from the working definition for transformation at the NWU, as well as working definitions for the 10 TIGs; also adding measurable outcomes to each of these indicator goals: Mainstreaming of transformation; access; alignment; diversity; equity; increased unity; quality, redress, resource allocation, student experience, success
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- 19 Collaborative effort to fast-track development and/or implementation of Inst Plan; curriculum design, alignment and implementation; EE programme
- 20 Values of inclusivity, equity, openness, free of unfair and hurtful discrimination; pursuing the requirements of multilingualism; concept of a single university based on dispersed delivery; campus-focused transformation agendas needed; establishing Transformation Forum to promote, oversee, facilitate inter-campus dialogue, feedback, sharing of relevant information
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CHAPTER 11

Diversity converges, sparking fresh ideas

11. The year 2008¹

In 2008 Dr Theuns Eloff, Vice-Chancellor, said: *“Since the merger, the NWU has always considered the unique diversity of the NWU community as an asset instead of a drawback. I believe that, if managed carefully, diversity contributes towards synergy – in other words it allows the NWU to be more than the sum of its parts. Over the years, I have often witnessed how the combination of the unique talents, expertise and qualities of our diverse community leads to fresh, innovative ideas.”*²

The year 2008 – four years after the merger – stands out as the year in which the university and its diverse component parts started to work together, each contributing in its own way to the creativity and success of the whole.

The cornerstones of this growing synergy were the structures established to govern the university, including the committees of Council.

11.1. Committees of Council³

All Council committees function under a mandate of strategic or financial importance to the NWU. They are chaired by persons with the requisite knowledge, skills and experience, and operate under clear terms of reference.

11.1.1 Executive Committee⁴

The Executive Committee deals with governance matters between Council meetings and reports on these matters at the next meeting. It also ensures that the Code of Conduct for Council members is upheld, and finalises matters referred to it by Council.

11.1.2 Remuneration Committee⁵

This Committee attends mainly to the employment contracts, remuneration and performance evaluation of the Vice-Chancellor, members of the Institutional Management and the Director: Internal Audit. Owing to the nature of its duties, the Remuneration Committee consists of the four external members of the Executive Committee of Council as well as the Chairperson of the Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee, who is also an external member of Council.

11.1.3 Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee (HREE)⁶

The mandate of the Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee is to ensure that adequate human resource policies and strategies are in place and to monitor the implementation of these in accordance with

set criteria and measures. The committee is responsible for all human resources and employment equity-related aspects, including remuneration and service conditions matters that are not within the scope of the Remuneration Committee. The committee receives and evaluates reports from management on specific human resources issues, including compliance with statutory requirements, and ensures that management is held accountable for the implementation of human resources-related strategy and policies.

11.1.4 Transformation Oversight Committee (TOC)⁷

The Transformation Oversight Committee oversees the implementation of the transformational aspects of the Institutional Plan and consists of four external and one internal member of Council, as well as the Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Principal.

11.1.5 Audit, Compliance and Risk Management Committee⁸

This committee is accountable to Council for the performance of its duties, which are to safeguard the NWU's assets, to maintain adequate accounting records, to develop and maintain an effective system of internal control, to oversee management's role in creating and maintaining a proper risk management process, and to authorise the annual audit fee of the external auditors. The committee provides a channel of communication between the Council, management, the internal audit function and the external auditors. It enjoys unrestricted communication with the Chairperson of Council (who is not a member of the Audit Committee), the Vice-Chancellor, and the Executive Director: Finance and Facilities, and the internal and external auditors.

11.1.6 Finance Committee⁹

The mandate of the Finance Committee is to advise Council on financial and investment matters and on long-term infrastructure development at the NWU. In fulfilling this role, the committee is tasked with reinforcing Council's governance function with regard to sound, responsible and effective financial planning, financial administration, financial governance and proper financial reporting. The Finance Committee has five external members and one internal member of Council.

11.1.7 Tender Committee¹⁰

This committee's role is to approve the tender policies and procedures prepared by management, to check that

these comply with the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003, to confirm that tender policies are being implemented, and to evaluate and approve tenders for contracts valued at between R2 million and R15 million. For contracts exceeding R15 million, the committee evaluates the tenders received and makes a recommendation to Council. The Tender Committee has three external members and three ex officio members.

11.1.8 Investments Committee ¹¹

The main task of this committee is to establish measures so that the NWU can earn the highest possible yield on investments, with appropriate risk exposure. Its duties are to appoint portfolio managers and evaluate investment policies, the investment performance of portfolio managers and the credit arrangements within which the money market manager can operate. The committee has up to five external members and two to three independent investment experts.

11.1.9 Assets Committee ¹²

The main responsibility of the Assets Committee is to ensure the long-term development and maintenance of the infrastructure of the university. The Assets Committee has two external members and three ex officio members.

11.1.10 Honorary Awards Committee ¹³

The Honorary Awards Committee consists of the Vice-Chancellor, Chairperson of Council, two members of Council, three members of Senate, the dean of the relevant faculty in an advisory capacity, and the Institutional Registrar (Secretary to Council).

11.1.11 Advisory Committee on Student Support Services (ACSSS) ¹⁴

During 2008, the duties of the committee were to:

- advise Council on the policy on student support at the university in terms of the Higher Education Act and the NWU Statute
- advise Council on the delivery of student support services, identify and address gaps in the delivery of these services and be the single point of contact within the university for information on the delivery of student support services
- establish such working teams, consisting of staff and students of the university, as it deems necessary to perform its mandate.

On the recommendation of the ACSSS, Council resolved on 21 November 2008 that the Committee would be disbanded and replaced by the Institutional Committee on Student Support Services (ICoSSS). This committee would be operational as from 2009 and would report

to the Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee.

11.1.12 Attendance of Council meetings ¹⁵

Four ordinary Council meetings were held during 2008: on 14 March, 20 June, 19 September and 21 November, and an extraordinary Council meeting was held on 16 October. The attendance record for Council meetings and its standing committees for 2008 was as follows:¹⁶

Committee	Percentage
Council	76%
Executive Committee	100%
Finance	90%
Transformation Oversight	72%
Human Resources and Employment Equity	75%
Tender	83%
Honorary Awards	67%
Audit, Compliance and Risk Management	64%
Remuneration	83%
Assets	90%
ACSSS	95%
Total average attendance figure for Council members	81%

Council's ability to govern faced a number of tests in 2008, including student unrest at the Mafikeng Campus.

11.2. Unrest at Mafikeng Campus

On 6 March 2008, a group of 46 students were arrested for blocking the entrance to the campus after the NWU obtained an interdict to prohibit students from damaging property and obstructing normal activities.¹⁷ The students were ordered to leave the campus by 12:00 on 8 March.¹⁸

Student protests continued, leading to the closure of the campus.¹⁹ On 14 March 2008, the Vice-Chancellor tabled a detailed report to Council on the events leading to the closure of the campus.²⁰ Two weeks later, on 28 March, students submitted a memorandum listing the issues they wanted management to address.²¹

On 26 May, a group of students again burned tyres and damaged university property. This was in protest against the expulsion of the SRC president and a small group of students for holding disorderly protests against a 13% tuition fee increase.²² More disruption followed. Then, on 28 May, the Campus Management reached an agreement with student representatives to stop the protest

action and commence with semester examinations on 2 June 2008.²³

This agreement would lapse once the issues in the memorandum submitted by students in March 2008 had been addressed through negotiations. Both students and management wanted the normal course of business to continue on campus and committed to resume negotiations. Management then responded to this memorandum in writing, but the contents of this response were not adequately communicated to students. To overcome this, the university management and student leaders made a commitment to keep staff, students and the national Department of Education informed about developments around the negotiations on the 28 March memorandum.²⁴

The campus was closed for the second time on 2 September because of a new phase of violence and disturbances by unruly students, who toyi-toyed in sympathy with seven students who were expelled.²⁵ The damage to university property amounted to almost R1 million. Minister Pandor instructed a ministerial task team to conduct a thorough investigation into both the state of affairs on campus and the NWU merger plan.

Dr Eloff was astounded that the Minister had unilaterally intervened without consulting Council or the NWU management, and replied that the Ministry had approved the NWU management model and received Council reports for the previous three years.²⁶

The Institutional Management submitted a report on the unrest at Mafikeng Campus to Council on 21 September 2008. Council determined strategies and resolved to cooperate with the Minister's decisions.²⁷ On 22 September, the campus was re-opened for the first time since 2 September and additional security officers were deployed in an attempt to prevent the intimidation of staff and students.²⁸ The 49 students who were arrested after the latest upheaval were released by the local court on 25 September.²⁹

According to Mr Thabiso Tsogang, spokesperson of the SRC, lectures on campus were on hold until their demands had been met: *"We demanded the reinstatement of all seven students that were expelled and suspended."* The Campus Rector, Prof Dan Kgwadi, remarked that the students had failed to come up with specific demands and had not honoured meetings with management to resolve the matter.³⁰

The NWU Council sought to resolve the matter by addressing the students' demands during a special meeting on 16 October 2008.³¹ The Council meeting did not accomplish this because about 500 students disrupted a graduation ceremony and the police had to be called to restore order.³²

The following Management report illustrated the ongoing attention given to this:

"Management, in renewed efforts to save the academic year for the students, had discussions and information sessions with stakeholders, including staff and parents, during the past week. The meeting held with parents in Rustenburg on Wednesday, 1 October 2008 was especially constructive. A group of about 150 parents gave Management their full support to resume with lectures on Monday 6 October 2008. In addition, the Campus Student Representative Council (CSRC) President, Mr Jabu Moleme, gave parents the assurance that their children would be safe when classes resume. With the consent of both Management and students, the Department of Education appointed a facilitator to assist in breaking the deadlock.

"Professor Hugh Africa, a member of the Council for Higher Education, assisted by Mr Hlengani Mathebula from ABSA, held meetings with staff, students and Management on Thursday, 2 October 2008. Unfortunately, this first attempt to facilitate resolution of the situation did not succeed. This was due to the intransigent and uncompromising position which the student leadership took. They insisted that all their demands should be met unconditionally before they would allow students to go back to classes. These demands are that the Campus Rector, Prof Dan Kgwadi, must be suspended immediately, that all expelled and suspended students should be allowed back unconditionally, that all charges against all other students for whatever offence, be dropped immediately, and that all staff members whose services had been terminated in the past, be reinstated immediately.

"Despite the fact that Management had indicated that in accordance with a Council resolution, they would consider commuting some of the sentences of the expelled and suspended students, the student leadership remained fixed in their rigid position. It must be noted that, also during the course of this week, the student leadership had an extensive meeting with the Provincial ANC leadership and that not even this engagement could soften the stance of the CSRC. In the light of this, the facilitators had no option but to declare a deadlock and they will report this to the Minister of Education.

"In accordance with the Council decision of 19 September, Management therefore calls on all students, staff and parents to ensure that normal teaching-learning activities resume on campus on Monday, 6 October. The residences will reopen on Sunday, 5 October at 14h00. All possible steps will

*be taken to ensure a safe environment for teaching-learning to resume.*³³

The NWU Council noted the situation at the Mafikeng Campus on 21 November, and received a report on the allegations made by the Mafikeng Campus SRC.³⁴ Meanwhile Mr Mosimanegape Moleme, at that stage the deputy president of SASCO, asked the High Court in Mahikeng to challenge the NWU's decision to dismiss him. He said that he still considered himself a student of NWU. Mr Mawethu Rune, the president of SASCO, said that they viewed the decision of NWU to expel seven students as a witch-hunt and would await the report of the ministerial task team appointed by Minister Pandor. Mr Lester Mpolokeng, the NWU's spokesperson, said that Mr Moleme and the six other students had appealed unsuccessfully against their expulsion at the end of August. He replied that they were expelled after being found guilty of an assortment of charges involving acts of violence, intimidation and vandalism during the student protest against tuition fee hikes in March 2008.³⁵

11.3. Snapshot information of the NWU at 2008³⁶

11.3.1 Institutional highlights and general events

Despite the volatile situation at the Mafikeng Campus, the NWU made solid progress in strengthening corporate governance, harmonising and integrating policies and structures, stabilising its finances, and continuing with the academic, research and community engagement business of the merged university.

Governance highlights of 2008

- The NWU's commitment to uphold best practice in effective management and corporate governance was acknowledged on 25 August,³⁷ when the NWU received first place in the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers' Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance, as the Best Corporate Governed University in South Africa during 2008.³⁸ *“Winning this award demonstrates that the stability and success of the NWU as a merged university is highly appreciated in the higher education sector and beyond,”* said Dr Theuns Eloff.³⁹ Adding to the significance of this award was the concern the Minister of Education had expressed about governance in the higher education sector and Higher Education South Africa's support for a proposal to develop and implement proposals to strengthen institutional councils.⁴⁰
- Three House Committee members at the Potchefstroom Campus were suspended from their duties after investigations into forbidden first-year orientation rites and physical contact with students, which are strictly prohibited by the rules of NWU.⁴¹
- The Institutional Plan 2008 – 2010 was tabled and noted by Council.⁴² Later in the year, the annual revision of the Institutional Plan 2009 – 2011 was approved
- The term of office of the Vice-Chancellor was due to expire in May 2009 and Council noted the appointment process and discussed issues regarding the possible reappointment of Dr Theuns Eloff.⁴³ On 16 October, an Interviewing Committee was established.⁴⁴ At its meeting of 21 November, Council resolved to reappoint Dr Eloff for another five-year term as Vice-Chancellor.⁴⁵ Council not only recognised the important role that Dr Eloff had played in positioning the NWU as a leading university, but also wished to give him the opportunity to finalise the various strategies implemented since the merger in 2004.⁴⁶
- In recognition of his contribution to democratic progress in South Africa and for his engagement with global education and social transformation, Dr Eloff received an honorary doctorate of Laws from London South Bank University. He joined an elite group of honorary graduates of this university, including Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who is also an honorary alumnus of the North-West University.⁴⁷ Prof Deian Hopkin, the Vice-Chancellor of London South Bank University, bestowed this honour on Dr Eloff at a ceremony on 19 November 2008.⁴⁸
- Mr PJ van der Walt was elected as the third Chairperson of Council on 20 June by majority vote in compliance with Section 5(1) of the Statute, and Dr S Mthembi-Mahanyele as Deputy Chairperson.⁴⁹
- Dr NM Takalo, the Vice-Principal, was still a voting member of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Board, which was constituted in April 2005.⁵⁰
- Students at the Vaal Triangle Campus stole the ballot boxes during the counting of votes after the SRC election by the Independent Electoral Commission. Campus Management negotiated plans to fix the election process.⁵¹

Harmonisation and integration highlights

- The university's new logo and branding strategy was accepted by Council and rolled out.
- Harmonisation of admission requirements was completed
- All integrated governance and management structures were operating well.
- Most integrated policies, rules and procedures were being applied
- The university's language policy of functional multilingualism earned it an award from the Pan-South African Language Board. With increased unity as one of the key drivers for 2008, it was good to note that the NWU was recognised for contributing the most towards multilingualism and nation building in the South African higher education sector over a 10-year period.
- The second Culture and Climate survey released in 2008 showed an increase in the "culture quotient" from 51.8% in 2005 to 58.3% in 2007.⁵² This was an indication that a sense of common purpose and belonging was starting to take root.

Financial highlights

The NWU was financially successful, even without additional funding from the Department of Education:

- Building projects of R45,2 million were completed at the Mafikeng Campus.
- As a percentage of total income, Department of Education funding came down from 42.8% in 2006 to 39.8%.
- Tuition fees as a percentage of income decreased to 18.9%.

The following table gives more detail on the state of the NWU's finances from 2004 to 2008.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total income, (R million)	R953	R1,080	R1,253	R1,414	R1,631
Surplus (recurrent items), (R million)	R14,7	R68,7	R62,6	R80,5	R50,3
Staff cost/total cost	53.25%	52.4%	52.6%	50.6%	49.2%
Self-generated income, (R million)	R311	R371	R441	R571	R624,2
% of income from government	45.13%	43.2%	42.76%	40.4%	40.9%
% of income from tuition fees	21.3%	21%	20.2%	19.2%	20.8%
Capital expenditure on new buildings, (R million)	R5,9	R29,3	R44,5	R46,8	R47,5

Transformation highlights

- On 14 March 2008, the Council of the NWU declared its concern over racism, sexism, intolerance, xenophobia, violence and crime in the country and in the higher education sector. Recognising and appreciating what the NWU community had done in this regard, Council signalled its wish to engage constructively with these issues. Hence, the NWU would enjoin the Institutional Forum and the Human Rights Committee of the university to actively foster the notion of diversity, intercultural harmony and cooperation.⁵³
- On the question of the ministerial task team looking into the affairs of the university, Council decided to approach the Minister with a response and respectfully requested to look at and rectify factual errors contained in the task team's report, before it was published⁵⁴ in June 2009, Council was still awaiting feedback from the Minister.⁵⁵
- Meaningful progress was made with employment equity; 38.1% of appointees were black and 53.3% female.
- A total of R80 million was spent on bringing buildings and facilities on the campuses up to par with each other.
- On 7 October 2008, seven students from the Potchefstroom Campus were charged for their alleged involvement in a racist Facebook group.

In response, approximately 150 to 200 students from the campus marched to the Institutional Office of the NWU on 16 October.⁵⁶

As part of the march, the South African Students Congress (SASCO) and the Student Representative Council (SRC) handed over memoranda. Mr Theo Venter, representing the Vice Chancellor, acknowledged receipt of the memoranda, and once again reassured students that all forms of discrimination and racism were regarded in a serious light and would be addressed.⁵⁷

- Disciplinary action was finalised against the seven students who were allegedly members of a racist Facebook group,⁵⁸ thus contravening a section of the Statute of the university.

The students were charged because their conduct was detrimental or could have been detrimental to the good name, order, discipline or performance of the work of the university or any part of the university. Six of the students were found not guilty, and the charges against them were withdrawn, because the disciplinary committee could not find any evidence that they actively associated themselves with the specific Facebook group. The seventh student was found guilty.⁵⁹ The disciplinary committee found that the behaviour of this student had violated the institution's rights regarding expected student conduct and that his actions were detrimental or had the potential to be detrimental to the good name of the university.⁶⁰

11.3.2 Teaching-learning highlights of 2008

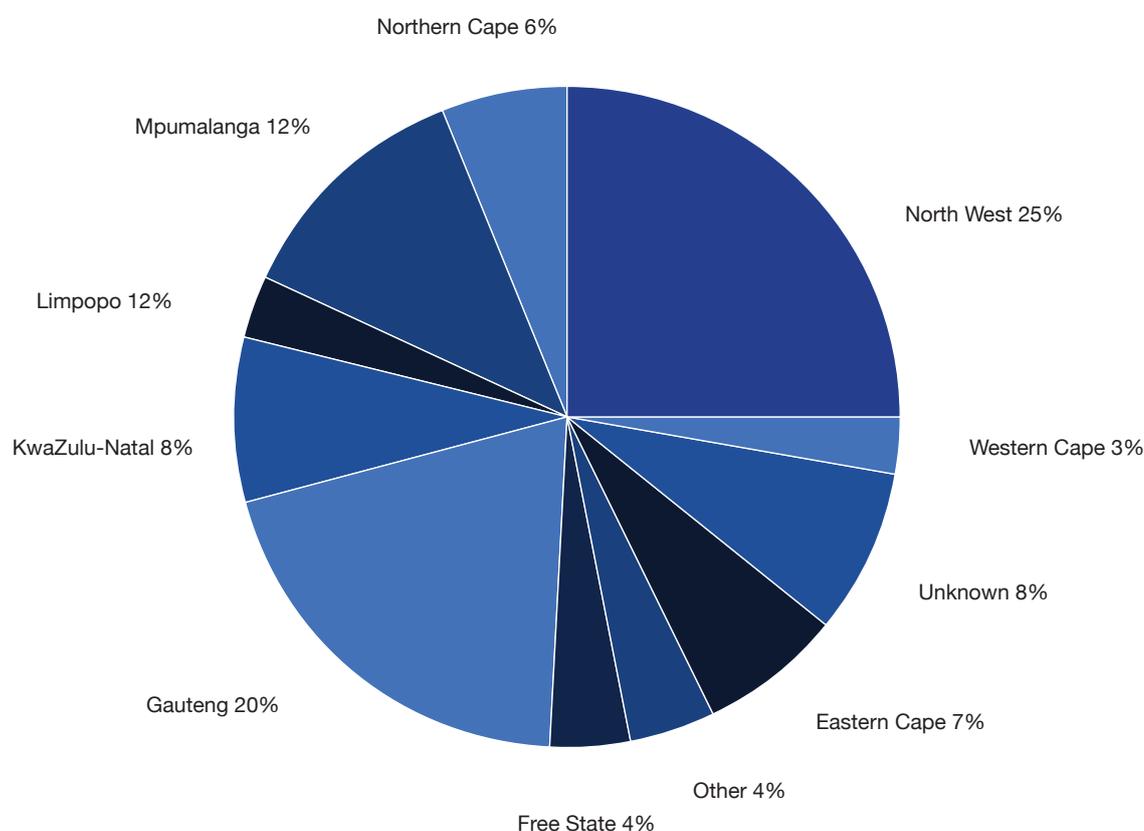
Students enrolled for 2008

	Mafikeng Campus	Potchefstroom Campus	Vaal Triangle Campus	Total
First years	1 146	3 300	672	5 118
Seniors	6 944	31 874	3 072	41 890
Total	8 090	35 174	3 744	47 008

Racial and gender composition of the student body 2008

Year	Race					Gender		Total
	White	African	Coloured	Asian	Unknown	Male	Female	
2003	1 146	21 717	1 050	325	1 860	14 052	22 346	36 398
2004	12 657	24 975	1 255	321	938	15 344	24 802	40 146
2005	13 389	23 454	1 195	338	220	14 866	23 730	38 596
2006	14 288	22 412	1 221	616	172	14 766	23 943	38 709
2007	16 209	26 440	1 359	701	17	16 128	28 598	44 726
2008	17 071	27 722	1 602	585	28	16 279	30 729	47 008

Geographical origins of students



Success rates ⁶¹

The ratio between the number of undergraduate students and the total full-time equivalents (FTEs) increased in 2008 in both the contact and the distance categories.

Throughput rate of contact undergraduate students*	Heads 2008	Graduates 2008	Throughput rate 2008	Throughput rate 2007	Throughput rate 2006
1st certificates and diplomas of 2 years or less	1 020	360	35%	49%	59%
1st diplomas and bachelor's degree: 3 years	11 701	2 497	21%	20%	21%
Professional 1st bachelor's degree: 4 years and more	6 758	1 152	17%	18%	18%

* The definition of 'throughput rate is the total number of graduates divided by the total number of enrolments in a specific year

Throughput rate of distance undergraduate students*	Heads 2008	Graduates 2008	Throughput rate 2008	Throughput rate 2007	Throughput rate 2006
1st certificates and diplomas of 2 years or less	12 406	4 178	34%	32%	26%
1st diplomas and bachelor's degree: 3 years	3 818	780	20%	15%	15%
Professional 1st bachelor's degree: 4 years and more	380	93	24%	26%	27%

Degrees and diplomas conferred at the NWU since 2003*

Degrees and diplomas conferred	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
First degree	2 323	3 032	3 237	3 719	3 646	3 698
Diplomas	2 856	4 459	2 450	3 553	5 266	5 964
Honours	1 345	1 453	1 284	1 678	1 691	1 992
Master's	615	626	700	764	618	583
PhDs	92	87	82	110	124	100
Total	7 231	9 657	7 753	9 824	11 345	12 337

Graduates for 2008 ⁶²

(Per ceremony date after complying with the examination requirements in 2008)

Mafikeng Campus	April 2008	1 446
	October 2008	615
Total		2 061
Potchefstroom Campus	March 2008	3 516
	May 2008	453
	June 2008	4
	September 2008	2 943
	November 2008	546
	December 2008	2 060
Total		9 522
Vaal Triangle Campus	May 2009	656
	October 2008	98
Total		754
Grand Total		12 337

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total student enrolment	40 145	38 596	38 709	44 726	47 008
Undergraduate pass rate (contact and distance)	75.2%	78.8%	78.36%	79.48%	81.20%
Total degrees and diplomas awarded	9 657	7 746	9 825	11 345	12 337
Master's degrees awarded	626	700	765	618	583
PhDs awarded	87	58	110	124	100
Total research output units	798	865	1 074	1 061	1 089
NRF-rated researchers	73	85	82	95	103

Academic programme alignment progressed

Academic programme alignment continued throughout the year. By 31 December 2008, some 32% of undergraduate programmes had been aligned and rationalised, equating to 114 out of a total of 355 programmes. Over the same period, 22 postgraduate programmes were aligned and rationalised, equating to

6% of all programmes at postgraduate level. In addition, the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) handled a total of 128 academic programme applications and 123 short course applications during 2008.⁶³

The next two tables summarise the progress made in 2008 with academic programme alignment.

Academic Programme Alignment Score Card		
Alignment action taken	Undergraduate programmes	Postgraduate programmes
Total number of programmes	317	334
Number of programmes aligned	33 (10%)	10 (3%)
Number of programmes phased out	3 (1%)	2 (1%)
Number of programmes aligned and rationalised	36 (11%)	12 (4%)
	(277 programmes not yet aligned) (87% outstanding)	(322 programmes not yet aligned) (96% outstanding)
Total number of programmes aligned and rationalised from 2007 until 2008	114/355 (32%)	22/350 (6%)

Two other achievements in this domain were the successful transformation of the ICAS process for new offerings from a paper-based process to an electronic process and the successful agreement with DALRO concerning copyright arrangements and payments to DALRO in 2008. An important milestone for the NWU's academic programme mix was Senate's approval in August 2008 of a five-year implementation plan for the improvement of short course management.

HEQC audit and other quality matters

The HEQC Quality Audit Project Team managed the preparations for the quality audit in March 2009, steered from the Project Office within the office of the Vice-Chancellor.⁶⁴

Council approved the 10th draft of the NWU Self-Assessment Report for the HEQC Institutional Audit.⁶⁵

This report, as well as the report on Institutional Academic Development and Support compiled by Prof Nan Yeld from the University of Cape Town, highlighted the need for alignment of all support services.

Programme accreditation and evaluation

The following outcomes of the HEQC Board's national review in March 2008 of the educational programmes boosted the extension of the NWU Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM):

- Full accreditation for the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) (Mathematics/Science Education) and MEd (Education Management) programmes at the Mafikeng Campus.
- Full accreditation for the ACE (Science Education) programme at the Potchefstroom Campus.
- Accreditation with conditions for the Senior and FET Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the Potchefstroom Campus while improvement plans were submitted.⁶⁶

During 2008, the university also had an especially busy schedule of external evaluations, affecting all three campuses:

- On the Mafikeng Campus the BA (Tourism), BA (Social Work), B NSc (Nursing) and BSc (Biology) were externally evaluated.
- Programmes externally evaluated on the Potchefstroom Campus were the BA Hons (Public Management and Governance), the BEd (Foundation Phase) and all BSc, BSc Hons and MSc programmes in the Centre for Business Mathematics.
- On the Vaal Triangle Campus, external evaluations were conducted for Public Management and Administration, Psychology, Industrial Sociology, Sesotho, Political Science and the BSc in Information Technology.

Academic structures reviewed

The realignment of academic structures across the three campuses was linked to a review of the NWU's range of academic programmes. One of the biggest changes in academic structures during 2008 took place on the Vaal Triangle Campus, whose one and only faculty was divided into two. On the Mafikeng Campus, good progress was made with the establishment of schools and the appointment of School Directors.

In all, the NWU had 15 faculties in 2008, distributed as follows:

- Five faculties, 14 schools, one Community Law Centre and one centre of expertise at the Mafikeng Campus. The five faculties were Agriculture, Science and Technology, Human and Social Sciences, Education, Commerce and Administration, and Law.
- Two faculties and seven schools at the Vaal Triangle Campus. The faculties were the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Information Technology. The seven schools were Behavioural Sciences, Languages, Basic Sciences, Education Sciences, Accounting Sciences, Economic Sciences and Information Technology.
- Eight faculties and 32 schools at the Potchefstroom Campus. The eight faculties were Arts, Natural Sciences, Theology, Education Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Law, Engineering and Health Sciences.

Throughput rate initiatives

The NWU focused intensively on initiatives aimed at improving student throughput rates. One of the most important strategies employed for this purpose was Supplemental Instruction (SI) for students in at-risk modules. SI was introduced in 2006 and was consolidated during 2008 to ensure consistency in delivery across all three campuses. In 2008, supplemental instruction was implemented for a total of 350 modules across the three campuses. In all, 7 609 sessions were presented, reaching approximately 76 000 participants. In addition, the university began establishing reading laboratories to help students improve their reading skills.

Access to commerce and the sciences

The NWU strove to broaden the skills pool of school leavers in natural sciences and commerce. The Mafikeng Campus offered two extended programmes for students who, based on their performance in Grade 12, would not otherwise gain admission to degree studies. For both programmes, the minimum criteria for selection in 2008

were an M score of four and a SATAP score of 40%. A total of 116 students registered for the BSc Extended Programme in 2008, compared to 105 in 2007. For the BCom Extended Programme registrations stood at 91 in 2008 against 195 in the previous academic year.

The lower than expected registration figures prompted the university to embark on a marketing drive in various parts of the North-West Province. The Mafikeng Campus also formed a task team to address certain other challenges encountered with the extended programmes. These included the need to provide additional academic support and career counselling to extended programme students.⁶⁷

11.4. Academic staff development

The two main academic staff development initiatives of 2008 were the standardised implementation of the Institutional Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA) on all campuses and the presentation of the Institutional Course for New Lecturers (ICNL).

To measure the impact of the awards, annual targets were set in the Institutional Plan in respect of the number of projected recipients on each campus. In 2008, the target was to reach a total of 55 recipients, comprising five from the Mafikeng Campus, 40 from the Potchefstroom Campus and 10 from the Vaal Triangle Campus. The actual number of awards made during the year stood at 32, which was below the target for various reasons. These included the student unrest on the Mafikeng Campus, which influenced the ITEA process for 2008.⁶⁸

11.5. Research and innovation highlights

On 27 November the national Department of Science and Technology named the NWU the Most Innovative Higher Education Institution in South Africa, with the University of Cape Town second and the University of Stellenbosch third.⁶⁹ This accolade also came with R550 000 in prize money. The Vice-Chancellor, Dr Eloff, said this award was as a result of the priorities set in the annual Institutional Plan: "*Winning this award demonstrates that the NWU defines the third element of its core business not merely as community engagement, but as the implementation of our expertise in an innovative way while we are locally engaged, nationally relevant and internationally recognised.*"⁷⁰

The Mafikeng Campus Centre for Applied Radiation Science and Technology (CARST) established national and international nuclear industry partnerships. In 2008, in a first for Africa, the United Nations Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization visited CARST and set up a mobile laboratory to measure radioactive noble gases. Four Russian scientists and a British expert from



▲ The NWU was named as the most Technologically Innovative Higher Education institution in 2008. Mr Victor Mothobi, Executive Director: Human Capital Development (left), Dr Rudi van der Walt (centre), Institutional Director: Innovation, receive the award from Dr McLean Sibanda (right) from the Department of Science and Technology.⁷¹

Sheffield University also conducted a training workshop in radioactive waste minimisation for postgraduate students and staff.⁷²

In all, the NWU had 22 research entities. One was a niche area called Population and Health at the Mafikeng Campus; the rest were at the Potchefstroom Campus, namely:

- Educational Technology for Effective Teaching, Learning and Facilitation
- Musical Arts in South Africa: Resources and Applications
- Medical Usage in South Africa (MUSA)
- Socio-economic impact of Tourism
- Hypertension in Africa Research Team (HART)
- Physical Activity Sport and Recreation (PhASRec)
- Sustainable Social Development
- Chemical resource beneficiation
- Teaching-Learning organisations
- Unit for Business Mathematics and Informatics
- Research Unit: Development in the South African Constitutional State
- Unit for Drug Research and Development
- Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management
- Unit for Languages and Literature in the South African context

- Unit for Energy systems
- Unit for Reformed Theology and the Development of the South African Society
- Unit for Space Physics
- Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR)
- Workwell: Research Unit for People, Policy and Performance
- ThinkWell: Economic Value of Wellness Research
- Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN)

11.6. Educational technology framework developed

Overall, teaching and learning technology was well established at the NWU in 2008, and students and lecturers used it on a daily basis. To secure the long-term effectiveness of technology deployment for teaching learning, a draft Teaching and Learning Technology Framework was prepared. The first draft of this framework was completed in November 2008; stakeholder consultation on this framework was scheduled for 2009.

11.7. Career Centre fully operational

The NWU Career Centre opened its doors, offering prospective students, undergraduates and graduates assistance in making realistic career choices and successfully navigating the job market. It initiated various projects, such as career fairs to enable students and graduates to interact with prospective employers. The Career Zone, an online graduate recruitment portal, was launched so that employers could advertise vacancies and students post their resumes. Other services and facilities were:

- the launch of the NWU's Employer of Choice initiative, offering selected employers the opportunity to strengthen their graduate recruitment presence
- CV and interview workshops for students entering the job market
- the first NWU Careers Guide on job hunting and related issues, as well as the first two Career Centre electronic newsletters
- the Career Centre website with a total of 63 pages in English and Afrikaans
- an electronic database of career-related articles
- a Career Centre Facebook group in an attempt to reach the large group of students on Facebook.⁷³

11.8. Conclusion on 2008

Dr Eloff said that 2008 was a very good year based on the results, academically, financially and transformationally, as well as the evidence of greater unity. However, signs of stagnation were emerging in certain areas, particularly research output. There were also gaps in the university's preparations for the HEQC audit, mainly in terms of processes and procedures, and management information was not yet up to standard.

Nevertheless, the university was on track towards becoming a balanced teaching-learning and research institution that implemented its expertise innovatively.⁷⁴

Looking back at the 2008 results, Council noted with appreciation that the NWU had performed extremely well in terms of the following core indicators:⁷⁵

Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total student enrolment	40 145	38 596	38 709	44 726	47 008
Undergraduate pass rate (contact and distance)	75.2%	78.8%	78.4%	79.5%	81.2%
Graduation rate (number of degrees as % of total heads)	24%	20%	25%	25%	26%
Total degrees and diplomas awarded	9 657	7 746	9 825	11 345	12 337
Master's degrees awarded	626	700	765	618	583
PhDs awarded	87	85	110	124	100
Article equivalents published (total)	275	326	361	376	512.64
NRF-rated researchers	73	85	82	95	103
Total research output*	798	865	1074	1061	1089
Total budget (R million)	R953	R1, 080	R1,253	R1,420	R1,650
% income from government	45.1%	43.2%	42.8%	39.8%	40%
Self-generated income (R million)	R311	R371	R441	R578	R649
Financial surplus/shortfall, (R million)	R14,7	R68,7	R71	R85	R71
Infrastructure: macro-maintenance (R million)	R20,9	R17,8	R32,1	R54,1	R50,3
	R5,9	R29,3	R44,5	R46,8	R46,2

* includes research master's, PhDs times three and other publications (including an estimation of books, conference proceedings and articles)⁷⁶

11.9. National position of NWU

According to the statistics published by the Department of Education in April 2008, the NWU was ranked as the fifth largest university in South Africa. It had the best graduation rate for master's degrees in the sector in 2006, the second best for undergraduate degrees and the fourth best for doctoral degrees. The NWU also delivered the fourth highest number of undergraduate and master's degree students and the third most doctoral students in the country.

About 47 008 students were enrolled at the NWU during 2008, supported by a total of 2 753 permanent academic and support staff members. The NWU conferred a record number of qualifications in 2008: 6 075 degrees and diplomas were conferred during the autumn graduation ceremonies and more than 6 262 during the spring graduation ceremonies.⁷⁷



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CHAPTER 12

Change makes way for growth and stability

12. The year 2009

By 2009, five years after the NWU came into being, the university was widely seen as one of South Africa's higher education merger success stories. The facts and figures bear this out.

12.1. Partnering with people and organisations of stature

Having spent the first five years of its life looking inwards, with a view to achieving stability after the merger, the university began looking outwards in 2009, seeking alliances and partners to help strengthen its strategic impact. This saw some influential people and organisations linking up with the NWU in various ways.

At a meeting of the NWU Council on 19 June 2009, His Majesty, Kgosi Leruo Tshekedi Molotlegi, King of the Royal Bafokeng Nation, was elected as the second Chancellor of the NWU. He accepted the appointment on 14 July. The Chancellor is the titular head of the university and confers all degrees in its name. Kgosi Molotlegi succeeded Dr Popo Molefe, the first Chancellor after the merger, whose term expired on 31 May 2009.²

Kgosi Leruo Tshekedi Molotlegi was inaugurated as Chancellor of NWU on 17 September 2009 at a prestigious event.³ During his acceptance address, he stressed that the NWU's students, staff, innovations and achievements were of great strategic importance to not only the North West Province and South Africa, but also to the world.⁴ This prestigious event also saw the confirmation of Dr Theuns Eloff in his second term as Vice-Chancellor of the NWU.⁵

Dr Theuns Eloff chaired two distinguished higher education associations during 2009.⁷ He was still the Chairperson of Higher Education South Africa (HESA) until 31 December 2009, and in July 2009, was elected unopposed as chairperson of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). Dr Eloff, who had been the vice-chairperson of the ACU since 2007,⁸ was elected chairperson for two years during a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.⁹

The university honoured one of its best-known alumni, former President FW de Klerk, when the FW de Klerk exhibition was officially opened on 22 January 2009.¹⁰ The exhibition was made up of memorabilia that Mr de Klerk had donated to the university, depicting various aspects of his renowned career.¹¹

Two new Campus Rectors, both highly respected academic leaders, joined the NWU during the year. On



▲ Inauguration of Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi, the second Chancellor, and Dr Eloff as Vice-Chancellor, 17 September 2009⁶



▲ Institutional Management, 25 March 2009¹⁶

19 June 2009,¹² the NWU Council approved the process for appointing a new Rector for both the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses. Five months later, on 20 November, Council accepted the recommendations of the Interviewing Committee of Council and approved the appointment of the two new Rectors.¹³

Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, previously the Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of the Free State, was appointed as the new Potchefstroom Campus Rector for a term of six years. Prof Thanyani Mariba, then the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria, was appointed as new the Rector for the Vaal Triangle Campus for a term of five years (in view of the fact that Prof Mariba would reach retirement age in five years).¹⁴

Dr Eloff said that with these appointments, the NWU was essentially entering the post-merger phase. *“We say goodbye to the first senior members of management who made the merger work and we get two leaders who have not been involved from the onset and will bring new blood to the NWU.”* He added that the new Rectors would inevitably stimulate new ideas and innovation, something that the university strongly endorsed through its pay-off line, *“Innovation through diversity”*.¹⁵

12.2. The NWU profile during 2009

The internal scorecard compiled in 2009 to assess the university’s performance since the merger in January 2004 showed the favourable position the NWU had carved out for itself. From governance through to finances, student success rates and research output, the statistics told the story of a university that was fundamentally sound and growing in stature and confidence.

Good governance

The governance of NWU was professional and constructive.¹⁷ In August 2009, for the third year in a row, the university’s commitment to upholding best practice in effective management and corporate governance earned it first place in the PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance.¹⁸

The management model was working smoothly, and was well suited to the unique circumstances of a unitary, multi-campus university. Some improvement in alignment and cohesiveness was necessary, of course, and the ongoing debate about centralisation versus decentralisation was lively and productive.

Financial stability

The university’s financial position was stable. Despite the economic recession, the NWU again ended the year with a moderate surplus. Another financial highlight was that, for the first time since the mid-1990s, the NWU received a substantial amount, R212 million, from the Department of Higher Education and Training for infrastructure funding for the period 2010-2012.¹⁹

As a result of additional funding in the form of a block grant from the Minister of Education, Mrs Naledi Pandor,

Racial and gender composition of the student body in 2009

Year		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Race	White	11446	12657	13389	14288	16209	17071	18160
	African	21717	24975	23454	22412	26440	27722	30095
	Coloured	1050	1255	1195	1221	1359	1602	1921
	Asian	325	321	338	616	701	585	408
	Unknown	1860	938	220	172	17	28	5
Gender	Male	14052	15344	14866	14766	16128	16279	17196
	Female	22346	24808	23730	23943	28598	30729	33393
Total		36398	40146	38596	38709	44726	47008	50589

the NWU’s tuition fees increased by only 9% on all three campuses in 2009. Over and above this, more than R10 million rand was made available to academically deserving and financially needy students on all three campuses.²⁰

Strong student growth

For the 2009 student intake, the number of first-time entrants increased from 5 100 in 2008 to 5 874 in 2009, which represented growth of more than 13%. This was in line with increased first-year enrolments at most universities due to the higher number of national senior certificate first-time entering students.

Considering the disruptions experienced at the NWU in 2008, management was particularly excited about the 1 272 first years registered at Mafikeng, which was almost the same as in 2008. The Potchefstroom Campus registered around 3 600 first years and the Vaal Triangle Campus around 1 000. This was the first time that the Potchefstroom Campus had exceeded 3 000 first-year enrolments and the Vaal Triangle Campus 1 000.²¹

Student enrolment for the whole of 2009

Campus	Total contact	Total distance*	Total 2009
Mafikeng	6 552	1 721	8 273
Potchefstroom	17 157	32 361	49 518
Vaal Triangle	3 714	864	4 578
NWU total	27 423	34 946	62 369

Meanwhile, all institutions had to submit their enrolment plans up to 2013 to the Department of Higher Education and Training. The NWU had managed to achieve moderate growth among contact students during the merger phase, and growth of 4.8% on average was forecast until 2013. The Teacher Further Training students registered for the distance programme were over-subscribed and the NWU would have to negotiate new targets with the DHET around an enrolment of about 20 000 heads.²²

Throughput rate, 2006 - 2009

Throughput rate of contact undergraduate students*	Heads 2009	Graduates 2009	Throughput rate 2009	Throughput rate 2008	Throughput rate 2007	Throughput rate 2006
1st certificates and diplomas of 2 years or less	713	308	43%	35%	47%	59%
1st diplomas and bachelors degrees 3 years	12005	2633	22%	21%	20%	21%
Professional 1st bachelors degree: 4 years and more	7280	1218	17%	17%	18%	18%

* The definition of 'throughput rate' is the total number of graduates divided by total number of enrolments in a specific year

Throughput rate of distance undergraduate students	Heads 2009	Graduates 2009	Throughput rate 2009	Throughput rate 2008	Throughput rate 2007	Throughput rate 2006
1st certificates and diplomas of 2 years or less	13085	4939	38%	34%	33%	26%
1st diplomas and bachelors degrees 3 years	4169	723	17%	20%	16%	15%
Professional 1st bachelors degree: 4 years and more	560	71	13%	24%	26%	27%

Solid student success rates

In 2009, the core business was generally functioning well. Teaching-learning proceeded without interruption throughout the year and there was stability on all campuses. The improvement in the teaching-learning environment was due to the emphasis on improving communication and relations with all stakeholders, especially students.

This stability showed up in the teaching-learning results of 2009. The undergraduate pass rate improved from 81.2% in 2008 to 83.6% in 2009, and the graduation rate was 26%. In all, the NWU conferred 13 445 degrees and diplomas in 2009, which was just over 8% more than in the previous year. A total of 50 589 students were enrolled with the NWU in 2009, of whom 53% were contact students and 47% distance education.

Growth in research and innovation

As for research and innovation, the NWU had risen to sixth in research in the country, and was one of the top three universities for innovation and commercialisation. This reflected the sustained improvement in research output, which increased by 10% overall. There was a significant increase in the number of rated researchers, from 103 to 116 in 2009, along with an 18% rise in doctoral degrees awarded and an 11,5% increase in master's degrees conferred.²³

The NWU was also one of the top Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) earners in the higher education sector. In 2009 the university earned R26 485 875 from this programme.

Mr Derek Hanekom, then Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, launched the university's Centre for High Performance Computing towards the end of the year. The centre stands out for the high quality of its experimental equipment, which is used for computational-intensive research in a wide range of disciplines.

Research results in 2009²⁴

Output	Number
Article equivalents	413,56
Conference proceedings	34,38
Books	4,56
Article equivalents published	452,50
Total weighted research output	1 190
Number of NRF accredited researchers	116
Master's degrees conferred	659
Doctoral degrees conferred	123
Postdoctoral fellows	48

Conducive working environment

The working environment was improving steadily, with a growing percentage of staff expressing positive attitudes towards efforts to build a unified institutional culture. According to the latest Culture and Climate Survey, positive perceptions had improved from 51% to 58% (out of a maximum of 70%) in the five years since 2004. Furthermore, the NWU was one of only two universities in South Africa at the time with performance agreements for staff members.

Steady progress was being made with employment equity, especially at senior levels, notwithstanding the challenges being experienced

Equitable investment across campuses

A concerted effort was being made to level the playing field at the three campuses in terms of facilities and infrastructure. The expenditure on infrastructure, viewed per student, showed that the allocations were equitable.

²⁵

New infrastructure	Expenditure per student = Rand
Mafikeng	R12,361
Potchefstroom	R8,062
Vaal Triangle	R22,020
Upgrading of infrastructure	Expenditure per student = Rand
Mafikeng	R8,241
Potchefstroom	R15,832
Vaal Triangle	R14,839
DoE funding, 2010 – 2012	Expenditure per student = Rand
Mafikeng	R13,627
Potchefstroom	R7,590
Vaal Triangle	R8,080

Keeping the spotlight on transformation

The Soudien report on progress towards transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination was referred to all subcommittees of Council, the Institutional Forum, staff, management and student structures for comments, which the Transformation and Oversight Committee collated.²⁶ Council noted that the report was based on perceptions, with the result that the distinction between fact and fiction had “*started to blur*” and that the recommendations should therefore be carefully scrutinised.²⁷

Council approved the development of a Transformation Dashboard as a measurement tool, consisting of four broad categories with 15 sub-headings:²⁸

Equity	Alignment
Race	Quality assurance
Gender	Salaries
	Programmes
	Policies
	Procedures
Redress	Students
Building infrastructure	Facilities
IT infrastructure	Student funding
Research support	Admission criteria
Residences	Governance

All stakeholders were also engaged on issues of transformation and social cohesion. Staff members attended industrial theatre sessions by CheHan Ideaneers and participated in the third social cohesion audit. Management and Council continued to engage with this important matter.²⁹

12.3. HEQC quality audit³⁰

The Institutional Audit by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in March 2009 was probably the most important event of 2009. (Refer to sections 6.6.6 and 9.2.2 for details.) Four years of preparation for the institutional quality audit culminated in the HEQC panel visit to the university in March 2009. The panel gave its preliminary feedback during a verbal feedback session at the end of the visit. The audit report of the NWU was approved by the HEQC and an executive summary of the audit report was placed on the CHE website. The draft report with recommendations was due in January 2010.³¹

The NWU submitted a comprehensive quality improvement plan based on the recommendations made in the audit report. The improvement plan was analysed by the HEQC’s Institutional Audits Committee and discussed with the NWU. The NWU received a formal response from the HEQC after the Institutional Audits Committee meeting during May 2011.³²

12.4. Progress in aligning academic programmes

Academic programme alignment was one of the major transformation processes that the NWU had been undertaking since 2006, with 2009 being the target year for completing the alignment of undergraduate programmes. The plan was to offer the aligned programmes from 2010.

The academic alignment process gained momentum early in 2009 as faculties throughout the NWU worked to meet the June 2009 deadline for obtaining formal approval for undergraduate programmes, curricula and modules from Senate’s Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS). The intention was to implement the aligned programmes across the board in 2010. By the deadline set, 128 generic and professional bachelor degrees had been through the alignment process, representing 77% of all undergraduate programmes.

Some undergraduate programmes were not aligned due to campus-specific specialisations, which was due to the NWU’s character as a multi-campus university serving diversified niche markets. Certain other programmes such as nursing could not be aligned owing to challenges faced by external authorities and boards.

Another factor with an impact on the alignment process was re-curriculation, which affected about 23% of unaligned undergraduate programmes.

Having completed the formal part of academic alignment at undergraduate level, the next step was for faculties to finalise their detailed plans for the implementation.

A critical aspect of these plans was communication with pipeline students whose curricula would change as a result of academic alignment. The NWU was committed to ensuring that academic alignment would not disadvantage pipeline students in any way.

12.4.1 Academic programme and short course applications³³

Good progress was made in preparing for the implementation of a new short course management model. Enterprise-wide consultation on the new model was completed in 2009, paving the way for the model to be introduced in 2010.

As part of its role in ensuring academic coherence at the university, the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS) approved 214 applications for academic programmes compared to 128 in the previous year, and 46 for short courses during 2009. The table below provided details of the applications approved per campus.

Campus	Number of academic programme applications approved in 2009	Number of short course applications approved in 2009
Mafikeng Campus	34	7
Potchefstroom Campus	166	33
Vaal Triangle Campus	14	5
Institutional Office	-	1
Total	214	46

12.4.2 Throughput rate initiatives

Supplemental Instruction (SI) for students in modules with a pass rate below 50% continued to be one of the most important strategies used at the NWU to support students academically and to improve throughput rates. In 2009, just over 15 300 Supplemental Instruction sessions were held in 325 modules on the different campuses, which was more than double the 7 609 sessions run in the previous year.

The rapid growth in the use of Supplemental Instruction for students enrolled in problematic modules heightened the need for academic staff to be familiar with Supplemental Instruction techniques as this strengthens their teaching skills. In 2009, two international experts in the field, Mrs Cathy Unite Clarke and Prof Glenn Jacobs, visited the NWU to train 26 staff members. They also presented training sessions for student facilitators.

Another important academic support strategy was the rollout of reading laboratories to assist students with comprehension skills and language proficiency. Fully-fledged reading laboratories were established on all

three campuses during 2009. Another step forward in this kind of student support, was the preparation of the Draft Policy for Student Academic Development and Support, as well as the Draft Policy Framework for Promoting Equity of Access.

12.4.3 Academic staff development

Throughout 2009, the NWU encouraged academic staff to pursue further academic studies and benefit from reward systems such as the Institutional Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA). In 2009, a total of 35 lecturers received teaching excellence awards compared to 32 in 2008.³⁴ Mafikeng Campus staff participated for the first time.

The other key academic staff development initiatives were the Institutional Course for New Lecturers and the advanced training for academics in Supplemental Instruction: A total of 75 academics attended phase one of the Institutional Course for New Lecturers, which introduces newly appointed academics to best teaching practices and informs them about the latest trends in higher education. They then started the second phase of the course, which involves mentoring and takes place on the campuses.

12.4.4 Teaching and Learning Technology Framework

During 2009, the final NWU Teaching and Learning Technology (TLT) Framework was completed. Its purpose was to ensure the long-term effectiveness and quality of technology deployment in teaching-learning.

Furthermore, the university's virtual learning environment, e-Fundi, was extended to 2 238 learning sites. Of these, 1 580 were active sites, each used by an average of seven students. In total, 18 106 students and 526 lecturers were active e-Fundi users.

Lecture rooms were upgraded to ensure compatibility with the Teaching and Learning Technology Framework. The total budget for this in 2009 came to R1,25 million, of which R750,000.00 was spent on upgrading 57 classrooms on the Vaal Triangle and Potchefstroom campuses.

Working relationships were established or strengthened with other TLT role-players in the higher education landscape. To this end, NWU teams visited their TLT counterparts at the University of Cape Town, Tshwane University of Technology, MIT, Boston University, Texas State University and the University of Botswana.³⁵

12.5. Ready for the next five years

With the first five years behind it, the NWU was ready for the challenges that would accompany the next phase of consolidating the merger and incorporation process.

These challenges were essentially to continue strengthening the university's core business while at the same time achieving comprehensive and sustainable transformation. In the case of the core business, the focus would be on maintaining good teaching-learning outputs and decreasing dropout rates, improving research outputs on all campuses, improving levels of innovation and community engagement, maintaining financial viability and investing in staff development.

To increase the pace of transformation, the NWU's priorities would be ensure redress in buildings, infrastructure and services, along with improvements in equity (in overall numbers and job levels), internationalisation, quality assurance and the student experience on all three campuses. All the while, the university would keep on balancing unity and diversity, as well as centralisation and decentralisation in organisational structure.³⁶



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CHAPTER 13

Seeing the bigger picture of higher education

13. The year 2010

The year 2010 stands out for the many forms of recognition that the NWU and its people received for their contribution to higher education. It was clear from the awards, agreements and collaborations marking the year that the university was becoming a force to be reckoned with.

13.1. Highlights of the year

Hosting the World Cup winners

For South Africans, 2010 was a special year as it was the first time that a FIFA World Cup had been hosted on African soil. The NWU played a small but important part in that: it hosted the Spanish football squad that went on to win the World Cup.

Well known as a top sports university with outstanding facilities, the NWU succeeded in its bid to host the Spanish team at the sports village on the Potchefstroom Campus. The World Cup winners were accommodated in the custom-built sports village and did their preparatory training at the campus's High Performance Institute, which has superior sports facilities and comprehensive medical and sports services.

The investment in the sports village would deliver returns for years to come as it reinforced the NWU's reputation and capacity as a training venue of choice for hundreds of top athletes around the world.

Best-governed university for four consecutive years

For the fourth year in a row, the university was awarded first place in the PricewaterhouseCoopers' Higher Education Award for Corporate Governance. This award again demonstrated how the NWU put good corporate governance into practice across its operations, whether in filling key positions, overseeing the annual budget, monitoring spending, managing procurement or complying with its legal obligations.

Leading the way with language

The NWU received two awards during the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) annual multilingualism awards in Johannesburg on 21 February 2010. The university was named the winner in the interpretation and translation category and, in the education category for universities, was joint runner-up with the University of Cape Town.

Commenting on the awards, Dr Theuns Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, said they were presented on the strength

of the ground-breaking achievements of the NWU's Language Directorate and its programme of functional multilingualism. In the feedback received after an external evaluation, for example, the Directorate was described as a world leader in the field of language support services. One of the panel members remarked: *"This is best practice, nationally and internationally".²*

World's largest Supplemental Instruction programme

The NWU's expertise in Supplemental Instruction, used to assist students enrolled for at-risk modules, was globally recognised. In 2010, there were only 14 certified Supplemental Instruction trainers worldwide – and one of them was an NWU staff member. The university itself was one of only two national Supplemental Instruction offices in the country in 2010, and its programme was not only the biggest in South Africa but also internationally.

From continual data analysis, it is evident that with regular Supplemental Instruction attendance, students in general improve their final module mark by between 5% and 10%. Additionally, students are less likely to withdraw from difficult modules when they know Supplemental Instruction is available.

Technology was extensively used to provide support to students. A new electronic workflow-based study material production system was implemented in 2010 to standardise and enhance the study guide production system on the campuses. In addition, the NWU's electronic learning platform, known as e-Fundi, underwent further development: at the Faculty of Theology on the Potchefstroom Campus, laptops were introduced to make the Learning Management System (LMS) and study material available to students electronically.

Leading-edge collaboration

During 2010, progress was made in establishing no fewer than three collaborative research competency centres and platforms. One was the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Hydrogen Infrastructure Competency Centre, based on the Potchefstroom Campus and partnering with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The second was the DST National Metabolomics Platform, also at the Potchefstroom Campus. The third was the DST Indigenous Knowledge Systems Competency Centre, located at the Mafikeng Campus and undertaken in partnership with the University of Venda and the University of Limpopo.

Approval was also received to establish new collaborative research entities, namely the DST National Pre-clinical

Drug Development Platform and the Centre of Excellence in Advanced Manufacturing.

Breaking new ground in the trade arena, economists from the NWU and the University of Antwerp developed a research model to identify export opportunities for South Africa. This model was a first in South Africa and – as far as scope was concerned – also a first in the world.³

In 2010, the NWU was again the top earner in the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) of the National Research Foundation (NRF).

Students vote of confidence

One of the most important forms of recognition for a university is the confidence of its students who, in a manner of speaking, “*vote with their feet*”. In 2010 the NWU was the third largest university in South Africa based on the total student head count of 55 732. This was 10.2% higher than the 50 589 head count in 2009.

13.2. Throughput figures for 2007 to 2010

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total student enrolment	38 596	38 708	44 726	47 008	50 589	55 732
Contact	27 092	27 889	26 075	25 740	26 853	29 243
Distance	11 504	10 819	18 651	21 268	23 736	26 489
Undergraduate pass rate	78.8%	78.4%	79.5%	81.2%	83.6%	83.5%
Throughput rate	20%	25%	25%	26%	26.6%	27%
Degrees and diplomas awarded	7 746	9 825	11 345	12 337	13 445	15 083
Master's degrees awarded	700	765	618	583	659	633
PhDs awarded	85	110	124	100	123	129
Article equivalents published (total)	326	361	376	513	452.5	578.24
NRF-rated researchers	85	82	95	103	116	117
Total research output	865	1074	1 061	1 083	1 190	1318
Total income	R1 133m	R1 272m	R1 436m	R1 671m	R1 827m	R2 002m
Surplus (recurrent items)	R54m	R63m	R66m	R82m	R58m	R43m
Staff cost/total cost	52.5%	52.6%	50.1%	48.8%	50.7%	52.8%
Self-generated income	R384m	R453m	R542m	R644m	R647m	R642m
% of income from government	43.2%	42.8%	39.8%	40.0%	41.5%	44.6%
% income from tuition fees	21.1%	20.2%	21.4%	20.3%	22.4%	23.6%
Capital expenditure: buildings	R31.7m	R45.3m	R42.9m	R49.3m	R64.0m	R169.6m
Capital expenditure upgrading	R26.6m	R31.2m	R48.7m	R63.8m	R78.8m	R52.2m

Clearly, the NWU had come a long way in the six years since the merger, but its journey towards becoming a balanced, transformed teaching-learning and research university was far from over. Some of the biggest tasks demanding attention in 2010 were the admissions process, transformation and social cohesion, the full implementation of academic programme alignment, and quality assurance matters following the HEQC audit in the previous year. It was also a priority to improve the student experience on all campuses.

In terms of distance students, the NWU was the second largest institution in South Africa. Of the 44 732 students enrolled in 2010, almost 26 000 were distance education students.

Student success rates also continued to increase. The undergraduate pass rate for contact and distance students stood at 83.5% in 2010, up from 78.8% in 2005. The graduation rate improved from 26.6% in 2009 to 27% in 2010, which was high compared to the 17% country-wide.⁴ In all, 15 083 degrees and diplomas were awarded in 2010, an increase of 10.8% from 2009.

All indications were that employers, too, had confidence in the NWU and its graduates. The annual employment survey during graduation sessions showed that nearly 85% of Potchefstroom Campus graduates were employed within three months after graduating.⁵

13.3. Rising to the challenges

NWU targets for first-time enrolments

In his first Vice-Chancellor's newsletter for 2010, Dr Eloff reported that the late announcement of the 2009 matric results had had an impact on the admissions process on all campuses. This, coupled with the slow registration process and commencement of classes, put considerable pressure on all the university's processes and systems.

Despite these circumstances, the NWU reached the target of enrolling 6 073 good-quality students entering university for the first time. This showed that the recruitment processes had attracted more students

at an earlier stage, especially to the Vaal Triangle and Mafikeng campuses - with the Mafikeng Campus processing almost 8 000 applications.

As at 15 February 2010, the student enrolment figures for the year were as follows (distance students and most postgraduates excluded):⁶

Campus	2009 actual	2010 target	First-time entering undergraduates registered in 2010	Total number of students registered in 2010 - excluding distance and postgraduate students
Mafikeng Campus	1 251	1 530	1 992	6 022
Potchefstroom Campus	3 119	3 477	3 834	14 470
Vaal Triangle Campus	856	1 066	1 258	3 780
NWU total	5 226	6 073	7 084	24 272

Owing to the high number of applications, NWU Management discussed the challenges associated with the unfolding challenge of increasing student numbers with the Department of Higher Education and Training during November 2010.⁷

Inspirational teaching rewarded

It is commonly known that when a person is passionate and motivated, they can inspire others to develop their full potential. It was thanks to their passion and motivation that 15 NWU lecturers won *Rapport* newspaper Awards for *Inspiring Teaching* to the value of R50 000 each.⁸ During one of the three prize-giving functions, Mr Koos Bekker, Chief Executive of Naspers, said that the ability to teach is something that deserves recognition and reward.⁹

Those awards were not the only incentive for lectures to raise the learning-teaching bar. During 2010, 100 new lecturers attended Phase 1 of the Institutional Course for New Lecturers. Another cross-campus development tool, the Institutional Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA), encouraged lecturers to develop their teaching skills and acknowledged and rewarded best teaching-learning practices.¹⁰

Research culture reinforced

The university made sizeable investments in building research capacity across the three campuses and giving researchers incentives. During 2010, R9,3 million was paid to researchers participating in the Institutional Research Excellence Awards (IREA) programme. An amount of R2,7 million was spent on top-up bursaries for master's and PhD students in the scarce skills. Seed funding for new entities and various other capacity-building schemes amounted to R660 000.

Overview of research results in 2010¹¹

Output	Number
Article equivalents	510,75
Conference proceedings	43,04
Books	24,44
Article equivalents published	578,24
Total weighted research output	1 190
Number of NRF accredited researchers	117
Master's degrees conferred	633
Doctoral degrees conferred	129
Postdoctoral fellows	69

Academic alignment goes full steam ahead

The academic programme alignment process was the heart of the ongoing calibration of the PQM of the university, and although fair progress had been made, much still needed to be done. Obstacles were the different qualification structures, different credit allocations to modules and different programme content (depending on the campus-specific niches and expertise).

Even so, it was full steam ahead for the implementation of all aligned undergraduate programmes and for the alignment of remaining undergraduate programmes. Already, 223 out of 333 undergraduate programmes and 143 out of 360 postgraduate programmes had been aligned.

Transformation and social cohesion

Transformation and achieving greater social cohesion were high on the agenda of the NWU. Staff members were urged to attend the scheduled Transformation colloquium and Social Cohesion Conference for more than 150 stakeholder representatives.¹²

Promoting a culture of human rights was a priority for the university. On Human Rights Day on 24 March 2010, the Institutional Office in Potchefstroom invited Judge Raymond Zondo, Judge President of the Labour Court and Labour Appeals Court, to be the guest speaker at a workshop entitled “*Your rights in the workplace*”. Judge Zondo touched on subjects such as diversity, respect, integrity, commitment, responsibility and tolerance in the workplace.¹³ Delegates from the whole NWU community attended, meaning the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom, and Vaal Triangle campuses and the Institutional Office. Guests from government departments and communities were also invited.¹⁴

Controversy arose over a controversial decision to rename the Lost City residence at the Mafikeng Campus after former homeland president Kgosi Lucas M Mangope. This decision came after a consultative process from the campus residence committee, comprising representatives from campus management, student affairs, managers and wardens who approved the name and motivation in June 2009, and recommended that the campus executive committee should approve the proposal. Mr Saki Mofokeng, the ANC North West coordinator, said during September 2010 that, “*as the ANC we strongly condemn this act as a betrayal of the struggle of our people who were subjected to torture, terror and murder by Lucas Mangope and his regime*”.¹⁵

During an extraordinary meeting on 7 October 2010, Council decided to suspend the renaming of the Lost City residence and the erection of a bust of Kgosi Mangope until Council had approved policy, processes



▲ Students at the Mafikeng Campus, 24 March 2009¹⁹

and procedures for the naming of university assets.¹⁶ The public lecture by Kgosi Mangope, one of four in the 2010 series on 8 October to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Mafikeng Campus, would proceed as planned¹⁷ in the interest of academic freedom and freedom of speech.¹⁸

Scene set for further growth

Six years after the merger, the NWU was in a strong position to generate more and more high-level skills and knowledge for the economy while intensifying its transformation drive. The scene was set for a period of intensive growth, especially in research, infrastructure and facilities, and international involvement.



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CHAPTER 14

Making a meaningful difference in South Africa and the world

14. The year 2011

Having found its feet, the NWU was on solid ground in its interaction with stakeholders and strategic partners in South Africa and beyond in 2011.

14.1. Internationalisation

Being part of the international knowledge community has many advantages for a South African university. Knowledge can be shared, staff and students can benefit from opportunities for international exposure and funding, and management, researchers and academics can keep their finger on the pulse of the latest global developments.

For the NWU, 2011 was the year in which the internationalisation strategy truly took off. The Internationalisation Office was established as part of the portfolio of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Technology, and a director of Internationalisation was appointed. The university opened an office in London, focusing mainly on the European Union Framework 7 and Horizon 2020 programmes.

To extend its international profile and reach, the university developed an institutional internationalisation framework and procedures were developed in consultation with the campuses to formalise and facilitate internationalisation activities, processes and targets. Various collaboration arrangements with international partners and conferences were undertaken.¹ Such partners included the International Cycling Union and the Quali Student initiative.

Entering a new cycle in the international arena

On 4 August 2011, through its World Cycling Centre in South Africa, the International Cycling Union (ICU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the NWU to develop a first class indoor cycling track called a Velodrome. This project was not only a first for South Africa, but for any university worldwide. The MOU was signed by Mr Frédéric Magné, the ICU's Development Director and Director of the World Cycling Centre in Aigle, Switzerland, and Dr Theuns Eloff., the Vice-Chancellor.²

First full international partner of Quali

During February 2011 the NWU joined the Quali Student initiative as a development partner, becoming the first full international partner outside North America and bringing strong functional and technical expertise to the project team.³

The NWU took this step to help further the development of the open source Quali Student system, which is a business system for universities, designed by universities. Other Quali partners included Indiana University, Carnegie Mellon University, Naval Postgraduate School, San Joaquin Delta College, University of California Berkeley, University of Maryland, University of Southern California, University of Washington and Boston College.

"The North-West University is privileged and excited to participate in the development of Quali Student, and to collaborate on an international basis with reputable institutions," Dr Eloff said. *"We see this as a win-win opportunity for all participants to create innovative yet cost-effective higher education business solutions. This initiative will further our vision of local engagement, national relevance and international recognition."*⁴

Member of the Talloires Network

The NWU joined the Talloires Network, a global alliance of higher education institutions committed to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of universities and colleges around the world. The university's Vice-Chancellor and community Engagement Director attended the network's international conference in Madrid, Spain, from 14 to 16 June 2011.

Closer to home, the university participated in other community engagement platforms, such as the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF). The NWU's community engagement director was a SAHECEF board member and a member of the executive steering committee, and served on the body's conference committee for 2011.

Open and distance learning for Africa

In May 2011, the Potchefstroom Campus of the university hosted the annual meeting of the African Council on Distance Education.⁵ The NWU was a natural choice as host: as South-Africa's second-largest provider of open and distance learning programmes, it had 24 978 distance-learning students and operated 39 learning centres across South Africa. Highly advanced interactive teaching technology facilitated contact sessions at the learning centres, even in the most rural areas of Southern Africa.

The pass rate for the NWU's distance students had averaged 82.9% in the four years to 2011, and the average graduation rate for the same period was 29.9%. The

university's investment in this mode of delivery is testimony to the potential of open and distance learning as a viable and effective means to improve participation rates in the higher education sector and alleviate skills shortages.

14.2. Strengthening the core business

Student success rates exceed the national average

During 2011 the total headcount enrolments rose to 56 641, an increase of 1.63% compared to the 2010 intake. Contact enrolments accounted for 56%, which was slightly higher than in 2010.

The following table shows the graduation and pass rates among contact and distance students in 2011:⁷

Academic key performance indicators in 2011	Contact	Distance
Undergraduate pass rate	85.2%	85.3%
Graduation rate	26.6%	29.9%
Number of diplomas and degrees awarded	7 627	7 466

This undergraduate pass rate of 85.2% for contact students and 85.3% for distance students put the NWU well ahead of the national average. Similarly, the graduation rate of 26.6% for contact students and 29.9% for distance students again placed the NWU among the country's top universities.⁸



▲ Institutional Management, 1 June 2011⁶

Drop-out rates decline

2011 saw the commencement of a project to determine and analyse student dropout and throughput rates by means of cohort analysis. This important tool made it possible to measure student progress on a more strategic level.

The following table shows that the NWU has succeeded in managing its first-year drop-out rate fairly well. These figures are in stark contrast to the national first-year dropout rates, estimated at over 20%. In fact, almost 46% of all students who started studying for three-year and four-year degrees in 2005 at the 22 South African universities, excluding UNISA, had dropped out by 2010.⁹

NWU first-year drop-out rates (first-time entering students)¹⁰

Degree	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Registered for three-year degrees (undergraduate)	14.37%	13.65%	14.5%	13.1%	13.3%	15.3%	13.5%	13.97%
Registered for four-year degrees (undergraduate)	12.8%	12.4%	10.1%	11.48%	10.33%	9.47%	10.4%	11%
NWU average (per year) for four-year and three-year degrees	13.59%	13.05%	12.28%	12.29%	11.83%	12.39%	11.96%	12.48%

Steps towards student success

The steady improvements in pass rates and drop-out rates reflected the substantial amount of work done to strengthen teaching-learning through Supplemental Instruction and reading laboratories, academic staff development and implementing the recommendations from the HEQC audit.

Following up on the HEQC audit

The university approached the HEQC process as an opportunity to review its PQM, and to revisit the state of internal cross-faculty and cross-campus programme alignment.

All the university's qualifications and programmes were grouped into 15 coherent clusters according to the first order categories of the Classification of Educational Subject Matter (as determined by the Department of

Higher Education and Training), with a convener coordinating the alignment process within each cluster. In terms of the HEQF alignment process, approximately half the university's qualifications were classified as Category B qualifications (qualifications/programmes that require some curriculum development). This situation indicated that urgent further attention needed to be paid to internal programme alignment.

In accordance with the recommendations of the HEQC Audit Report, which the NWU had received in 2010, SAQA-registered providers trained 78 lecturers as assessors in 2011. A further 70 lecturers were trained as moderators.¹¹

The HEQC Audit report recommended that the provision of extended programmes should be expanded to the Vaal Triangle and Potchefstroom Campuses. Accordingly, the university successfully applied to the Department of Higher Education and Training for funding for extended programmes at both campuses. The review of teaching and learning that was conducted at the Potchefstroom Campus during 2011 recommended that further attention be paid to the possibilities for extended programme provision at the campus.

Supplemental Instruction proves its worth

Supplemental Instruction (SI) was used more intensively than ever before in 2011: some 715 SI leaders presented SI sessions in 476 "at-risk" modules in all the university's faculties. "At-risk" modules are defined as those that have large classes, challenging content and an average pass rate of less than 50%.

Results have shown that students who regularly attend SI earn higher subject marks and drop out less often than non-SI participants do. Research conducted during 2011 confirmed this. According to an analysis of 76 modules, students who participated in SI achieved an average performance of 58% in their modules, compared to 44% among students who did not participate in SI.

After five years of systematic implementation, the SI process was thoroughly redesigned during 2011. The SI policy was reviewed, extended guidelines for use by SI supervisors and leaders were developed, administrative forms and processes were revised, and the SI quality manual was reformulated. In a further highlight, three SI leaders (one from each campus) attended the SI leaders' Conference in Missouri, Kansas.

Encouraging excellent teaching

The Institutional Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA) is a mechanism to acknowledge and encourage lecturers to develop their teaching skills. A total of 47 ITEA awards were made to staff in 2011: there were 18 awards on

the Mafikeng Campus (compared to only nine in 2010), 20 on the Potchefstroom Campus and nine on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

In 2011, for the second time, the university received a substantial sponsorship from *Rapport* newspaper to recognise inspirational lecturers, based on nominations from students. Fourteen lecturers won *Rapport* Top Lecturer Awards to the value of R50 000 each. The prize money was presented to the winning lecturers at a gala event in Potchefstroom on 7 November 2011.

During the prize-giving function, Ms Liza Albrecht, Head: Digital Media, Media 24, said the long-term future of a knowledge economy depends on the quality of universities, and the quality of a university is in turn determined by lecturers who empower students to enter the knowledge-driven society.

One of the students who participated in the voting described an inspiring lecturer as follows: "*Top lecturers are accommodating, have their students' best interest at heart, guide them to develop their own potential, encourage them to test their personal limits and unlock a world of possibilities for them.*"¹²

In 2011, the Institutional Course for New Lecturers was extended to include contract and part-time lecturers. A total of 119 newly appointed lecturers attended Phase 1 of the ICNL during 2011. Of these, 16 lecturers were from the Mafikeng Campus, 77 from the Potchefstroom Campus and 26 from the Vaal Triangle Campus.

The NWU hosted its first institutional conference on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in October 2011. The conference focused on challenges such as access, student success and technology. The conference would be presented annually and is a platform for creating further opportunities to promote the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) at the university.

Well-rounded graduates sought after in the job market

The Career Centre plays a vital role in promoting employability among NWU students and in 2011 was voted the third best Career Centre/Services in the country by the companies that took part in the South African Graduate Recruitment Association (SAGRA) survey.

The services offered to employers include the Career Zone where employers could advertise vacancies, career fairs at which employers could promote employment opportunities, the career guide distributed to all students, and employer presentations. An important milestone during 2011 was the first business workshop in which the faculties of Business Management and Economic Sciences from the three campuses, together with the office of the Vice-Chancellor, participated.

The position of the Career Consultant was filled for the first time in January 2011 to assist students in all aspects of the job search process including CV writing and interview skills. During 2011, the career consultant served 887 students across the various campuses.

A total of 3 257 NWU students took part in the 2011 Magnet Student Survey, which researches the career expectations of students, as well as the Magnet Professionals Survey, which canvasses the opinions of graduates on the best companies to work for.

In addition, work commenced on a tracer study on Graduate Attributes in September 2011. The aim was to obtain a more accurate picture of NWU graduates and the way in which employers perceive their attributes.

Culture and sport develop well-rounded graduates

Academic performance alone does not produce the kind of well-rounded graduate that employees seek, hence the NWU's emphasis on encouraging students to take part in sport, cultural activities and community engagement.

Cultural activities

The Mafikeng Campus has distinguished itself in art, music, choral and multicultural drama. In 2011, the campus choir participated at the Sedibeng Choral Festival and the National Choir Festival, earning third and second position respectively.

The Potchefstroom Campus hosts the renowned NWU-PUK Choir, the Boulevard Harmonists and the NWU-PUK Serenaders. In 2011, the university choir was crowned the overall winners at the Prague International Christmas and Choir Festival, while the Serenaders won the national Old Mutual choir competition, and received the award for best conductor at this event. In another feat, the PUK Symphony Orchestra successfully presented their first full performance in the Conservatory Hall. In addition, the campus also boasts the Buzzin Brass Ensemble, the Thalia Drama Society, the Disfunctional Beat Dance Society and Divaco, a cultural society depicting the Cape culture through theatre, dancing and music.

The Vaal Triangle Campus was during 2011 in the final stages of establishing a radio station. The campus choir, The Voices of the River, was well established and took part in several regional competitions. An annual Cultural Festival was one of the highlights on the campus calendar, with all three NWU campuses participating.¹³

The NWU celebrated Human Rights Day on 18 March 2011 by collaborating with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in organising a workshop with the theme, "*Race in South Africa since 1994*".¹⁴

Sport codes

Based on achievements on the sports field, the NWU could justifiably claim to be one of the top sports universities in South Africa.

In 2011, the NWU focused on seven major sports codes, namely athletics, cricket, hockey, netball, rugby, soccer and tennis, and offered opportunities for participation in 30 other sports and recreational activities, including cycling, karate, softball, squash, rock-climbing, table tennis and competitive chess. Five athletes represented South Africa at junior level in 2011, while 13 members represented USSA at the International University Sports Federation's World Student Games in China.

Smaller sports codes supported on the Mafikeng Campus include chess, karate, volleyball, ju-jitsu, table tennis, boxing, aerobics, badminton, softball and bodybuilding. The aerobics and boxing teams came third at the 2011 USSA Championships, with the boxing club scooping four individual gold medals for the second consecutive year, and the aerobics team returning home with one gold, one silver and two bronze medals.

At the SA National Ju-Jitsu Championships, two members of the Mafikeng Campus ju-jitsu team won gold and silver medals, and several members were selected for the South African ju-jitsu, and USSA softball and table tennis teams. One student made the national wheelchair basketball team and represented South Africa internationally against Mexico in 2012 as a qualifier for the Olympic Games. The Mafikeng Campus bodybuilding team were crowned overall winners at the 2011 USSA Championships, while the men's team of the Vaal Triangle Campus came first.¹⁵

14.3. Robust research culture takes root

One of the greatest success stories of 2011 was the progress made in stimulating a robust research culture on all three campuses. Together, the campuses achieved a 32% increase in publications output for the year, generating 773 units compared to the previous year's 586. Less spectacular but no less solid was the 12% increase in total research output, which increased to 1 483 in 2011.

Another feather in the NWU's cap was that, of the journal articles published, 50.5% (329, 5 units) appeared in Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) journals.¹⁶

A critical success factor in the significant increase in research output was the research entity management model, which was fully in place in 2011.¹⁷ This model provides for four levels of research entities, starting with research niche areas, moving up to research focus areas and then progressing to research units and, ultimately, centres of excellence,

Research investment

R25 millions of NWU funds was invested in expensive research equipment, including R5 million for replacing ageing equipment.

Staff who were in the process of completing their PhDs received financial support totalling R1.5 million in 2011.

Throughout the year, capacity-building workshops were conducted on topics such as research publication and supervision, funding opportunities, ethics and rating applications. The total cost of these workshops, which 450 staff members attended, came to just over R441 300.

NRF-rated researchers

The university started the academic year with 117 NRF-rated researchers and in February 2011, submitted 31 rating applications to the NRF. Of the 14 applications for new ratings, 13 were accepted. The NRF also approved all 17 applications for re-evaluation. Owing to natural attrition among researchers, the NWU ended the year with 125 rated researchers.

Research chairs

In 2011, the NWU was hosting two South African Research Chair initiative (SARChI) chairs, one in Nuclear Energy and one in Space Physics. Another chair was supported by the South African National Energy Research Institute (SANERI).

The NWU received R30,9 million from the NRF for research in 2011 and was still one of the top earners in the NRF's Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP). Counting the contributions from industry, THRIP money received for the year came to just over R40 million.¹⁸

NWU rewards outstanding researchers

NWU staff members received awards for research, innovation, community involvement and creativity at a gala event in Potchefstroom in October 2011.

Prof Eno Ebenso from the School of Physics in the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology on the Mafikeng Campus was named Most Internationally Cited Researcher. Prof Melville Saayman, Director of the research focus area Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society (TREES) on the Potchefstroom campus, was named the NWU's Most Productive Researcher of the Year. Dr Jaco Gericke from the School of Basic Sciences in the Faculty of Humanities on the Vaal Triangle Campus received the award for Most Productive Junior Researcher of the Year.¹⁹

The Unit for Drug Research and Development in the Faculty of Health Sciences on the Potchefstroom

Campus was named most productive research entity at the NWU. Prof Pieter Buys from the School of Accounting Sciences in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus received the Pro Reformando Trust's HG Stoker Prize for publications that promote the trust.²⁰

Intellectual property shows its value

By 2011, the NWU had built up a comprehensive patent portfolio spanning 47 countries and generating valuable third-stream income through licence agreements, royalties and income from product sales based on its own intellectual property.²¹

On 6 June 2011, Council approved the NWU Intellectual Property Rights policy. In September 2011, the university presented the statutory compliance reports in terms of the RSA Intellectual Property Act of 2008 to the National Intellectual Property Management Organisation (NIPMO).

Measures to curb patent prosecution costs were also implemented in 2011. These included using teleconferencing to save travel costs and time, scrutinising patent disclosures to prevent the registration of patents with insufficient commercial value. Existing patents were evaluated, which led to the termination of 13 patents.

Presentations on intellectual property rights (IPR) management, commercialisation and entrepreneurship were held on all three campuses, one dealing specifically with Intellectual Property Rights. This contributed to a 50% increase in the number of IP rights agreements requiring input and support from the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office in 2011.

14.4. Community engagement and sustainability

In September 2011, the NWU adopted a new community engagement policy, requiring societal issues to be integrated into the core business strategies. The policy emphasised transdisciplinary development projects that are sustainable and have measurable impact. A new strategic initiative was the incorporation of King III reporting processes for all NWU activities.

The university's Internal Audit division completed a successful due diligence on the Mosaic project, an HIV/Aids orphan care and development programme. At the time, Mosaic had 10 houses, a training centre, three businesses and a day care centre for 130 children, 90 of whom were HIV positive.²²

The community engagement office explored various partnerships and signed memoranda of understanding with Impala Platinum, Anglo Gold Ashanti, the Dr Kenneth Kaunda Resource Centre, Next-S, the

Africa Foundation and the Department of Social Welfare, Women, Children and People with Disabilities. These agreements covered a range of community engagement projects, from agricultural development to training and collaboration in social development.

For example, at the request of the Department of Social Welfare, Women, Children and People with Disabilities, the NWU participated in workshops on the development of a diploma and degree in Community Development.

The community engagement office assisted a group from Matwlang, an agrarian community near Hessie, in developing the land they received through land restitution by holding several workshops on conflict resolution, planning and training. The NWU also participated in the launch of the Tlokwe Recycling Forum and several consultative meetings in Mahikeng with their domestic waste collection project.

R3,197 million in Lotto funding was allocated for arts and culture projects such as a radio station on the Vaal Triangle Campus, studio equipment and sound-proofing on the Potchefstroom Campus and an outdoor arena with stage on the Mafikeng Campus. A total of R15 million in Lotto funding was allocated for sports and recreation projects, including the construction of a Velodrome – the first and only one in Africa – on the Potchefstroom Campus, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the International Cycling Union (ICU) and the NWU on 4 August 2011.²³

14.5. Keeping the NWU's own house in order

While becoming increasingly active in engaging with external stakeholders, the NWU kept its own house in order by investing in facilities and infrastructure, managing its finances prudently, and strengthening corporate governance.

The financial net surplus averaged 5.4% over the seven years to 2011, which was in line with the norm of between 3% and 6% set by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).²⁴

Considerable development of the university's library services and resources on the three campuses started in 2011 when the Institutional Management allocated R5 million to enable the libraries to enhance their stocks of books.²⁵

To address the need for more student accommodation on the Potchefstroom Campus, approval was obtained to sell property owned by the campus.²⁶

Other steps taken in 2011 to keep the NWU's business running smoothly were approval of the 2011 key risk register,²⁷ and the submission of the NWU enrolment plan to the DHET, which approved the plan.²⁸



▲ Mafikeng Campus Management, 10 February 2010²⁹



▲ Potchefstroom Campus Management, 4 September 2011³⁰



▲ Vaal Triangle Campus Management, 25 November 2011³¹

14.6. Maintaining leadership in corporate governance

For the fifth consecutive year, the NWU won first place in the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers' Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance, living

up to its reputation as the best-governed university in South Africa.³²

“Winning this award again reflects that the NWU is a university that sticks relentlessly to the right processes and in this way, ends up with the intended results,” said Dr Theuns Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor. *“Whether filling key positions, overseeing the institution’s budget and financial management or holding a Council meeting, it is important to us to follow proper procedure, without cutting corners.”*³³

Effective leadership

The backbone of the new university’s success as a merged organisation has been coherent and consistent leadership. This came across clearly in 2011 through several key appointments:

- Mr PJ van der Walt was unanimously re-elected as chairperson of Council for a further term of four years.³⁴
- The Institutional Management team was restructured to make provision for the new positions of Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Technology.³⁵
- Two senior staff members assumed duties on 1 June, namely Prof Martin Oosthuizen, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning,³⁶ and Dr Ingrid Tufvesson, Executive Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor on Transformation and Diversity.³⁷ The contract of Prof Thanyani Mariba, Rector of the Vaal Triangle Campus, was extended by six months to end on 30 June 2015, thus aligning his retirement age and the end of his contract.³⁸
- Dr Ngoato Takalo, the former Vice-Principal and Executive Director: Teaching and Learning, was elected as chairperson of the HEQC’s Institutional Audits Committee.³⁹

- Prof T Mosia, the Institutional Registrar, was a member of the CHE’s Accreditation Committee for the 2010/11 reporting period.⁴⁰

14.7. Making technology work

By 2011, the new electronic workflow based study material production system was operational on all three campuses. On the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, study guides were available in 98.35% and 99.04% of modules, respectively. During the second half of 2011, the study material production system was implemented for the first time at the Mafikeng Campus.

More than 18 100 students were using the university’s electronic learning platform, known as e-Fundi, and 246 classrooms on all campuses were equipped with multimedia technology. The university continued to work with international partners such as Virginia Tech and the American Public University on the development of e-portfolios, e-assessment, lecture capturing and learning analytics, as well as the further design of the SAKAI learning management system.⁴¹

A number of significant ICT improvements, expected to have long-term benefits for the NWU IT community, were implemented during 2011. In total, 58 ICT projects were completed, delivering improvements for all three campuses and demonstrating the positive effect of standardising and integrating systems and infrastructure.

A new Information Technology Central (ITC) strategic plan was developed, aimed at positioning ICT as a strategic differentiator for the NWU. The goal was to provide an abundance of ICT connectivity, bandwidth and quality ICT services to staff and students through a combination of demand-pull and technology-push strategies. The three-year strategy consisted of 10 broad but integrated strategies that would establish a state-of-the-art ICT environment on par with international standards and ahead of most other South African universities.⁴²



Endnotes

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- 3 <http://www.nwu.ac.za/content/north-west-university-leading-south-african-universities-developing-software-higher-education>
- 4 http://www.nwu.ac.za/i-news/Press_Releases/Press_docs_2011/Press52_e.html
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- 8 NWU Institutional Office archive, Profile, 2012/2013 (2012, 60004.pdf), p 3
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- 30 NWU Institutional Office archive, Potchefstroom Campus Management, 4 September 2011
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CHAPTER 15

A place of possibilities

15. The year 2012

The year 2012 was the ninth since the merger and incorporation in 2004 and the NWU statistical score card highlighted the university's excellent, multifaceted performance during this period.

15.1 Excellent corporate governance

For six years in a row, from 2007 to 2012, the NWU received the PricewaterhouseCoopers' Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance, making it the best-governed university in South Africa.¹

The six successive awards showed the underlying strength of governance at the university, built on well-functioning governance structures that understand their respective roles and the interrelationships between them.

For example, the results of the Council self-evaluation exercise in the second semester of 2012 showed Council was independent in its decision-making, understood its governance role and did not micro-manage by encroaching on the day-to-day management role assigned to the Vice-Chancellor. The lines of responsibility between the governing structures and management were clearly demarcated and observed. There was coherence and alignment between Council, its committees and Institutional Management in working towards and reaching shared goals.²

15.2 Tragedy puts Council to the test

Council's leadership was certainly put to the test when tragedy struck the NWU community early in 2012.

Mr Thabang Makhoang, a 19-year-old first-year student from Wolmaransstad, drowned in a swimming pool during reception and introduction programmes at the Potchefstroom Campus on Saturday evening on 21 January 2012. Captain Tselane Nkala of the South African Police Service said during a media interview that the first-year student was with 76 other students when he drowned. The group of students were participating in a fruit festival when they were told to wash themselves off in the swimming pool.

"The other students and the conductors of the orientation did not notice that the deceased was no longer with them when they left the swimming pool," Captain Nkala said.

The student's body was found at the bottom of the pool when another group of students went for a swim.³ He was enrolled for a Bachelor of Engineering course in



▲ Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training since 2009⁶

mechanical engineering after matriculating in 2010. The next-of-kin of Mr Makhoang received counselling from a team of psychologists from the university and the social services unit supported with the funeral arrangements.⁴

The NWU Council held an extraordinary meeting on 8 February 2012 to discuss the tragic drowning of Mr Makhoang.⁵ Council resolved that management should continue with its intended independent investigation and cooperate fully with the investigation announced by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande.

Minister Nzimande had said in a media statement that although he had read *"the university's statement and explanation of what occurred during the fruit festival"*, he was *"deeply concerned at the description of the organised event"*.⁷

Council also resolved that the management should explore possibilities to support the Makhoang family.⁸

A second extraordinary meeting of Council was held on 30 March 2012 to discuss the report from the independent investigators into the drowning of Mr Makhoang.⁹ Council noted that it was not possible to blame any individual or the institution for this tragic event, and supported the establishment of the Thabang Makhoang Bursary Fund for learners from the Reabona High School, where Mr Makhoang had gone to school. Council also supported the proposal that an ex gratia award for the erection of a basic house for Mr Makhoang's family be considered¹⁰

Council appointed a delegation, led by Potchefstroom Campus Rector Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, to meet with the family in the spirit of goodwill.¹¹ After meeting with Ms Sanna Makhoang, Prof van Schalkwyk provided final feedback to Council on 15 June 2012, outlining the plans to build a house in Wolmaransstad and establish the Thabang Makhoang Tsweleng Bursary Fund.¹²

15.3 Financial excellence

Since 2004, effective, efficient and transparent financial management and internal control systems have been the cornerstones of the university's commitment to ensuring financial sustainability. For the ninth consecutive year, the NWU received an unqualified audit report for 2012.¹³

The university has a solid track record in keeping costs within the targets set. Total costs for 2012, expressed as percentages, were as follows.¹⁴

All income streams (Cash flow statement)	Target as per Institutional Plan	NWU budget 2013	NWU budget 2012	NWU actual 2011	NWU budget 2011
Personnel cost	50-52%	53.9%	53.6%	49.6%	52.9%
Operating cost	43-45%	42.2%	42.5%	42.5%	42.8%
Capital	4-5%	3.9%	3.9%	10.6%	4.3%

Procuring goods and services from BBBEE-qualified suppliers has been a priority. Of the R824 million procured in 2012, almost 66.39% qualified as BBBEE contributions, compared to 57.54 in 2011.

The NWU was part of the task team of the Financial Executive Forum of Higher Education South Africa that designed a set of financial indicators or criteria to serve as early signs of financial "trouble", for use in benchmarking exercises sector wide.

The total income of the university increased by 195, 9% from R911,7 million in 2004 to R2 697,9 million in 2012. This was despite income from the state subsidy decreasing from 45, 2% as a percentage of total income in 2003 to 41, 0% in 2012. The increase in revenue came mainly from strong growth in income from entrepreneurial activities, as well as growth in investment income.¹⁵

The university's accumulated reserves increased by 148, 9% over the period ending 31 December 2012 due to an average net surplus of 3, 9% of total income. The following graph shows the university's track record in achieving surpluses every year from 2004 onwards. The Mafikeng Campus, having reversed its deficit, made a growing contribution to this trend.¹⁶

15.4 Excellent facilities and infrastructure

The NWU spent R219 million on capital expenditure and macro maintenance in 2012. Of this, R30,5 million was spent at the Mafikeng Campus, R52,9 million at the Vaal Triangle Campus and R104,7 million at the Potchefstroom Campus.

The infrastructure projects focused on upgrading and increasing the capacity of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) laboratories for teaching-learning and

research. In line with the Ministerial report on student housing, student residences were upgraded and the number of beds increased, enabling more students to reap the benefits of living on campus.

According to the Department of Trade and Industry's formula, approximately 92% of total capital expenditure for the year was disbursed to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) contractors.¹⁷

15.5 ICT at the forefront

In total, 44 ICT projects were completed at the NWU in 2012. These delivered improvements for all three campuses and demonstrated the positive effect of standardising and integrating systems and infrastructure.

Students benefited directly from some of these projects. Personal computer rooms for students were upgraded on all three campuses in 2012. The Potchefstroom Campus received a new 300-seat PC laboratory, boosting the total number of PCs for student use to 1 269 at 19 labs. The Mafikeng Campus received six new labs, each with approximately 80 PCs. As a result, the campus had 22 labs with a total of 1057 PCs. The Vaal Triangle Campus had five PC labs with 385 PCs.

The telecommunications and IT infrastructure of the university was substantially improved, with more bandwidth, network coverage and disk storage available than ever before available to students and staff.¹⁸

15.6 In good company internationally

The expertise and productivity of NWU IT teams participating in the development of the Quali Student System inspired the Quali Foundation to fund an additional NWU team in 2012. As a result, a third of the teams collaborating on this international project were from the

NWU, with the other teams coming from American and Canadian universities.

Kuali Student is a student administration system developed by universities for universities. The NWU was the only South African university participating in the project and its involvement was an opportunity to build local development expertise.

The Kuali Student project management team commended the quality of deliverables from the NWU and, at Kuali Days 2012 in Austin, Texas in the United States, the NWU team lead, Nina Gelderbloem, received special recognition for her contribution to the project.

In 2012, the NWU became a member of the Eidos Institute, an independent, not-for-profit organisation that consists of 14 member universities from South Africa and Australia, as well as a growing network of industry partners.

Dr Theuns Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, became a member of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), comprising 600 peer presidents, rectors and chancellors from more than 70 countries.

During the year, the university signed memoranda of understanding with four international academic institutions, namely the University of Nizwa in Oman, the University of Tilburgh in the Netherlands (in the areas of Law, Arts and Social and Behavioural Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus), the University of Leipzig in Germany (Health Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus), and the Duisenberg School of Finance in the Netherlands (Business Mathematics and Informatics, Potchefstroom Campus).¹⁹

15.7 Strong stakeholder relations

Building and strengthening sound stakeholder relations is important to the NWU. In 2012, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Theuns Eloff, hosted 12 networking dinners held across the country to forge strategic relationships, enter into business development partnerships and inform opinion-leaders about the NWU’s achievements and challenges.

Dr Eloff also held 20 breakfast meetings with members of staff on the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, as well as at the Institutional Office. These were aimed at facilitating internal communication, especially about the role of staff in contributing to achievements of the university.

15.8 Community engagement shows its class

As a member of the Talloires Network, a global alliance committed to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of universities and colleges around the world, the NWU participated in the annual MacJannet

competition for student driven community upliftment and global citizenship. The university was a second place winner among 72 nominations from 52 universities in 21 countries.

15.9 Providing excellent student support

Students on all three campuses could count on the NWU to provide financial aid and academic support where needed

For the 2012 financial year, the financial aid offices on the three campus administered financial assistance totalling R515, 1 million, compared to R403,7 million in 2011. The R515,1 million in student financial aid consisted of:

- R50,2 million from the university’s own funds to assist undergraduate students and R57 million for postgraduate students
- R172 million in external funding assistance for undergraduate students and R25,4 million for postgraduate students
- R184,1 million in funding for undergraduate students and R6,8 million for postgraduate students from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)/Department of Social Development
- R19,1 million from the NRF for financial assistance for postgraduate students.

The NWU’s use of Supplemental Instruction (SI) to enrich learning and improve student retention and performance grew strongly in 2012. A total of 694 SI leaders presented 22 221 SI sessions in 479 at-risk modules, representing an investment of R1.5 million.

Supplemental Instruction in 2012

Campus	Trained SI leaders	Active SI leaders	Modules in which SI was presented	SI sessions
Mafikeng Campus	250	203	133	8 009
Potchefstroom Campus	201	273	176	7 563
Vaal Triangle Campus	238	218	170	6 639
Total	689	694	479	22 211

The development of literacy skills through academic literacy modules and reading laboratories helps students to cope with the demands of higher education. During 2012, a total of 9 766 students took the two academic literacy modules that all new students are required to complete.²⁰

Study guides are a crucial part of effective learning. The university's centralised production resource unit at the Potchefstroom Campus developed 29 new study material collections in 2012, and did maintenance work on 16 existing ones.

15.10 Aspiring to excellence in student leadership

All campuses held successful Campus Student Representative Council elections during August and September 2012 for the 2012/13 leadership. The House Rules were approved and the new ISRC was inaugurated on 7 September 2012. Orapeleng Matshediso of the Mafikeng Campus was appointed as the new ISRC Chairperson. From 12 to 14 October 2012, all the newly elected Campus SRC members attended a leadership workshop, facilitated by the African Leadership Group and the Life College Group.

15.11 Recognising outstanding alumni

Being very proud of its alumni, the NWU decided in 2012 to introduce alumni awards to publicly recognise outstanding alumni for their personal and career accomplishments and their exemplary contributions to society. The Institutional Management Committee approved the criteria for alumni awards in August 2012.

15.12 Excelling in communication

The NWU's internal staff newsletter, *Eish!*, rates among the best in-house publications in the country. At the South African Publication Forum's award ceremony in September 2012, the newsletter was named Best Publication overall with a limited budget. Certificates were also received for excellence in writing, communication and design, and the publication was a finalist in the category for Best Internal Newsletter and in the overall category for Best Corporate Publication.

In the same competition, the alumni magazine, *NWU and U*, received certificates for excellence in communication and writing, and was a finalist in the category for Best External Magazine.

Media monitoring showed that favourable coverage of the NWU significantly outweighed unfavourable coverage during 2012. A total of 12 186 media items were analysed, compared to the 7 730 in 2011, an increase of 57.6%. The 2012 articles had a total advertising equivalent value of R285 million.

15.13 Giving employees access to excellent services

In 2012, the university had a total staff complement of 7 581 permanent and temporary employees, including 3 611 teaching or research professionals, 2 477 administrative employees and 620 specialist support professionals.

Employees have access to a wide range of health and wellness services, such as health screening, general programmes encouraging staff to be physically active, workshops on topics such as stress management and personal financial management, and awareness campaigns on occupational health and safety, corporate wellness, sun-smart behaviour and disability awareness, and so on.

Here are some health and wellness highlights of 2012:

- 415 staff members had flu vaccinations, 429 benefited from general health screening, 75 male employees had prostate cancer testing, 110 female employees had pap smears and breast screening, and 220 employees gave blood at blood donation clinics.
- 176 staff members and 2 866 students were voluntarily tested for HIV/Aids as part of the "First Things First Campaign" within the Higher Education HIV/Aids Programme.
- 312 participants took part in Be Active, a programme consisting of organised golf, walking, soccer and netball events.
- 275 employees benefited from work-life balance projects, aimed at reducing the amount of time staff spend off campus attending to important personal errands. Of these, 187 were assisted to obtain identity documents and passports, 34 to obtain international driving permits and 54 to obtain motor vehicle licences.

Following the 2011 disability survey, 21 staff members identified themselves as persons with a physical or mental disability. Various other employees were also assisted from the Disability Fund with transport arrangements and assistive devices. Successful applications for extra funding for disability assistance were submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training, as well as to the Carl and Emily Fuchs Foundation.

15.14 Ample opportunities for staff development

During 2012, the university spent R16,3 million on training and development for staff. Of this, R13 million was spent on the staff bursary scheme, enabling employees to enrol for formal qualifications through the NWU or Unisa. A further R3,2 million was spent on skills development.

To substantially improve the NWU's ability to attract and retain employees from the designated groups, the university started a Capacity Building Fund and introduced a programme called 'Growing our own timber'. This included a cadet programme designed to enable top-performing undergraduate students to become academics

in scarce skills areas, as well as a postgraduate development programme. Succession planning was introduced, and 191 employees were identified as potential future managers. In October 2012, guidelines were approved for internships in support services.

Inspiring lecturers recognised

In all, 49 staff members received Institutional Teaching Excellence Awards (ITEA) in 2012, with a good distribution across the campuses (18 at Potchefstroom Campus; 20 at Mafikeng Campus and 11 at Vaal Triangle Campus).²¹

For the third consecutive year, *Rapport* newspaper made a substantial amount of money available to recognise the NWU's most inspiring lecturers. Full-time undergraduate students in each of the 15 faculties across the NWU voted for the lecturers who inspired them the most. Thanks to the efforts of the Campus Student Representative Councils, 40% of full-time undergraduate students voted and the 15 lecturers who were selected received a cash prize of R50 000 each.

During the prize-giving function on 13 November 2012, Mr Tim du Plessis, Head: Afrikaans newspapers in the Media 24 group, said society did not always realise that they owed educators a debt of gratitude. He added that to be a lecturer is quite often a thankless job, but when it becomes satisfying, it cancels out the frustration.

Mr GP van Rheede van Oudtshoorn, one of the winning lecturers, commented: *"We do not teach for the money,*

*the status or to climb the corporate ladder. We do not teach because that is what we do, but we teach because that is who we are, and when we get it right, we inevitably inspire."*²²

Excellent researchers rewarded

The university again recognised and rewarded its top researchers. On 26 October 2012, more than 50 staff members received awards for excellence in research, innovation, community involvement and creativity. The guest speaker was Mr Derek Hanekom, Minister for Science and Technology, who congratulated the university on the great strides it had taken to increase research output.

For the second year in a row, the award for Most Productive NWU Researcher went to Prof Melville Saayman, Director of the research entity Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society (TREES) on the Potchefstroom Campus. The award for Most Productive Junior Researcher of the Year was presented to Prof Karina Mostert from the school of Human Resource Sciences at the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Two research entities on that campus shared the award for the Most Productive Research Entity, namely Social Transformation under the leadership of Prof André Duvenhage, and the WorkWell Research Unit for Economic and Management Sciences under the leadership of Prof Jaco Pienaar.²³

15.15 Profile of NWU from 2004-2012²⁴

Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total student enrolment	40 145	38 596	38 709	44 726	47 008	50 589	55 732	56 641	58 845
Undergraduate pass rate (contact and distance)	75.20%	78.80%	78.36%	79.48%	81.20%	83.6%	83.5%	85.2%	88.2%
Total degrees and diplomas awarded	9 657	7 746	9 825	11 345	12 337	13 445	15 083	15 904	14 669
Graduation rate	24%	20%	25%	25%	26%	27%	27%	27%	25%

The following table shows the success rates per major field of study below master's level in 2012. Success rates were based on the ratio of completed FTEs to enrolled FTEs.

Success rates per major field of study ²⁵

Qualification type	SET	Bus/ management	Education		Other humanities
			Contact	Distance	
Undergraduate diploma or certificate (1 - 2 years)	0.81	0.9	0.92	0.86	0.7
Undergraduate diploma or certificate (3 years)	0.87	1	1	0.79	0.89
General academic bachelor's degree (3 years)	0.81	0.85	1	0	0.81
Professional first bachelor's degree (3 years)	0.88	0.79	0.87	0	0.88
Professional first bachelor's degree (4 years or more)	0.88	0.85	0.93	0.92	0.85
Postgraduate diploma	0.86	0.94	0.91	0	0.89
Honours degree	0.97	0.88	0.88	0.72	0.86

15.16 Academic profile

Achieving academic excellence

By 2012, the NWU had achieved nine years of student growth in student numbers and consistent improvements in the undergraduate pass rate.

Total student numbers for the year came to 58 845, an increase of 32% compared to 2004.

This growth went hand in hand with an improvement in undergraduate pass rates, which stood at 88.2% in 2012 (for contact and distance students alike), against only 75.20% in 2004.

The total number of degrees and diplomas awarded rose from 9 657 in the year 2004 to 14 669 in 2012. The graduation rate improved from 24% to 25% over the period, with some fluctuations in the intervening years.

Academic programming shows its quality

Various statutory bodies and professional bodies conducted external evaluations of the university's academic programmes during the year.

On the Mafikeng Campus, external evaluations were conducted on the Bachelor's degree in Administration, the BCom degree in Management, and English as a subject. On the Potchefstroom Campus, the Master's degree in Theology (New Testament) was externally evaluated.

The statutory bodies that evaluated academic programmes in 2012 were:²⁶

- The Health Professions Council of South Africa, which evaluated the Honours in Psychology at Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses

and the Honours and Master's programmes in Industrial Psychology at the Potchefstroom Campus

- South African Institute for Chartered Accountants, which evaluated the CA programme at all three campuses
- The South African Council for Social Service Professions, which evaluated the Social Work programmes at all three campuses
- The South African Council for Veterinary Sciences, which evaluated Animal Health at the Mafikeng Campus.

The Association of MBAs (AMBA), an accreditation body based in the UK/Europe, paid a comprehensive follow-up visit. This was in preparation for the international accreditation of the MBA programme offered at the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campus.

A strategic goal of 2012 was to give continual attention to the Quality Improvement Plan resulting from the HEQC Quality Audit that was completed in 2009. After giving oral feedback on the Improvement Plan in 2011, the HEQC provided written feedback on the NWU audit progress report during 2012.

Expanding distance learning

After Unisa, the NWU was the South African university with the biggest portfolio of distance programmes; 24 383 students were enrolled for distance learning programmes during the year.

In June 2012, the university Council approved the establishment of a Unit for Open Distance Learning (UODL) on the Potchefstroom Campus in the place of the existing

School of Continuing Teacher Education. As from January 2013, the new unit would serve all faculties and not only the Faculty of Education Sciences.

Apart from delivering formal programmes, the unit would deliver various short courses and the University Preparatory Programme (UNIVPREP), a BCom bridging programme for students who would not otherwise qualify for university entrance.

UNIVPREP was introduced in 2012 as a pilot project. Teaching-learning was offered through blended-learning, combining face-to-face and online instruction, and providing active support to students.

The pilot group for 2012 consisted of 26 students, half of whom were women. Black students made up 62% of the students, whites 27% and coloureds 11%. Most of the students who enrolled for UNIVPREP showed a remarkable improvement in their performance in Mathematics, indicating that the bridging programme, albeit on a small scale, held fair potential to assist in narrowing the gap between secondary and higher education.

Path to excellence: extended programmes

During 2012, the NWU successfully applied to the DHET to offer 43 extended programmes from 2013. Twenty of these programmes would be offered at the Mafikeng Campus's Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, and 14 in the campus's Faculty of Commerce and Administration. The remaining seven programmes were located in the Faculty of Economic Sciences and Information Technology at the Vaal Triangle Campus. The targeted enrolment was 3 705 FTEs.

Excellence in research and innovation

In 2005, the NWU received the award for most progressive, technologically innovative university in South Africa, and followed this up in 2008 with the award for most innovative university in South Africa, presented by the Innovation Fund of the Department of Science and Technology. Although this award was discontinued, the NWU continued to make major strides in research and innovation.

Given the possibility of registering inventions in many countries, the NWU's portfolio consisted of more than 300 individual patent registrations, active and terminated, worldwide. NWU had 11 USA-registered patents.

The university continued to make its inventions available to industry through licensing and royalty agreements. There were 15 active agreements in 2012, which brought in just over R2 million in royalties and licence fees. Furthermore, the NWU had 13 active spin-off companies involved in the commercialisation of the university's patents.²⁷

Research performance²⁸

The NWU's research performance took a large leap forward in 2012, when the university achieved significant increases in publications output, postdoctoral fellowships and the number of NRF-rated researchers, among other things.

The increase in publication units rose from 734 in 2011 to 869 in 2012, boosting the NWU's per capita output to 0.70 and making the NWU one of the top 10 universities in terms of publications outputs. This is shown in the following table, which ranks the country's 23 public universities by total and per capita publications output.²⁹

National research publications, 2011 and 2012 ³⁰

Institution	Total research publications		Research publications per permanent academic	
	2012	2011	2012	2011
Pretoria	1 424	1 315	1.11	1.03
KwaZulu-Natal	1 424	1 250	1.02	0.85
Cape Town	1 391	1 314	1.29	1.25
Stellenbosch	1 323	1 148	1.36	1.22
Witwatersrand	1 114	1 037	1.04	0.99
South Africa	893	798	0.56	0.53
Johannesburg	874	774	0.87	0.89
North West	869	734	0.70	0.61
Free State	644	569	0.68	0.67
Rhodes	410	359	1.22	1.12
Western Cape	367	346	0.66	0.65
Nelson Mandela	312	351	0.52	0.61
Tshwane	230	243	0.27	0.29
Limpopo	219	148	0.27	0.18
Fort Hare	209	181	0.65	0.62
Cape Peninsula	168	142	0.22	0.19
Venda	128	131	0.39	0.40
Durban	80	89	0.13	0.15
Vaal	75	75	0.22	0.22
Zululand	73	69	0.24	0.26
Walter Sisulu	61	45	0.10	0.07
Central	59	47	0.22	0.18
Mangosuthu	18	26	0.10	0.13
National total	12 364	11 191	0.71	0.66

The university's research performance was even stronger when total article equivalents are taken into account. Total publications output came to 944.24 units for the year. This was an increase of 22% against the previous year's 765.28 units.

Of the journal articles published, 66% (519.84 units) appeared in Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) journals, compared to 50.5% in 2011.

The research equivalents for the nine-year period from 2004 are summarised in the table below.

Research output	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Article equivalents	272	318	352	358	471	409	511	653	790
Conference proceedings	3	8	8	13	18	34	43	84	98
Books	0	0	2	5	13	5	24	36	56
Total article equivalents published	275	326	361	376	503	448	578	773	944
Number of NRF-rated researchers	73	85	82	95	103	116	117	125	140
Master's degrees conferred	626	700	765	618	583	659	633	639	670
Research Master's	262	293	384	313	281	369	353	365	462
Research Master's weighted	262	293	384	313	281	369	353	365	462
Doctoral degrees conferred	87	82	110	124	100	123	129	115	154
Doctoral degrees weighted	261	246	330	372	300	369	387	345	462
Total research output	798	865	1074	1061	1083	1186	1318	1483	1868
Postdoctoral fellows	9	17	18	34	38	48	69	89	114

One of the most positive developments of 2012 was the surge in research output at the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle campuses, as shown in the following table:

Campus	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mafikeng Campus	13.0	8.1	24.3	30.8	46.9	161.5	196.7
Potchefstroom Campus	313.3	320.8	400.0	332.3	395.3	520.9	647.5
Vaal Triangle Campus	25.2	27.3	44.0	46.6	61.8	82.9	98.2
Institutional Management							1.8
Total	351.5	356.2	468.3	409.7	504.0	765.3	944.2

Another positive trend was the strong growth in post-doctoral fellowships on all three campuses. Where the Mafikeng Campus had only one postgraduate fellow in 2007, this increased to 23 in 2012. At the Potchefstroom Campus, the number of postgraduate fellows soared from 32 in 2007 to 88 in 2012. The Vaal Triangle Campus had three postdoctoral fellows in 2012, compared to only one in 2007. Overall, the university ended 2012 with 114 postdoctoral fellows, up from 34 in 2007.

Also worth noting was the substantial increase in NRF funding awarded to the NWU for research, specifically for projects within the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP).

Year	Amount	Adjusted	Award
2009	R20,6 million	R8,6 million	R29,2 million
2010	R22,9 million	R16,7 million	R39,6 million
2011	R31,6 million	R4 million	R35,7 million
2012	R47,4 million	R-10,2 million	R37,1 million

Setting the scene for future research growth

The university took concrete steps to lay the foundation for future research growth and excellence.

The NWU entered another three-year programme of external reviews. Four research entities were externally evaluated, with a positive outcome. The external panel also evaluated the ability of the NWU to support its research programme. This, too, had a positive outcome and provided some useful recommendations for further improvement. A comprehensive self-assessment of the NWU research and innovation activities served as one of the inputs in the evaluation.

The Research Entity model was further refined to include hosted research entities and commercial research entities.³¹

In a hosted research entity, the focus is on innovation output and a number of collaborating organisations are typically involved. Examples are the Department of Science and Technology Hydrogen Infrastructure Centre of Competency, co-hosted with the CSIR, the Metabolomics Platform, the National Pre-Clinical Drug Development Platform, the DTI Centre for Advanced Manufacturing, and the Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Competency Centre (co-hosted by the Universities of Limpopo and Venda).

A commercial research entity, on the other hand, operates on business principles, is expected to be financially independent and focuses primarily on the implementation of expertise. The Centre for Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Services is typical of this type.³²

In other developments around the Research Entity model, the Unit for Drug Research and Development was upgraded to a Centre of Excellence³³ and three new research focus areas were approved. These were Optentia at the Vaal Triangle Campus,³⁴ Quality in Nursing and Midwifery (Insinq) at the Potchefstroom Campus³⁵ and Material Science Innovation and Modelling (Masim) at the Mafikeng Campus.³⁶

Two new niche areas were also approved, namely Multilingual Speech Technologies (MUST) at the Vaal Triangle Campus³⁷ and Trade and Development (TRADE) at the Potchefstroom Campus.³⁸

These changes meant that the NWU ended 2012 with eight niche areas, eight focus areas, nine research units and two centres of excellence.³⁹

Two new SARCHi chairs were awarded to the NWU,⁴⁰ namely Coal Research and Early Detection and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Africa. The latter was one of only eight directed chairs awarded in South Africa in 2012.

The NWU continued establishing the rest of its 14 internal Research Chair positions. Incumbents had to be NRF rated or ready for NRF rating within the first two years of appointment, and the posts had to become self-sustaining within a maximum of three years.

15.17 Nine years of consistent delivery

As Mr PJ van der Walt, Council Chairperson, put it, the NWU had steadily strengthened its corporate governance, financial management, administrative and strategic planning capabilities in the nine years since the merger. The university's record of consistent delivery – in poor and good economic times – stood it in good stead to make a growing contribution to skills development in South Africa and further afield.⁴¹



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CHAPTER 16

The warmth of summer, the coldness of winter

16. The year 2013

“What good is the warmth of summer, without the coldness of winter to give it sweetness?”

This quotation, from John Steinbeck’s book *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*,² sums up the contrasts that the NWU experienced in 2013.

On the one hand, the university continued to perform extremely well in teaching-learning, research and the implementation of expertise, leaving no doubt that it was a good return on government’s investment.

On the other hand, the NWU came under heavy criticism for what was seen in some circles as the slow pace of transformation and perceived difficulties in achieving a truly integrated institutional culture.

16.1 The coldness of winter

There were testing times for the NWU in 2013, bringing to mind the “coldness” of winter about which Steinbeck wrote. Although the university was doing well on the academic and administrative front, several allegations of racism, ideological differences and the slow pace of transformation caused tension in and outside the university and clouded its perceived success story.

Ms Victoria John of the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper described the NWU in 2013 as an uneasy union: *“NWU is the stormy product of one of the country’s most unlikely tertiary mergers. It came into being in 2004, when two culturally and geographically distant institutions were joined in an uneasy union. They were the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, a white and heavily Afrikaner Calvinist institution, and the University of Bophuthatswana, a black Bantustan institution that, like all pre-1994 universities, apartheid designed for second-rate status.”*³

Ms Ingrid Tufvesson, former executive adviser on transformation, said she was dismissed on 31 January 2013 because she questioned the way the university approached transformation.⁴ This dismissal led to tensions on campuses because some staff members and students accused the NWU management of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender and sexuality.⁵

These accusations were aired just after the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, had announced a permanent committee to oversee transformation at South Africa’s 23 universities. According to Ms Tufvesson, the NWU went to *“great pains to present to the world that it is non-racist, non-sexist and has*



▲ Institutional Management, 19 June 2013¹

moved away from the old way. But where are its explicit policies on racism, hate speech, sexism, sexuality and xenophobia?”

In response, Dr Theuns Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, said that, *“there are some levels of intolerance ... It’s not heaven here, but I haven’t seen real issues that haven’t been dealt with properly.”*⁶

Tragedy revisited

During March 2013 there were reports that Dr Nzimande wanted the Hawks (the directorate for priority crime investigation) to launch a new investigation into the heart-breaking death in January 2012 of a first-year student, Mr Thabang Makhoang.⁷

In 2012, Dr Nzimande had already requested an inquiry into Mr Makhoang’s death and the university had pledged its full support and cooperation.⁸ It had also given its full support to the police in their investigation and, in addition, had launched its own independent investigation headed by two senior advocates, Vusi Pikoli SC and Lourens de Koning SC.⁹ The outcome of their investigation and the subsequent report were given to the Deputy Director-General at the Department of Higher Education and Training, who had acknowledged receipt.¹⁰

The university also published the findings of the investigation into the death of Mr Makhoang on its website. It was not aware of any new, concrete evidence or information that had been independently verified in connection with his death. The university awaited a formal response from the Minister about this new investigation, and again pledged its full cooperation and assistance.¹¹

Unfounded allegations made

During April 2013, the NWU strongly objected to unfounded allegations made against the university on various platforms by individuals and organisations. These allegations were linked to the student who had been provisionally suspended as chairperson of the Institutional Representative Student Council, pending the finalisation of a disciplinary hearing. The impression was created that he had been suspended both as an NWU student and as chairperson of the Mafikeng Campus's Student Representative Council.

What made this situation all the more regrettable was that these individuals and organisations were clearly exploiting the tragic death of Mr Makhoang to divert attention from issues of real substance between them and the NWU.¹² The university found it inconceivable that anyone could, after more than a year, suddenly come forward with "new information" that had not been made known before. This cast suspicion on the bona fides of the allegations.¹³

The North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria granted an urgent interdict to the university on 9 May 2013 to prevent the Higher Education Transformation Network (HETN) and its directors from defaming the NWU. The HETN was ordered to remove defamatory statements about the institution and Dr Theuns Eloff from all social media. These statements had depicted the university as "racists, Nazis and criminals".¹⁴

Protest march held

On Friday, 19 July 2013, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) organised a march to the NWU Institutional Office and drew hundreds of protesters, including students and staff from the university.



▲ Protest march, 19 July 2013¹⁵

Leaders from Cosatu and its affiliates such as the South African Communist Party, ANC, the ANC Youth League task team, the Young Communist League, Congress of South African Students and the South African Students' Congress, as well as the South African National Civic Organisation, took turns to address the crowd and lambast the university's management. They used this strategy to campaign for the ANC for the municipal by-elections in Tlokwe and the 2014 national election, and made a wide range of demands.

The top demand in the Nehawu memorandum was that the university should allow an independent investigation into the mysterious drowning of first-year student Mr Thabang Makhoang at the Potchefstroom campus during the 2012 welcoming programme.

Nehawu called for the "immediate" resignation of Dr Theuns Eloff as Vice-Chancellor because he had allegedly failed to transform the university into a racially inclusive one.

The trade union also alleged that the Potchefstroom campus was a bastion of racism, more so than the university's Vaal and Mafikeng campuses.

Furthermore, Nehawu complained about classes on the Potchefstroom campus being conducted in Afrikaans, saying that "students who do not understand the language are given headsets through which lectures are translated into English". The memorandum thus called for a review of the university's language and admission policies.

Finally, Nehawu called for a ban on the outsourcing of services and the reinstatement of black staff and students who had recently been suspended or dismissed "unfairly". NWU's management was given a month to respond.¹⁶

Following the protest march, the NWU's Institutional Management rejected the demand for a review of the university's language policy. The NWU pointed out that it had implemented a functionally multilingual language policy since 2007 after proper consultation and an inclusive process.

Mr James Botha, the acting registrar, summed up this issue in the following statement: "Apart from classes offered in the parallel and dual modes of delivery, large-scale educational interpreting services are rendered, study guides are available in both English and Afrikaans, and in some instances also in Setswana and Sesotho."¹⁷

Serious about transformation

In August 2013, Dr Eloff, whose second term at the helm of the NWU was due to expire in May 2014, told the *Sunday Independent* newspaper that he was confident of

leaving behind a stable university, despite criticism that he had failed to transform the NWU.

He pointed out that a strong sense of unity at NWU was difficult to achieve among campuses 300 km apart. He also said that transformation was not only about the numbers of people from different racial groups but also about success and the quality of the institution's performance, for example: "*The transformation at Mafikeng is second to none. It's a quality campus.*"¹⁸

Also in August 2013, Dr Eloff elaborated on this view of transformation, again highlighting that it went beyond numerical targets. He cited the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the NWU and the North West Provincial Government to collaborate in research, development, socio-economic planning, poverty relief and agricultural development.

"*The signing of the MOU is firmly aligned with the national development plan,*" Dr Eloff said, adding that it was a step towards fostering transformation in the way the university conducts its business.

Dr Thandi Modise, Premier of the province at the time, said the agreement represented a "*marriage between the people of the North West and academic expertise*". She said the relationship with the NWU would aid the provincial government in building a state that is capable of taking care of its citizens.



▲ North West Premier, Mrs Thandi Modise and Dr Eloff, August 2013¹⁹

In an interview for the journal *Leadership*, Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, said: "*In no other sector should transformation be taken more seriously than in tertiary education – but without understanding what it is, we cannot do justice to the good intentions it is supposed to give birth to.*"²⁰

Concrete steps towards transformation

The NWU takes a broader view of transformation without overlooking the importance of working towards clear-cut targets for improving demographic representation. For 2013, the university was working towards 10 transformation elements, each with annual targets.

Race and gender targets were set for each campus, based on its specific demographics.

The Mafikeng Campus had sought to diversify its staff complement by increasing the number of white employees while also employing more women. The campus met the race target for 2013, with whites making up just over 12% of staff, and narrowly missed the target for employing women, who made up 47,08% of the staff against the target of 47,10%.

At the Potchefstroom Campus, the target was to increase the number of black staff to 26,70% and to decrease the number of women employed to 55,40%. The campus did not meet its race target because the number of employees increased, resulting in black staff accounting for 24,95% of staff. It also missed the gender target, as women still made up 58,76% of the workforce.

The Vaal Triangle Campus, which had aimed to increase the representation of black staff to 35,30% in 2013, exceeded this slightly (35,88%). The campus did not meet its target of reducing the number of women employed to 54%, ending with 64,64%.

Finally, the Institutional Office narrowly missed its target to increase the number of black employees to 22,10%, achieving 21,49%. It also missed the target set to decrease the number of women employed. Women accounted for 56,47%, against the target of 55,70%.

The NWU as a whole was aiming to increase the number of black staff to 38,02% in 2013 and decrease the number of women to 53,05%. The university did not meet the target for race because the number of employees had increased, but nevertheless had made steady progress in increasing the employment of black employees. It also did not meet the target for women employees.

One area where the NWU has to apply considerably more effort is disability. In 2013, a total of 22 employees with disabilities were registered with the university. This works out at 0,70% of the total permanent workforce, against the national average of 1,4%, according to the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE)'s Annual Report for 2012/13.

Closing the gaps in student access and success

The undergraduate pass rate of 85% in 2013 was

made up of 81% for black students and 88% for white students, and this gap had to be closed. Similarly, there was still a difference in the dropout and graduation rate between black and white students, and this also needed to be reduced as part of transformation.

Council noted on 21 June 2013 that the higher drop-out rates at the Vaal Triangle and Mafikeng campuses could mainly be attributed to the intake of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The reasons for these students dropping out included difficulties with finance, adaptation and preparedness, lack of career guidance at school and personal reasons. Council further noted that students who stayed in residences performed better but that poorer students could not afford this option.²¹

The university was addressing these issues from many angles, including providing additional student financial aid, building and upgrading student residences, extending academic support and introducing more foundational programmes.



▲ Institutional SRC for 2012 – 2013 and Dr Eloff, 17 May 2013²²

For the 2013 financial year, an amount of R575,9 million in student financial aid was administered by the financial aid offices on the three campuses. This consisted of R144,2 million from the university's own funding, R246,6 million in government funding and approximately R185 million from external funding sources. Undergraduate students received the bulk of the funding, about R461 million.

The provision of foundational programmes was substantially expanded after the NWU successfully applied to the DHET in 2012 to offer 43 extended programmes in the foundational provision funding cycle that commenced in 2013. Thirty-four of these programmes were presented at the Mafikeng Campus and seven at the Vaal Triangle Campus. In all, 2 401 students were enrolled for extended programmes in 2013, including 921 first-time entering students.

Another programme introduced to address student attrition and enable readiness among school leavers was the University Preparatory Programme (UNIVPREP). This distance learning programme is for students who had just missed the admission requirements to prepare for admission the following year. In 2013, there were 120 learners on the programme, which was in the second year of a three-year pilot project.²³

The Mafikeng Campus introduced an innovative Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme as an intervention strategy in a third-year logistics module (LMNM 311) with 123 students. The pass rate increased from 32% for an informal class test, and 38% for the first semester test to 92% for a second opportunity first test and 63% for the second semester test. The final throughput (success rate) for the module was 85%.

Upholding human rights

Under the leadership of Adv Rehana Rawat, the NWU Human Rights Committee successfully dealt with all reported cases of alleged human rights violations. A human rights workshop was held on 17 September 2013 on disabilities in the workplace.

To promote human rights among students and employees alike, the Vice-Chancellor, Campus Rectors and Student Deans held a workshop on 23 October 2013.

Vice-Chancellor prepares to hand over the reins

On 20 November, the *Beeld* newspaper asked the rhetorical question if it were possible that the NWU could “cross its Rubicon” with the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor.²⁴ Two days later, the NWU Council approved the appointment of Prof Dan Kgwadi as the new Vice-Chancellor as from 1 June 2014.²⁵



▲ Prof Dan Kgwadi, previously Rector of the Mafikeng Campus and from 1 June 2014, Vice-Chancellor of the NWU ²⁶

At the same meeting, Council noted that the first five-year term of the Chancellor, Kgosi Leruo T Molotlegi, would expire on 19 June 2014. Council unanimously re-appointed Kgosi Molotlegi for a second term of five years.²⁷

Council made several other senior leadership appointments: Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, would serve as Vice-Principal with effect of 1 January 2014, and Prof Marlene Verhoef, the Executive Advisor: Strategies and Projects in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, was appointed as the Institutional Registrar,²⁸ for a period of six years as from 1 January 2014.²⁹

16.2 The warmth of summer

While weathering the challenges around the pace of transformation, the university achieved some of the best results yet in its core business.

Total research output increased again, taking the NWU to sixth place in the country.

As shown in the next table, which looks at the university's research performance from 2004 to 2013, there were substantial increases in article equivalents published, NRF ratings, master's and doctoral degrees awarded and postdoctoral fellowships.

Research performance, 2004 to 2013³¹

Research output	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Article equivalents	272	318	352	358	471	409	511	653	791	1061
Conference proceedings	3	8	8	13	18	34	43	84	50	126
Books	0	0	2	5	13	5	24	36	28	40
Total article equivalents published	275	326	361	376	503	448	589	734	869	1227
Number of NRF-rated researchers	73	85	82	95	103	116	117	125	140	169
Master's degrees conferred	626	700	765	618	583	659	633	639	670	781
Research master's	262	293	384	313	281	369	353	365	462	506
Research master's weighted	262	293	384	313	281	369	353	365	462	506
Doctoral degrees conferred	87	82	110	124	100	123	129	115	154	168
Doctoral degrees weighted	261	246	330	372	300	369	387	345	462	504
Total weighted research output	798	865	1074	1061	1083	1186	1318	1483	1793	2237
Postdoctoral fellows	9	17	18	34	38	48	69	89	118	140

Teaching-learning at the university was vibrant and thriving. As the next table shows, total enrolments had leapt from just over 40 000 in 2004 to above 60 000 in 2013. Over the same period, the undergraduate pass rate increased from 75,2% in 2004 to 85,1% in 2013.

The graduation rate fluctuated somewhat but was holding steady at 25%, comparing favourably with other universities. A notable achievement was the 15 464 degrees and diplomas awarded in 2013.

Total enrolments³²

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total student enrolment	40 145	38 596	38 709	44 726	47 008	50 589	55 732	56 641	58 752	60 975
Undergraduate pass rate (contact and distance)	75,20%	78,80%	78,36%	79,48%	81,20%	83,6%	83,5%	85,2%	88,2%	85,1%
Total degrees and diplomas awarded	9 657	7 746	9 825	11 345	12 337	13 445	15 083	15 904	14 669	15 464
Graduation rate	24%	20%	25%	25%	26%	27%	27%	27%	25%	25%

2013: first things first

The year 2013 also stood out for the many firsts that the university achieved. These milestones included becoming the first university in Africa to receive a Quaquarelli Symonds (QS) rating and holding its first alumni awards.

The NWU aspires to being ranked as one of the world's top 500 higher education institutions and, to this end, participated in the first cycle of the QS rating process for 2013. The university was awarded a three-star rating and became the first university in Africa to be rated in this way.

The rating covered a number of categories, including teaching, for which the NWU received two stars, employability (three stars), research (two stars), internationalisation (three stars), facilities (four stars), engagement (three stars), innovation (five stars) and Specialist (two stars) in Life Sciences and Medicine. Between June and December 2013, the NWU engaged in ongoing dialogue with the QS Audit Division with the aim of correcting certain scores in the initial evaluation.

First alumni awards held

The NWU held its first alumni awards at an awards ceremony held in Sandton, Johannesburg, on 10 September 2013. The university paid tribute to 10 top alumni who have helped shape the country. They were:

- Mr FW de Klerk, former State President, Lifetime Achievement Award (Potchefstroom Campus alumnus)
- Justice Bess Nkabinde, Judge of the Constitutional Court (Mafikeng Campus)
- Dr Bismark Tyobeka, CEO of the National Nuclear Regulator (Mafikeng Campus)

- Judge Yvonne Mokgoro, former Judge of the Constitutional Court (Mafikeng Campus)
- Mr De la Rey Venter, Vice-President of Shell Upstream International (Potchefstroom Campus)
- Dr Johan van Zyl, President of Toyota SA Motors (Potchefstroom Campus)
- Prof TT Cloete, acclaimed Linguist (Potchefstroom Campus)
- Mr Eric Bukasa Ntumba, Corporate Manager of the Commercial Bank Congo (Vaal Triangle Campus)
- Prof Johann Coetzee, Industrial and Consulting Psychologist (Vaal Triangle Campus)
- Mr Maans Pretorius, President of Seadrift Coke, USA (Vaal Triangle Campus)³³

First environmental legal compliance audit

The first step in monitoring the university's environmental impact was to conduct an environmental legal compliance audit on all NWU campuses in 2012. The final report was finalised at the end of February 2013 and included recommendations for rectifying infringements and a proposed implementation plan. After approval from Institutional Management in April 2013, various initiatives were incorporated into the management of waste and dangerous products across all campuses.

The focus on greening saw the NWU investing R350 000 on each campus for recycling and electricity-saving campaigns. Green committees were formed on each campus and the student residences competed for prizes as incentives to stimulate awareness about energy saving. The three campuses saved a total of R2 086 614, 51 between May and October 2013.



▲ Illustrious alumni, 10 September 2013³⁴

Energy-saving initiatives were built into the infrastructure projects undertaken. For example, energy-saving show-erheads were installed in new and upgraded student residences, along with energy-efficient lighting. Solar geyser systems were installed in all new and upgraded buildings, and central air conditioning was provided wherever possible. The new Pharmacy and Biological Science building on the Potchefstroom Campus was designed using green principles.

Commitment to integrated reporting

The NWU committed itself to an integrated report process that would include the integration of social, economic and environmental impacts. To comply with global guidelines, the university joined the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Focal Point in Africa.

A process of stakeholder engagement was completed in November 2013 to determine stakeholders' views of the relative importance of the economic, environmental and social aspects of integrated reporting.

16.3 Other highlights of 2013

Supplemental Instruction surges: Supplemental Instruction (SI) was in demand across all three campuses, covering 63% of at-risk modules on the Vaal Triangle Campus, 37% on the Potchefstroom Campus

and 33% on the Mafikeng Campus. A total of 32 312 SI sessions were held, almost half of them at the Mafikeng Campus.

eFundi usage rises: During the year, 78% of contact students at the NWU made use of eFundi, the electronic learning management system. More than 85% of modules at the NWU are available on eFundi, which has an average of 2 000 simultaneous student users every day.

Website content in three languages: The website had 14 025 published pages, of which 6 255 were in English, 4 925 in Afrikaans and 2 572 in Setswana. This is a complex web site because of its size, number of tools used, and most of all, the implementation of three official languages.

Wealth of e-knowledge: Following a comprehensive stocktaking exercise at all three campuses, it was established that the NWU had access to approximately 7 000 e-books and was subscribed to 872 electronic journals and 95 electronic databases, giving it access to about 39 000 additional electronic journal titles.

Biggest bandwidth user: After six years, all campuses of the NWU were linked into the SANREN backbone at a minimum capacity of one gigabit per second. The NWU consumes the largest volume of internet bandwidth of

all universities in South Africa. The SANREN project, which provides internet services to all South African universities, is a Meraka/TENET project, which is largely funded by the Department of Science and Technology.

Laptop initiative takes off: The Student Laptop Initiative was in its second year and was renamed as the Student Technology Programme. Tablets were added in 2013. Over 5 500 laptops and tablets have been sold and NWU was one of two universities who took part in this initiative.

Email flow is strong: GroupWise, the email and calendaring solution of the NWU, is one of the most widely and intensively used solutions. Each day approximately 100 000 messages enter the university and 17 000 leave. This is over and above the hundreds of thousands of emails that flow internally every day.

Kuali mobile app launched: Thanks to its involvement in the Kuali Mobile project, the NWU successfully implemented a stable, cross-platform mobile application at a fraction of the cost of commercially available frameworks, while also having a significant voice in the future development of Kuali Mobile.

Enrolment planning approved: The Ministry of Higher Education and Training approved the enrolment plan and performance targets for the NWU. Targets for the head count totals were allowed to increase from 50 589 in 2009 to 62 551 in 2013, which represents an average annual increase of 5,4% between 2009 and 2013.

Unit for Open Distance Learning launched: Previously, Education Sciences was the only faculty using open distance learning for teaching-learning. This changed in January 2013 when the NWU opened its Unit for Open Distance Learning (UODL). The new unit would deliver open distance programmes for three faculties, namely Education Sciences, Theology and Health Sciences. It would also deliver various short courses and the University Preparatory Programme (UNIVPREP).

Awards for teaching excellence extended:³⁵ The awards presented in 2013 were spread across three categories: Emerging Teaching Excellence Award (ETEA), Teaching Excellence Award (ITEA) and Distinguished Teaching Excellence Award (EDTE). A total of 55 lecturers received teaching excellence awards in 2013.

Rapport Top Lecturer Awards held: For the fourth consecutive year, students in each of the 15 faculties of the NWU voted for the lecturer who inspired them the most. There were 14 winners in 2013 and each received a cash prize of R50 000, sponsored by the *Rapport* newspaper. On the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses, close to 60% of students voted in 2013. Negotiations were underway with the Mafikeng Campus management to improve student participation there.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL):³⁷ An amount of R1 million in strategic funding was allocated to support the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) initiative. As a result, R350 000 was allocated to the Mafikeng Campus, R400 000 to the Potchefstroom Campus, R150 000 to the Vaal Triangle Campus and R100 000 to the Institutional Office.

The annual SoTL conference was held from 19 to 21 November 2013, with the theme “*The university in the 21st century: cultivating inquiry-driven students*”. The guest speakers were Distinguished Professor Clifton Conrad from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the USA, and Dr Melissa Layne from the American Public University System.

Part of the HEQC pilot project: In 2013, the NWU became part of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) pilot project to refine the system for submitting academic programme alignment documentation. Discussions were held with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) on the naming of doctoral qualifications and the implications for Higher Education Quality Sub-Framework (HEQSF) alignment.

External evaluations conducted: During 2013, a total of 21 external scholars from Canada, Germany, India, Kenya, the Netherlands, Nigeria and the United Kingdom participated in external academic programme evaluations. Four scholars employed in industry took part in evaluations as panel members.

External evaluations were conducted on the BA Hons Art History (Potchefstroom Campus); BA Communication (Mafikeng Campus); MA/MSc Research Psychology (Potchefstroom Campus) and the BCom Information Systems (Mafikeng Campus). A follow-up evaluation was conducted for English as a subject on the Mafikeng Campus.

Other programme evaluations conducted in 2013 included:

- The HEQC’s national review of the Bachelor’s degree in Social Work, which involved all three campuses of the NWU.
- The review and accreditation visit of the UK-based Association of Masters in Business Administration (AMBA), which reviewed the MBA offered at the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses.
- The accreditation visit of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), resulting in full accreditation of the Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering at the Potchefstroom Campus.
- The second aligned internal programme evaluation was conducted across the three

campuses for the BEd (Hons.) in two of the curricula or programmes offered as part of this qualification.

- The first aligned internal programme evaluation was conducted for the BCom programme for Chartered Accountants.

Research and innovation clusters explored: A start was made in forming two potential research and innovation clusters (Bio-Economy and Digital Humanities). A Regional Innovation Structure, the North-West Technology Innovation Office, was conceptualised to support the innovation clusters and four Innovation Specialists were recruited. These positions are being financially supported by the National Intellectual Property Management Organisation for a period of three years.

MRC flagship project awarded: In a major boost for Health Sciences research, the NWU was awarded funding for a Medical Research Council Flagship Project entitled, “*Development to the Clinical Phase of Oxidant and Redox Drug Combinations for Treatment of Malaria, TB and Related Diseases (MALTB REDOX)*”.

New research entities approved: In 2013, two new research entities were approved for 2014, both on the Potchefstroom Campus. One was a new niche area in the Faculty of Arts and was called Visual Narratives and Creative Outputs through Interdisciplinary and Practice-led Research. The other was a new research focus area in the Faculty of Education Sciences, Self-Directed Learning and Technology Enhanced Learning (SDL and TEL).

The NWU research entities as at 31 December 2013 are presented in the following table.³⁸

NWU research entities	
Research niche areas	Faculty/campus
Food Security and Safety in the North-West Province	Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Mafikeng Campus
Medicine Usage in South Africa (MUSA)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Multilingual Speech Technologies (MuST)	Economic Sciences, Vaal Triangle Campus
Musical Arts in South Africa : Resources and Applications (MASARA)	Arts, Potchefstroom Campus
Population and Health	Humanities, Mafikeng Campus
Trade and Development (TRADE)	Economic Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Research focus areas	
Chemical Resource Beneficiation	Natural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Enabling optimal expression of individual, social and institutional potential (OPTENTIA)	Humanities, Vaal Triangle Campus
Hypertension in Africa Research Team (HART)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Material Science Innovation and Modelling (MaSIM)	Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Mafikeng Campus
Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation (PhASRec)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Quality in Nursing and Midwifery (INSINQ)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Social Transformation	Arts, Potchefstroom Campus
Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society (TREES)	Economic Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Understanding and Processing Language in Complex Settings (UPSET)	Humanities, Vaal Triangle Campus

Research units	
Unit for Business Mathematics and Informatics	Natural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Research Unit : Development in the South African Constitutional State	Law, Potchefstroom Campus
Education and Human Rights in Diversity (Edu-HRights)	Education, Potchefstroom Campus
Unit for Energy System	Engineering, Potchefstroom Campus
Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management	Natural Science, Potchefstroom Campus
Unit for Language and Literature in the South African Context	Arts, Potchefstroom Campus
Unit for Reformed Theology and the Development of the SA Society	Theology, Potchefstroom Campus
Africa Unit for Trans-disciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Workwell: Research Unit for Economic and Management Sciences	Economic Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Research centres of excellence	
Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Centre of Excellence for Pharmaceutical Sciences (PharMaCen)	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Centre for Space Research	Natural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Hosted entities (centres, platforms and institutes)	
Centre for Human Metabonomics	Natural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
DST HySA Infrastructure Centre of Competence in Hydrogen production, storage, reticulation and safety codes and standards	Natural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
DST/NWU Pre-Clinical Drug Development Platform	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
The DTI Centre for Advanced Manufacturing	Engineering, Potchefstroom Campus
The DST Centre of Excellence in Indigenous Knowledge Systems	Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Mafikeng Campus
Commercial research entities	
Centre for Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Services	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Research NRF Chairs	Campus
Astrophysics and Space Physics	Natural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus
Coal Research	Engineering, Potchefstroom Campus
Biofuels and other clean alternative fuels	Engineering, Potchefstroom Campus
Nuclear Energy	Engineering, Potchefstroom Campus
Early Detection and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in SA	Health Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus

16.4 Lessons from 2013

While the year 2013 was one of the toughest and most controversial since the NWU's inception in 2004, it taught the university community some valuable lessons for the future. One was that an organisation with sound fundamentals, especially good governance structures

and solid leadership, can weather any storm. Another was that criticism is just as critical to an organisation's development as positive feedback and praise. Thirdly, no matter how challenging the circumstances might be, a successful organisation keeps working towards its goals and objectives, delivering results regardless.



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CHAPTER 17

Ten years on: ringing in the changes

17. The year 2014

17.1. Taking stock

On 1 January 2014, the NWU was officially 10 years old. Turning 10 was cause for celebration and, at the same time, an opportunity to take stock of the road travelled since the merger in January 2004. There were times when that road was smooth and times when it was rocky, as was the case at the start of 2014 itself.

On 27 January 2014, the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria ordered that the temporary interdict granted to the NWU against the Higher Education Transformation Network (HETN) should remain in place.¹ Judge John Murphy said the interim interdict would stand until final adjudication in the matter and the granting of a cost order. The reason was that the HETN had had more than six months to deal with the issue but had done nothing.²

Meanwhile, the university honoured the commitments made after the tragic death in January 2012 of Mr Thabang Makhoang, a first-year student who had drowned in a swimming pool on the Potchefstroom Campus.

In tribute to the late Mr Makhoang, the NWU had facilitated the establishment of the Thabang Makhoang Community Bursary Fund for disadvantaged students from Wolmaransstad, Mr Makhoang's home town. One bursary recipient was already benefiting from the fund and was enrolled at the Vaal Triangle Campus.

The NWU had also commissioned the building of a house for Ms Sanna Makhoang, mother of the late Mr Makhoang, and her daughter Kamogelo. The house was officially handed over on 10 February 2014.

Prof Dan Kgwadi, who on 1 April 2014 succeeded Dr Theuns Eloff as Vice-Chancellor of the university, visited Ms Makhoang during April 2014 to stay in touch with the Makhoang family and to keep them informed of the progress with the bursary fund.

17.2. Initiation allegations provoke outcry

Meanwhile, a bombshell had burst on the Potchefstroom Campus. On 21 February 2014, the *Beeld* newspaper devoted four pages to allegations that some students on the campus had used the Nazi "Sieg heil" salute during an initiation ceremony, causing a national outcry that drew in people from all walks of life and ideologies.³ Later on, the editor of *Beeld* published a plea for wisdom and urged role players to seek the best solution.⁴



▲ The so-called Nazi salute at Potchefstroom, February 2014⁵

North West Premier Ms Thandi Modise expressed her shock at the reports that students on the Potchefstroom Campus had used the Nazi salute, saying "As South Africans, we have come a long way, indeed almost 20 years to the day to bury the sceptre of racism and ethnicity in all its manifestations."⁶

Mr Hendrik Makanjeta, HETN spokesperson, demanded that the entire management of the NWU be immediately relieved of their duties and asked the Minister of Higher Education and Training to urgently appoint an administrator to take over the management of the university. "We are happy to be vindicated by the graphic evidence which was initially published by the *Beeld* newspaper as we have been repeatedly asserting that there is proliferation of racist practices taking place at the NWU Potchefstroom campus and in the workplace of the same institution," the HETN said in a statement.⁷

President Jacob Zuma also expressed his shock over the reports.⁸ Many people loyal to the NWU-PUK heritage expressed their concerns in the media and social media,⁹ while others proposed that Afrikaners should boycott *Beeld*.¹⁰

17.3. Council acts swiftly

The NWU Council moved swiftly to deal with this crisis. Its Executive Committee (EXCO) had been informed on 20 February 2014 about the issues around the reception and introduction programme and the suspension of 18 student leaders on the house committees of two student residences on the Potchefstroom Campus.¹¹

The NWU said in a press statement on 21 February that the university would take strong action against any Nazi-related displays at its Potchefstroom Campus.¹² EXCO then held an extraordinary meeting on 24 February to discuss the reception and introduction practices on NWU campuses, which it viewed in a very serious light.¹³ An extraordinary meeting of the full Council was scheduled for the earliest possible date, 5 March 2014.¹⁴

Council chairperson Mr Peet van der Walt said after the EXCO meeting that EXCO was not proud of the reception and introduction programmes.¹⁵ EXCO noted the strategies that the management of the Potchefstroom Campus had proposed to manage the situation in the interim.¹⁶ First, the Campus Rector planned to start a blog to encourage debate with internal stakeholders. The campus would then establish a committee, chaired by an independent expert, to discuss the issues and suggestions raised in the blog, come up with other issues and suggestions, and make recommendations to management. In addition, the campus would appoint an industrial psychologist in the office of the Dean of Students to assist student structures with issues related to the saluting incident and with student discipline in general.¹⁷

After the EXCO meeting, the NWU issued a media statement setting out the agenda for the upcoming Council meeting. The agenda revolved around the report that the NWU had submitted to the Ministry, the internal disciplinary reports on the alleged human rights violations that had occurred, the statement from the Department of Higher Education and Training, and supporting documentation.¹⁸

EXCO also approved a seven-page report from NWU management, which had been submitted to the Minister on 24 February.¹⁹ In this report, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Theuns Eloff, discussed the reception and introduction practices at the NWU and Potchefstroom Campus, the so-called “*initiation practices, the Pukke salute*”, and the way forward for the university’s reception and introduction programmes.²⁰

On 25 February, Mr Gwebinkundla Qonde, director-general of the DHET, issued a press release expressing concern about the orientation activities reported in *Beeld*. Although the department acknowledged the NWU’s apology for any offence the activities may have caused, Mr Qonde said: “*Such practices are not at all innocent and can only be characterised as unacceptable practices where the use of gestures associated with Nazism are shunned upon throughout the world and are relics of a time which symbolised oppression, persecution and some of the worst atrocities committed in human history.*”²¹

Dr Eloff acknowledged the DHET’s press release, assured staff that management was handling the situation with the utmost urgency, and explained the process that the EXCO of Council was following.²² Two days later, Dr Eloff appealed to the NWU staff to remain calm and to give management the opportunity to deal with the situation.²³

In March 2014, Council appointed an independent investigative task team to look into the initiation controversy on the Potchefstroom Campus. The task team comprised Dr Leon Wessels (convenor), Dr Bismark Tyobeka, Prof Somadoda Fikeni and Advocate Rehana Rawat. The task team completed the investigation in May 2014, and Council submitted its report to the Minister of Higher Education and Training on 26 June 2014.²⁴

As a result of the findings of the independent investigative task team, a new first-year reception and introduction programme was approved for 2015, emphasising human rights and diversity training.

However, the storm over the Nazi-style salute and human rights violations on the Potchefstroom Campus triggered a change in the top leadership of the university.

17.4. Vice-Chancellor offers to step down

The Nazi salute incident led to the resignation of Dr Eloff.²⁵ On 5 March 2014, the Council chairperson, Mr Peet van der Walt, announced that Council had accepted the offer from Dr Eloff to step down as Vice-Chancellor on 31 March 2014, enabling Prof Dan Kgwadi to assume his duties on 1 April 2014 (instead of 1 June). This would allow Dr Eloff to complete a few outstanding tasks during March, while enabling Prof Kgwadi to take full responsibility of the NWU as Vice-Chancellor.

Dr Eloff said he had stepped down of his own accord to allow his successor, Prof Kgwadi, to tackle the initiation matter without delay. “*It makes much sense to let the man who will be at the helm for the next six years to take the bull by the horns.*”²⁶

Mr van der Walt responded as follows: “*The mammoth role which the outgoing vice-chancellor has played in making this merger a success will go down in history books as one of the most applaudable interventions by a single individual.*” He added that 10 years before, a group of courageous people had taken a great leap of faith when they established the NWU. Leading this group was Dr Theuns Eloff, the right person at the right time and place. In the NWU’s first decade, he had inspired the internal audiences of the NWU and also instilled confidence in the hearts of external stakeholders such as alumni, business partners and peers.²⁷

During the months of April and May 2014, Dr Eloff facilitated the handover to Prof Kgwadi in respect of certain external stakeholders, such as donors, business leaders and alumni. The farewell functions for Dr Eloff on the three campuses and the Institutional Office were scheduled during May 2014, as was the overall farewell function.²⁸

Dr Eloff concluded his tenure by saying that his 12-year relationship with the NWU had been an honour and a privilege. *“I am indebted to the University Council and Institutional Management for their trust and support, and to the entire staff for their caring and commitment. This university is in excellent hands.”*²⁹

17.5. Zero tolerance on initiation

Both Dr Eloff and the incoming Vice-Chancellor, Prof Kgwadi, made it clear that initiation practices were off limits at the NWU.

On 7 March 2014, Dr Eloff had issued a strongly worded message to all students and staff to give effect to the request of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande. He placed it on record that any form of initiation or initiation practices at any of the NWU’s three campuses was strictly forbidden and that no infringements of human rights at the NWU would be tolerated. Dr Eloff reiterated that preventing and reporting such practices was part of the responsibility of all relevant line managers, staff, house parents and student representative bodies.³⁰

Following this request, the staff and students of the Potchefstroom Campus held a frank and highly constructive forum on initiation practices.³¹

In an interview soon after taking up the position of Vice-Chancellor, Prof Kgwadi said he would follow a zero tolerance approach towards bad practices during the reception and introduction programmes on NWU campuses.³²

17.6. Students make their voices heard

In support of diversity and the Constitution, and against what they called misconceptions created about transformation on their campus, about 3 000 students from the Potchefstroom Campus held a protest march on 24 July 2014.³⁴ The Campus Student Representative Council presented a memorandum to Prof Dan Kgwadi, the Vice-Chancellor, to say they felt excluded from decisions affecting the institution:

“Once and for all, understand that we support the Constitution of the RSA not initiation! We hold as precious a commodity modelled upon the constitutional



▲ Prof Dan Kgwadi³³



▲ Prof Dan Kgwadi addressing students at the Potchefstroom Campus, 24 July 2014³⁷

*values of equality, freedom and human dignity. We confirm that we subscribe to these values and that we want to feel we are being treated by management in accordance with these same values. We demand effective transformation that will ensure the continued existence of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction on the Potchefstroom Campus within a multilingual and multi-cultural context, taking into account the demography of the Afrikaans-speaking population.”*³⁵

Mr Janco Jordaan, chairperson of the SRC also requested that a forum be established within 10 days, comprising the Vice-Chancellor and students’ representatives.

Prof Kgwadi responded by saying that he wanted to encourage robust debate, so that management could hear the voices of all interested parties.³⁶

HETN director Mr Hendrick Makaneta issued a statement, criticising the students' memorandum as a "sad indictment of the level of indoctrination" at the Potchefstroom Campus. "It is almost unthinkable that right-wing students should show their ignorance, insensitivity and prejudice so openly. It is clear that this strange document did not really originate from a student

body with valid concerns. It is more likely the product of stakeholders who are using right-wing students to make a public statement that will strengthen conservative interests."³⁸

While dealing with the crisis on the Potchefstroom Campus, the university continued to pay close attention to strengthening its core business of teaching-learning and research. Student enrolments reached an all-time high in 2014, as did research output. The next two tables show the gains made over the years.

17.7. Student enrolment, 2008 - 2014

Students enrolled per campus³⁹

Campus		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
		2008-12	2009-12	2010-12	2011-12	2012-12	2013-12	2014-02
Potchefstroom	Contact	15 875	16 953	17 867	18 783	19 632	20 284	19 382
	Distance	19 299	21 307	24 098	23 111	22 708	23 492	27 619
	Subtotal	35 174	38 260	41 965	41 894	42 338	43 776	47 001
Vaal Triangle	Contact	3 232	3 660	4 334	5 816	6 040	6 442	6 086
	Distance	512	846	879	350	117	71	243
	Subtotal	3 744	4 506	5 213	5 536	6 157	6 513	6 329
Mafikeng	Contact	6 633	6 340	7 042	7 694	8 715	9 463	9 138
	Distance	1 457	1 583	1 512	1 517	1 542	1 245	976
	Subtotal	8 090	7 823	8 554	9 211	10 257	10 708	10 114
Total		47 008	50 589	55 732	56 641	58 752	60 997	63 444

Gains in research output since 2004⁴⁰

Research output	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Article equivalents	272	318	352	358	471	409	511	653	790	1169	981
Conference proceedings	3	8	8	13	18	34	43	84	98	120	116
Books	0	0	2	5	13	5	24	36	56	40	43
Total article equivalents published	275	326	361	376	503	448	578	773	944	1 206	1 140
Number of NRF-rated researchers	73	85	82	95	103	116	117	125	140	172	190
Master's degrees conferred	626	700	765	618	583	659	633	639	670	781	746
Research master's	262	293	384	313	281	369	353	365	462	506	506
Research master's weighted	262	293	384	313	281	369	353	365	462	506	506
Doctoral degrees conferred	87	82	110	124	100	123	129	115	154	168	171
Doctoral degrees weighted	261	246	330	372	300	369	387	345	462	504	513
Total research output	798	865	1 074	1 061	1 083	1 186	1 318	1 483	1 868	2 180	2 160
Postdoctoral fellows	9	17	18	34	38	48	69	89	114	148	164

Meanwhile, the university continued to strengthen its leadership capabilities, invest in the best infrastructure and facilities for staff and students, and extend its national and international collaborative networks.

17.8. First woman rector at Mafikeng Campus

Before taking over the reins of the university, Prof Kgwadi was the Rector of the Mafikeng Campus – a key position in the running of the NWU. To succeed him, Council approved the appointment of Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele, then the Vice-Rector for teaching-learning and research at the Mafikeng Campus.⁴¹

Commenting on her selection and appointment, Mr van der Walt, the Council chairperson, said the level of competence of all candidates for the position had been extremely high and Council had full confidence in its choice. He emphasised that the new Rector would play a vital role in the university's continuing efforts to position itself as a leading university.

Prof Davhana-Maselesele took over as Rector on 1 April 2014 for a six-year term – becoming the first woman to lead the Mafikeng Campus.

Her appointment was widely welcomed. Ms Thandi Modise, Premier of the North West Province, said: “As reflected by the strides that the university has made despite the challenge of slow pace of transformation, 20 years of democracy has advanced us towards non-racialism and non-sexism.”⁴²

As the outgoing Rector and incoming NWU Vice-Chancellor, Prof Kgwadi expressed his confidence in his successor at the Mafikeng Campus, saying, “*I know that the campus will be in safe and capable hands and that the campus management will support her wholeheartedly.*”⁴³

17.9. Accolades for excellence

Many staff members, research units and students also excelled in their fields during 2014, bringing accolades to the university. These are just a few examples.

In mid-September 2014, Prof Wilma Viviers of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus was awarded a prestigious World Trade Organisation (WTO) Chair. In this capacity, she will help strengthen knowledge and understanding of the trading system among academics, citizens and policy makers in the North-West Province and South Africa.⁴⁴

In the field of nursing, Ms Boitumelo Molato, a lecturer in Nursing Sciences at the Mafikeng Campus, won the North West provincial award and was a national finalist for the prestigious Marilyn Nehana award. Named after one of South Africa's top nurses, this award recognises

the indispensable role of nurses in direct patient care and caring.⁴⁵

During 2014, the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) received a commendation in the “Excellent teacher” category of the HELTASA/CHE Excellence in Teaching Awards to Mr Herman Viviers, a senior lecturer from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences from the Potchefstroom Campus.⁴⁶

Prof Klaus Kellner of the School of Biological Sciences on the Potchefstroom Campus was selected as one of only 20 experts worldwide to serve on the Science and Policy Interface (SPI) committee of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). With his expertise in land degradation and desertification, he represents South Africa and the African continent on this committee.⁴⁷

Students from the Mafikeng Campus excelled in the 2014 Famelab competition, held in collaboration with the British Council, Jive Media and South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement. Two students from the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, Kgomotso Mohatalle and Raven Motsewabangwe, won the campus leg of the competition, and attended the national Famelab semi-finals in March 2014. Raven Motsewabangwe was the overall winner and represented South Africa in the UK in June 2014.⁴⁸

Five students from different faculties on the Potchefstroom Campus took part in an international hydrogen science competition hosted by the American-based Hydrogen Education Foundation Student Design Contest. The NWU students, who were competing against other multidisciplinary teams of students from around the world, received international recognition for their modern hydrogen fuelling station design.⁴⁹

Growth in collaboration

As the university's international profile has grown, so has the number of collaborative agreements with institutions beyond South Africa's borders. In 2014, there were 161 contracts with international institutions on register, compared to 88 in 2013.⁵⁰

Some of the agreements signed during 2014 broke new ground for the university's international portfolio. An example was the comprehensive Consortium Agreement with five foreign universities for the joint presentation of doctoral degrees in Law. To be known as the EDOLAD, this programme will in time lead to joint supervision agreements with individual candidates from all participating institutions.

Open and distance learning is an invaluable way to extend access to higher education programmes. In

2014, the NWU's Unit for Open Distance Learning (UODL) entered into a collaboration agreement with the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BODOCOL) for the delivery of certain academic programmes by way of distance learning. Similarly, the UODL concluded a memorandum of understanding with the Bindura University of Science Education of Zimbabwe. The parties aim to collaborate in promoting science and mathematics teacher education programmes and in enhancing teacher education through virtual and open distance learning delivery.

On 26 May 2014, the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Centre on the Mafikeng Campus held the first stakeholders' workshop on ethnomedicine. The aim of the workshop was to establish the indigenous knowledge associated with rural communities' use of plants for treating and controlling human and animal diseases.⁵¹ The workshop was one of the fruits of a partnership between the IKS Centre and four external partners, including the South African National Traditional Health Forum, for cooperation in the field of Ethnomedicine.⁵²

The university continued to be involved in the Namibian-South African bid to locate the new Cherenkov Telescope Array (CTA) at a Namibian site. A member of the university's Legal Services team has been involved as the NRF representative on the bid.

Sign of the times

Sign language interpreting is opening up new possibilities for the NWU and its students. In 2014, a Deaf second-year student, Mr Qobo Ningiza, had his classes in BA Law interpreted for him in South African Sign Language. This was the first time that the university had been able to assist a student in this way.⁵³

While the NWU has up to now not received many study applications from people in the Deaf community, this could change soon with the recognition of SA Sign Language as a qualifying language for university admission (and hopefully eventually as an official language).

Intellectual property grows in value

The NWU's intellectual property (IP) portfolio is in a healthy state and is an asset to the university. In 2014, the portfolio had 53 RSA-patented inventions, 21 of which were registered in a total of 47 countries.

At this stage, the NWU receives the highest subsidy (both in total and as a percentage of funds spent) from the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO). During 2014 an amount of R2 171 664 was received as subsidy for expenditure in 2013.

Three new licensing agreements were concluded during 2014, bringing the total number of active licencing agreements to 19. These yielded a gross income of

R1 440 408 from product sales based on own IP, in addition to a royalty income of R854 355 (representing cumulative income of R2 294 763 based on IP and royalties). Should the anticipated NIPMO subsidy for 2014 be realised, the NWU will soon reach the point where income from IP exceeds the costs of establishing IP. This would place the NWU in a very strategic position for the future.

17.10. Better, more modern facilities

Every year since the inception of the NWU in 2004, significant investments have been made in modernising and improving the university's facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of staff and students. 2014 was no exception.⁵⁴

On the Mafikeng Campus, the total investment in infrastructure, facilities and capital works in 2014 on this campus amounted to R74,62 million.

Two new residence complexes were completed and the Sedibeng Residence was upgraded, increasing the on-campus capacity by 486 beds. The construction of the second phase of the new Science Complex was finalised and the new Nursing Building's construction commenced. Two large Physics laboratories were refurbished and funds were committed for the upgrading of the Great Hall and the Health Centre.

On the Potchefstroom Campus, the total expenditure on infrastructure, facilities and capital works amounted to R130,20 million in 2014.

The construction of a new Pharmacy building, funded by the DHET Infrastructure and Efficiency Fund, continued in 2014 and will be completed in 2015. The new building for Biological Sciences, which the NWU is funding at a cost of R120 million, was also under construction, with an expected completion date in 2016. Four buildings were fitted with disability lifts, making them more accessible to people with disabilities.

The first phase of the refurbishment of the Library was completed in 2014 and included the establishment of a new Research Commons. Spaces were refurbished in the Chemistry and Physics departments to accommodate research groups. Another major project was the upgrading of the Over de Voor men's residence, making accommodation available for 112 more students.

In May 2014, the Vaal Triangle Campus opened its Learning and Research Commons, representing a multi-year investment of R70 million. The Commons houses the library, academic development and support, student counselling, IT support, reading and writing centres, and the newly established South African Water History Archival Repository (SAWHAR).

Work started on the construction of a new building for African Languages, and a new building was constructed to house the Kaizer Chiefs Innovation Centre. The building previously housing the library was upgraded for the School of Information Technology, and the campus's electrical infrastructure was upgraded. All in all, R19,94 million was spent on infrastructure, facilities and capital works on the Vaal Triangle Campus during 2014.

Financial first

In 2014, the university completed preparations for the biggest financial system change since 2006, when all three campuses and the institutional office adopted an integrated financial system, Oracle. The imminent switch to the Quali Financial System (KFS), due to be fully functional early in January 2015, has many advantages for the university, such as significantly lower total cost of ownership and sizeable savings as no licence fees are payable. Designed by universities for universities, the new system is also expected to improve the internal controls for processing payments, thus helping to curb fraud. During 2014, in preparation for the switch-over to the Quali Financial System – a first for a South African university – approximately 800 finance end-users were trained by identified super-users on the campuses.⁵⁵

Chancellor starts a second term

The Chancellor of the university, Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi, King of the Royal Bafokeng Nation, was reinstalled for a second term on 26 September 2014. This was also the day on which Prof Dan Kgwadi was inaugurated as Vice-Chancellor of the NWU.⁵⁶

“We must establish and nurture a single university culture and identity which leads to an integrated university with equity of provision across the campuses. This we will do by embracing transformation in all its facets and ensuring that quality outcomes are strengthened. We must recognise that we will not be regarded as a quality institution without a more committed approach to transformation,” Prof Ntate Daniel (Dan) Kgwadi said at his inauguration. *“Another area that requires attention is the way in which the university is structured and, in particular, the management model. I indicated earlier that the management model served the university well in the past. It allowed the necessary stability for the consolidation of the merger, permitted campuses to address their weaknesses and encouraged strong campus accountability. The model is constantly criticized as resembling a federal model and has some negative effects in encouraging competition rather than co-operation between campuses. The model further encourages the idea that the campuses are semi-autonomous and can establish separate and possibly non-aligned strategic directions. Campus autonomy promotes the idea of separateness rather than unity, whether intended or*

*not. I am reminded of Kgosi Mangope comments during his inauguration as President of the then homeland when he questioned the motives of the South African government in granting independence – ‘I don’t know how sincere and honest the motives of the South Africa were by granting us independence – it may be their motive to further the strategy of apartheid.’ The motive behind the adoption of the management model for the university was also received with scepticism since its inception. Apart from the concerns relating to social cohesion and integration, there are significant issues of affordability and efficiency. Structural adjustment may therefore be necessary to ensure that a university wide identity and culture is embedded and that strong transformation initiatives are centrally steered.”*⁵⁷

Prior to his appointment as the NWU's vice-chancellor and before that as Mafikeng Campus rector, Prof Kgwadi served as senior manager/assessment coordinator at the National Nuclear Regulator; head of the Physics Department at the Vaal University of Technology; lecturer and head of the Physics department at the University of North-West, and research and teaching assistant at Ball State University in the United States. He started his career as a physics teacher at Phatisma High School.⁵⁸

New Chairperson elected

The Council chairperson, Mr Peet van der Walt, resigned on 23 September 2014 from the NWU Council because of ill health and Ms Itumeleng Pooe, the deputy chairperson, acted as chair until 18 November 2014. At the Council meeting that took place on 17 and 18 November, Advocate Johan Kruger was elected as council chairperson and Dr Joe Tshifularo as deputy Council chairperson. They will hold these positions for a three-year period.⁵⁹

17.11. Strategy for the next 10 years

In July 2014, the university initiated a new strategy development process, aimed at determining a new strategic agenda. The process started with a two-day workshop for the Institutional Management, where progress was made on formulating a revised success model for the NWU. In the words of Prof Kgwadi: *“The success model entails the idealised vision of what ultimate success will look like for the NWU ... Following on the conclusion of the success model, we will then formulate our strategic agenda and establish prioritised goals and targets, which will lead us towards our vision for the future. At each stage of the process, we will consult key stakeholder groups to ensure that we obtain valuable input into this process. Please join us in this exciting task by participating fully at the appropriate time.”*⁶⁰



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CHAPTER 18

From the outside, looking in

18. The pace of transformation

As a public university that exists to serve the greater good, the NWU is under constant scrutiny from a wide range of stakeholders. This scrutiny has been all the more intense given the university's origins in a merger and incorporation that brought together partners with distinctly different outlooks and expectations.

On six separate occasions over the years, the Department of Education has sent task teams to the NWU to ascertain the progress it has made in implementing government interventions to transform the sector.

18.1 Ministerial reviews and involvement in the internal affairs of the NWU

The first such assessment took place between August and October 2003 when the Merger Reference Group visited the university. The second time was in April 2008 when the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education was formed.¹ Then came the Ministerial Task Team that investigated the affairs of the NWU in October 2008, followed in 2009 by the HEQC Institutional Audit and then the Merger Unit of the Department of Education.

The Merger Unit, located in the Higher Education branch of the Department of Education, was the principal agent for state support for implementing government policy on mergers and incorporations. Its main role was to oversee, support and monitor mergers and incorporations, and submit regular progress reports to the Minister of Education.²

18.1.1 August and October 2003: visit of the Merger Reference Group

According to the Merger Guidelines, the purpose of the Reference Group, located within the Merger Unit, was to monitor the merger planning and implementation processes on the ground at merging universities to ensure they observed the central principles underpinning the restructuring agenda. These principles were transformation, equity, efficiency and development.

The Merger Reference Group also had to make sure that the management of a university was responsive to the voices and concerns of all stakeholders and constituencies. Its members were highly respected individuals who had experience of higher education and other large institutions.³

Before the establishment of interim councils at the merging universities, the members of the Merger Reference Group were organised into teams responsible for monitoring one or two specific mergers. As such, the Reference Group was an additional link between the Merger Unit, the Minister and the institutions concerned.⁴

During 2003, a team of the Merger Reference Group visited the two universities that were merging to form the North-West University (NWU). The team visited the University of the North West in Mahikeng on 5 August 2003, and the Potchefstroom Christian University for Higher Education and its Vaal Triangle Campus in October 2003.⁵ They met with the universities' management, Institutional Forum, Staff Association, unions and Student Representative Councils, and were comprehensively informed about the proposed merger and incorporation plan. Except for a few technical remarks from the task team members, the strategies were left intact.

18.1.2 2008: the visit of the Ministerial Task Team

On 23 January 2008, the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education and some staff members visited the Mafikeng Campus and were impressed with its achievements. They gave the NWU the go-ahead to resubmit a motivation for infrastructure funding.

A month later, on 29 February, Minister Naledi Pandor (Minister of Education from 2004 to 2009) visited the Potchefstroom Campus to open a new building for the Faculty of Education. During her visit, NWU staff members gave her an update on current affairs at the university.⁶

Unfortunately, these positive developments were overshadowed by several unfortunate incidents that subsequently convinced the Minister to intervene in the affairs of the NWU.

18.2 A chain of events: contrasts and contradictions

Closure of the Mafikeng Campus

This chain of events began on 7 March 2008 when the Mafikeng Campus was closed to students after student protests by mainly SASCO supporters. A list of contradictory demands was handed to the Campus Management, only to be withdrawn after apparent tension between SASCO members and the ANC Youth League. The Campus SRC did not support the strike, and the campus was reopened on 25 March 2008. In an

effort to make up for lost teaching time, all staff and the majority of students agreed to forego the autumn recess. The campus was reopened on the understanding that there would be zero tolerance for any further unlawful disruption of campus activities.

Regrettably, the situation at the Mafikeng Campus deteriorated to such an extent that it had to be closed, again, from 3 to 19 September 2008. The reason for this was violence involving a small group of students reacting to decisions taken by the Student Disciplinary Appeals Committee on 25 August 2008.

On 9 October 2008, in his regular electronic newsletter, the then Vice-Chancellor, Dr Theuns Eloff, reported the events as follows to staff members:⁷

“The seven students had been found guilty of acts of misconduct during student activities in early March 2008 and were either suspended or expelled from the university. These convictions and sentences were upheld on appeal. These seven students requested, through their attorneys, that they remain on campus pending the institution of review proceedings in the High Court. This request was turned down.

“The matter was discussed at length at the Council meeting of 19 September and the Campus SRC President made it clear that yet another demand has surfaced: the suspension of Prof Dan Kgwadi, the Campus Rector. In response, the Council passed a resolution that management is supported in their efforts to establish a culture conducive to teaching-learning, and that everything must be done to save the academic year on the campus. The Mafikeng Campus SRC must submit to Council before the next meeting its list of grievances, to be commented on by management. In addition, I was requested to apply my mind with regard to the possibility of commuting some or all of the sentences of the seven expelled and suspended students.

“The most recent news is that the campus is open, and lectures are continuing to a certain extent. The Minister has, with the agreement of the Council Chairperson and management, appointed Prof Hugh Africa, a member of the Council on Higher Education, as facilitator. He engaged with staff, students and management on Thursday, 2 October, and some progress was made.”⁸

Dr Eloff went on to explain his perceptions of the situation to staff members:

“On the one hand, the NWU’s commitment of upholding best practice in effective management and corporate governance was acknowledged on 25 August, when the university achieved first place in the PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance ...

“On the other hand, in a rather disturbing development, the Minister of Education announced, without any prior consultation with the Council of the university, that she was going to institute an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the affairs of the North-West University, focusing on the implementation of the merger.

“Council resolved that the Executive Committee should engage in urgent discussions with Minister Pandor regarding her letter. In the event, the Minister had a “private meeting” with the chairperson of the Council, Mr Peet van der Walt, at her request. She reiterated that she had the power to appoint such an investigation, and did not judge this to be an infringement of the university’s autonomy or academic freedom.

“The Council would discuss the issue further at its extraordinary meeting of 16 October. In the meantime, no information is (yet) available on the specific terms of reference or the composition of the investigating team. It is my opinion the Minister has been placed under strong pressure by Cosatu and elements of the Mafikeng staff to make such a decision. The NWU, however, has nothing to hide and would cooperate with such an investigation, though questions remain about the pressures and the motives behind the decision.”⁹

The investigation proceeds

On 10 October 2008, Minister Pandor appointed a Ministerial Task Team of six members, with Dr J Phaahla as chair, to investigate the affairs at the NWU.¹⁰ The following reasons were given for the investigation:

“The Minister of Education observed that the North-West University (NWU) has been experiencing a number of problems as it continues to grow and become consolidated as a merged institution. These problems have surfaced and are most prominently illustrated by several disruptions of academic activities that have occurred at the Mafikeng Campus ever since the merger. This resulted in the closure of the Mafikeng Campus on at least three occasions in 2008 alone. The Minister further noted that there has been an apparent lack of academic integration within the university, as well as some staff discontent on the Vaal Triangle Campus.”¹¹

The terms of reference for the task team were to report on four main issues¹². In summary, these were:

- the causes of disruptions, instability and discontent at the NWU, especially the Mafikeng Campus
- the extent, manner, success and efficacy of integration across all campuses, focusing on academic structures, governance and management, including financial management, resource allocation and human resources

- the extent, manner and success of enhancing social cohesion and a new institutional culture that overcomes the Apartheid-induced divide
- the measures and actions necessary to enhance the efficacy of the merger.

As a fact-finding committee, the task team conducted investigations at the Institutional Office and the three campuses from 15 to 23 October, and listened to 387 people representing the various NWU constituencies. Their report was ready on 4 December 2008¹³ and their findings were published in the Government Gazette of 4 February 2009.¹⁴

Findings announced

The Ministerial Task Team found a number of problems related to the merger, inequality in academics and infrastructure, and questions surrounding racial equity on the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses.¹⁵ The Vaal Triangle Campus was found to be the biggest beneficiary of the merger, with a well-integrated staff and student body. Both staff and students at the Mafikeng Campus did not seem to buy in to the merger, perceiving it as “*unequal, coercive and detrimental to the survival of the Mafikeng Campus*”.¹⁶

The task team’s report examined each of the four issues described in the terms of reference. A summary of the findings for each issue, together with recommendations, follows.

In looking at the causes of disruptions on the Mafikeng Campus, the task team reported nine findings. Topping the list was the weakened state of the campus’s academic programme and the lack of academic cooperation between the three campuses.

On the question of possible external interference, the task team reported that students and the Staff Association had not raised this as an issue. Thus, the task team did not support management’s view that external influences were behind the protracted student protests and the fractured relationships on the campus.

The task team found that management had not been as forthcoming as it should have been about the turnover of staff in the period after the merger. However, it did not support the general charge by staff and students that management had deliberately kept them uninformed about events at the university.

Another finding was that a delicate and even controversial situation had arisen as a result of the NWU Council’s policy decision to equalise tuition fees for the three campuses by 2011.

The task team reported its perception that there was a near terminal loss of trust, common vision and

even decorum between the management, students in organised formations, organised labour, and general academic and support staff.

Furthermore, management’s predominantly “*legalistic*” and “*security*” oriented approach towards solving problems at the Mafikeng Campus was unlikely to yield lasting solutions for the campus, the task team found.¹⁷

Governance and the management model

The task team dwelt at length on institutional integration, looking at issues from governance and the functioning of the NWU management model to financial management and resource allocation.

On governance and the functioning of the management model, the task team based its understanding on an investigation and report by Dr Rolf Stumpf.¹⁸ With this report as its point of reference, the task team’s view¹⁹ of the management model was mixed. This is what it had to say about the model in relation to the Institutional Office and the Mafikeng Campus: “*The Institutional Office is a kind of ‘corporate services’ business model ingeniously married to a traditional academic autonomy model, which works very well for separate, independently functioning institutions, for which it is a ‘win-win’ model of autonomy with technical and strategic support.*”

However, the team was not convinced that the model worked for the Mafikeng Campus: “*For an institution such as the Mafikeng Campus, which is not an autonomously functioning independent university, it is a failure in that it breeds suspicion, feeds into historical prejudices and fears, and does not help the institution to overcome its ‘historical legacy’.*”

Commenting on the management model’s contribution to transformation, the task team quoted Dr Stumpf, who said the model “*neither hindered transformation nor advanced it in any significant way*”.²⁰

Furthermore, said the task team, the model had created an integration of policies but not practices. Thus, it had not met the main objectives of the merger: “*To the point, the model has not overcome the Apartheid-induced divide between historically white and historically black institutions, particularly not in building administrative, governance and academic capacity, nor has it achieved a new institutional culture across all campuses.*”

The task team went on to say that the model had two structural flaws. “*Firstly, it is premised on the coordination and enhancement of autonomous, well-functioning institutions, which is a false premise considering that Mafikeng and Vaal are not sustainable autonomous universities. Secondly, it is a useful approach to governance, providing a coordinating and steering framework, but it is not the strong problem-solving management*

*tool that is needed if unequal institutions with vastly different cultures and practices are to 'merge'.*²¹

Interventions proposed for merger goals

On the question of academic programmes and policies, the task team proposed three interventions to accomplish the original merger goals of overcoming historical divisions, promoting a more equitable staff and student body campus wide, building academic and research capacity, and consolidating their concept of deployment and use of academic personnel between campuses.

The first proposed intervention was to undergo intensive academic staff development, linked to the alignment process and securing input from all three campuses.

The task team's second proposal was to review the Institutional Plan and the merger/transformation strategy, with the aim of identifying new areas of academic excellence and niche areas for further development across all three campuses.

Thirdly, the Institutional Management should facilitate a process of staff and student academic exchange across campuses, particularly for postgraduate students, with a view to sharing expertise and developing capacity.²²

The task team also proposed three strategies in respect of student governance. Specifically, campuses that excluded student political formations from student governance, due to the institutional policy, should find ways to accommodate them in student governance processes. Campuses should continually review and adjust the language policy, as black staff and students across the board had complained about this. A strategy for the Mafikeng Campus in particular was to restore trust and communication between the SRC and Campus Management, overhaul and strengthen student affairs, and consistently and equitably apply the university's policies on student discipline.²³

Financial management and resource allocation were directly addressed. The task team reported that whatever the merits of the NWU's financial allocation model, stakeholders at the Mafikeng Campus were so suspicious of the Institutional Management that they believed the financial figures presented by management could even refer to another institution! Consequently, management had to address the fact that it had not secured buy-in to the merger/transformation project from staff and student formations on the Mafikeng Campus.²⁴

Concerns about the human resources policies, systems and practices boiled down to the fact that although NWU had developed a great number of human resource-related policies, the equal implementation of these policies on all campuses was at stake. The task team mentioned the feedback from the organisational culture survey

results commissioned by Institutional Management in 2005 and 2007 to prove this accusation. The surveys showed that some staff members had raised concerns about the inconsistent application of policies across all campuses and across all levels of staff. At the Mafikeng Campus, there was a concern about the appointment of staff, unequal salary packages between campuses, high staff turnover, the way the equity policy was implemented, and the lack of a clear staff development plan. Management has argued that it has a strategic staff development fund that unfortunately was not fully utilised. The task team proposed therefore that this kind of contrast between role players at Mafikeng illustrated that there was no sense of common purpose among its constituencies.²⁵

According to the task team, the NWU labour relations system experienced a meltdown at the Mafikeng Campus because the university had failed to develop an inclusive and functional labour relations practice. This situation, said the task team, also contributed to the widespread alienation of significant constituencies from the merger process, and undermined the first two merger project goals by entrenching historical divisions and silencing sections of the staff body, such as the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) and National Tertiary Education Staff Union (NTESU), owing to the 30% threshold for representation.

To address these challenges, the task team proposed that the NWU move to a more inclusive labour relations regime by suspending the 30% threshold and actively encouraging participation in the institutional and workplace forums. Furthermore, the NWU should begin a high-level debate on the appropriate roles of all stakeholders in the merger exercise, perhaps through an expanded, less management-oriented Institutional Transformation Forum that would engage everyone in a review of the merger process. The task team seriously questioned the old-fashioned, repressive style of management at the Mafikeng Campus and the fact that this was tolerated or even encouraged by the Institutional Management.²⁶

Doubts over social cohesion

In respect of social cohesion and a new institutional culture across campuses, the task team said it was unable to obtain an expression of a unified institutional culture at the NWU but rather a collage of three different institutionally based cultures purporting to be one.²⁷

The task team said it was left with a number of indelible impressions and, given the circumstances that had given rise to its appointment, could not overlook or ignore various perceptions.

“University management reveals a prevailing deep fear of ‘political forces’, which they perceive as some kind of a ‘third force’ that is in control of activities at the Mafikeng Campus. Apparently, these political forces were responsible for the disruptions at the Mafikeng Campus. Management has even openly alleged that the Minister was conspiring with COSATU in instituting the current investigation. Indeed, this fear of third forces has translated into a paranoia that was most visible during discussions about the role of student political formations in SRC and student governance processes in general.”

The task team went on to say that during its visit to the Mafikeng Campus, most submissions made to it pointed to a deep-seated fear of an agenda by “*the Potchefstroom team*”, as the Institutional Office and the Potchefstroom Campus staff were referred to. That agenda was supposedly to weaken the campus and eventually close it down. This sentiment was partly premised on the previous experience of the closure of the Mankwe Campus after the merger.

The task team said it further observed that Mafikeng Campus stakeholders were preoccupied with a gripping sense of sabotage that was allegedly being perpetrated by the Potchefstroom Campus with the continued dominance of the Afrikaner culture, which the NWU was alleged to be imposing on the institution.

“Mafikeng Campus in particular suffers from a great sense of loss of trust between management and the institutional leadership on the one hand, and other constituencies on the other, which has resulted in a feeling of abandonment and helplessness, and an inability to even try and explore long-term solutions to some of the prevailing challenges,” the report said. “African students and NEHAWU members at the Potchefstroom Campus shared some of the general discontent with the management of the university. Overall, these fault lines have negatively affected communication within the new institution.”

The task team commented on Senior Management’s lack of trust and paranoia about the intentions of the Minister in appointing it. *“Various enquiries were made as to the legal standing of the task team, the levels of authority between the task team and the university management, the need for the task team to enter into a ‘confidentiality contract’ with the Council, the need for the task team to submit its draft report to the Council before submitting it to the Minister, and the tone and content of a newsletter circulated by the Vice-Chancellor on 9 October 2008, prior to the arrival of the task team. All these left the task team with a sense of deep mistrust by the senior team about the Minister’s motives in appointing them.”*

Furthermore, the task team said, it had not gained a clear sense or evidence of an existing plan to resolve the recurring disruptions at Mafikeng, other than resorting

to increased security and legal measures.²⁸

NWU a viable university

One of the main issues that the task team dealt with was whether the NWU of 2008 was a viable institution, based on its finances, student numbers, success rate, staff-to-student ratio, research output and so on.

The facts showed that the NWU had been experiencing strong growth in student numbers and its success rate was close to that of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, one of the top five universities in South Africa. The staff-to-student ratio was well within the national average and the percentage of staff with doctorates was well above the average. While its research output per academic staff member was below the national target for universities, it was by no means the lowest. Financially, the NWU had been performing well above the national average since 2003.

Dr Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, informed the task team that the NWU was among the top five universities nationally in 2008 in terms of teaching and learning, in the top eight in research, had won awards for governance and multilingualism and, in 2007, had joined a small group of universities that received less than 40% of their total income from direct government subsidy.

The task team acknowledged that the university was performing well above the national averages, except for research output. Overall, the NWU was doing well and seemed set to play an important role in the North West Province, and had the potential to play a greater role nationally.²⁹

Recommendations made

Finally, the task team listed a number of recommendations for setting the identified problems right.

For the short term, the task team had five recommendations for the Mafikeng Campus.

Firstly, the Department of Education should take the lead in initiating consultation with the university’s leadership to establish an interactive forum that would engage the surrounding community and stakeholders to restore relationships, communication, trust and a sense of common mission and ownership. This forum would reaffirm the policy intentions of cooperative governance of a merged university, and reclaim and restore the Mafikeng Campus as a site of higher education learning where academia takes precedence over any other agenda. At the same time, the campus should secure some external expertise to help mediate the more pressing issues that had arisen.

Two of the recommendations had to do with strengthening student support and discipline. Specifically,

management should urgently ensure equal handling of student affairs by installing all committees contemplated in the student disciplinary code, and the campus's student support services should be brought on par with the other NWU campuses.

Finally, management at Mafikeng Campus should be restructured appropriately, with greater support and mentoring from the Institutional Office, as part of a medium to long-term strategy to reengineer the NWU's overall governance model.

University-wide solutions proposed

Over and above these recommendations for the Mafikeng Campus, the task team proposed 10 university-wide solutions to correct the merger project. These recommendations revolved around the reconceptualisation of the academic programme, changes to the governance/management model, the fast-tracking of transformation, and the inculcation of a more inclusive institutional culture.

Concerning the academic project, the task team recommended that this be reconceptualised to become a single university (rather than a unitary one). This would require a reassessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic programmes, particularly but not only at the Mafikeng Campus, to determine which components could be strengthened. As for the academic character of the campus, the task team suggested that it become a multi-purpose campus where academic programmes were offered in a selected number of strategic areas, in line with national and regional needs

The reconceptualisation of the academic project would also require much greater academic and administrative interdependence between the three campuses. For example, it should be possible for a student who completes two years of academic preparation at Mafikeng to transfer to one of the other campuses to complete his or her degree. Similarly, it should be possible to deploy academic staff, particularly deans, from Potchefstroom or the Vaal Triangle to help in the turnaround of selected faculties at Mafikeng Campus.

In the case of the management model, the task team said the NWU should change this in a way that would enable it to achieve the goals of the merger with a leadership structure that would initiate and manage change on all three campuses, integrate the academic programmes and administrative procedures, and take strategic decisions that would strengthen the institution. *“Such a new model would harness the considerable expertise located in the Institutional Office not only for planning and promotion of the institution but also to manage it effectively,”* the task team said.

At the same time, the management style and culture at the NWU should shift away from a legalistic and formalistic paradigm that tended to overemphasise security-oriented solutions. The university should also encourage a more inclusive culture, especially at the Potchefstroom Campus.

“The task team received submissions from the student body and from staff members to the effect that the Potchefstroom Campus is essentially being regarded as an Afrikaner campus. The corollary is that black students at this campus are effectively considered an appendage to the substantive body of white Afrikaans-speaking students, hence the common reference to these (black) students having to learn to adapt. The task team concludes that the prevailing culture on the campus thus provides a fertile ground for the manifestation of racist tendencies,” it said.³⁰

On the question of transformation, the task team said the NWU lagged behind the rest of the sector in terms of addressing critical aspects of increasing access and equity for black students. *“The task team urges the university to fast-track its transformation process in this respect as it relates to the admission of black students as there seems to be neither a fundamental explanation nor a justification for the current low numbers of black students at Potchefstroom.”*

Further, the task team recommended that the university pay special attention to improving the number of black staff, and particularly academics, at both the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses. It said an analysis of the available data showed that the Potchefstroom Campus had not improved in terms of employment equity over the past 10 years but had actually regressed in real terms.

Lastly, the task team made two key recommendations to the Department of Education: to address the issue of equalising student fees across the three campuses, and to investigate different approaches and models for the governance and management of multi-campus institutions.

With regard to student fees, the task team said this was a sore point for students at Mafikeng, and a source of discontent, instability and strikes on this campus. It recommended that a small committee be established to help address this matter as one of the measures to be taken to avoid a possible student strike in 2009. This process should include facilitating related initiatives such as the signing of a memorandum of understanding, a review of disciplinary procedures and dealing with the issue of suspended students.

As for governance, the task team said the management of multi-campus institutions was much more

complicated than the merger proposals had assumed, and that it was time to draw from local and international experiences. It recommended that the Department of Education appoint a working group to study and recommend different approaches to managing and governing multi-campus institutions, saying that such a study would be useful for the Further Education and Training sector, where a number of multi-campus mergers had occurred³¹

The issue of external political influence

There was one rather vaguely formulated perception that the task team included in its recommendations for addressing issues at the Mafikeng Campus. This was the matter of external political influence with which Campus Management said it had to cope. The task team suggested that the Department of Education take the lead in establishing a joint forum with the local community in which the campus operates, in order to find political solutions to the reported permanent contestation affecting relations on the campus.³² The reason for this recommendation was most likely that the task team apparently felt obliged to include in its report these suggestions made during meeting with management that the 2008 student protests had been inspired by strategies used by local trade unions and in public struggles between political groupings.³³

The task team's recommendations and suggestions conveyed the depressing message that, in terms of the merger goals, the profile of the NWU represented an unfinished, even largely failed merger project,³⁴ where diversity did not lead to a unified institution with innovative practices, and which continued to symbolise and perpetuate past divisions.³⁵ The focus of the report was a clear indication that its intended audience was political as well as educational.³⁶

NWU responds to task team report

The report of the task team was sent to Council and the Institutional Management in mid-December 2008, and the Executive Committee of Council and members of management set to work responding to the issues raised. The Exco of Council reaffirmed its confidence in management and scheduled a two-day strategic workshop for 13 and 14 March 2009 to respond officially to the report.³⁷

The Institutional Management of the NWU strongly opposed the perception that the university's merger project had failed, pointing out that the NWU was still an accountable university.³⁸ The chairperson of Council continued discussions with the Minister of Education about the report and pledged to cooperate fully with the outcome of the investigation.³⁹

Dr Eloff, the Vice-Chancellor, shared the NWU's proposed response during a meeting with the senior management and directors on 22 October 2008 in Potchefstroom.⁴⁰ He also explained the NWU viewpoint on this matter to staff in a special Vice-Chancellor's Newsletter issued on 23 October 2008, with a link provided to the Institutional Management's presentation to the task team.

In the special newsletter, Dr Eloff said: *"In conclusion, the NWU is, like its predecessor universities, not unaccustomed to controversy. As I have previously stated, we just have to do our job so well that we continue to command respect and high regard. I am convinced that this has to be our reaction to all the above matters."*⁴¹

On 28 November 2008, Dr Eloff reflected on all the difficult times the NWU had had to deal with during the year. He mentioned the unrest, violence and vandalism on the Mafikeng Campus. He also mentioned incidents such as the Facebook race issue on the Potchefstroom Campus, and the theft of ballot boxes for the SRC elections on the Vaal Triangle Campus. Turning to the bigger picture, he referred to the national climate in higher education that had led to the Ministerial Committee's investigation into social cohesion and racism, and the Ministerial Task Team that had *"investigated the affairs of the university"*.⁴²

Dr Eloff said the majority of staff and students had risen to these challenges, and their maturity in dealing with these issues gave him hope for the future: *"Clearly, some of the underlying issues would remain with us for some time, but I am confident that with the goals we have set for ourselves to transform the NWU, we will overcome these"*. Council had also reappointed Dr Eloff for a second term of five years: *"I believe that this will enable me and the rest of the university to consolidate the gains we have achieved with the merger, as well as the improvement in our core business."*⁴³

He said these events raised the following questions about the outcomes of mergers:

- How difficult is it to successfully manage multi-campus mergers?
- How should one manage a multi-campus merger?
- How should one measure successful mergers?
- When or at what stage should one declare the success or failure of a merger?⁴⁴

In a frank commentary on the NWU multi-campus merger and incorporation plan, Dr Eloff referred to international literature on university mergers in China, a country with a common national culture, in the 1990s. He pointed out that these mergers were not painless and that it

had taken up to 10 years for the merged universities to operate as a cohesive, well-integrated whole.⁴⁵

Seen in this light, it was clear that the merger and incorporation between three historically black campuses (Mafikeng, Mankwe and Sebokeng) and two historically Afrikaans campuses (Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle) was extremely complex and required wisdom, patience and courage. Dr Eloff concluded that after “*only five years it is too early to declare either complete success or failure on this or any merger*”.⁴⁶

The Vice-Chancellor explained the main strategies followed in the merger and incorporation process and lessons learned from the Ministerial investigation. He said the measures of the success of the merger and incorporation should be efficiency, quality and sustainable transformation. The NWU viewpoint was that once quality and efficiency were compromised with “*quick*” transformation strategies, it would be very difficult to restore them. The wisdom of this strategy would become apparent in the years to come but in the meantime, had served the university well. In its first five years, the NWU had performed well academically compared to its peers and won three national awards:

- The NWU had received the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance in 2007 and 2008, making it the best-governed university in South Africa.
- The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) had given the NWU an award for doing the most for nation building and multilingualism.
- The NWU had won the Department of Trade and Industry’s competition for the most innovative university.
- Academically, in 2006 the NWU had produced the third most PhDs in the country and achieved the second highest graduation rate, illustrating that teaching-learning time had not been lost since the merger and incorporation.

Turning to the management model, he said the model for multi-campus universities was in flux and was more complex than merger proposals had assumed. Dr Rolf Stumpf, former Vice-Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, had assessed the NWU as a unitary institutional with decentralised campuses. His observation was that this management model was the only workable format for the NWU and was the reason it had made such progress.

Dr Eloff commented that the Ministerial Task Team report was a mechanism for ongoing introspection

because some of the challenges mentioned brought new perspectives. The NWU remained committed to the success of the merger and incorporation.⁴⁷

The NWU also highlighted some concerns over factual errors in the report, which came about after the university’s request to comment on the factual issues was denied. The result was numerous factual errors, some of which were used as the basis for fundamental findings of the task team.⁴⁸

The two-day workshop that Council held on 13 and 14 March 2009 focused on the longer term future of the NWU, and culminated in the 2020 vision and mission. Council also noted its concerns and objections to certain aspects of the task team’s report. The meeting resolved that a number of matters from the report should be incorporated into the 2010-12 Institutional Plan, after which the report should serve as a useful mechanism for ongoing introspection. Finally, Council approved its formal response to the Minister on the report of the task team.⁴⁹

In July 2009, Dr Blade Nzimande, the new Minister of Higher Education, announced that his department was planning a national conference on racism to discuss transformation and alleged discriminatory practices at tertiary institutions.⁵⁰ At the two-day summit main emphasis of Dr Nzimande was the desire to create caring universities that would reclaim democratic traditions under different conditions.

18.3 Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education, 2008

The Minister of Education established this Ministerial Committee in April 2008⁵¹ to “*investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions, with particular focus on racism, and to make appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and promote social cohesion*”.

Terms of reference

The committee’s terms of reference were clearly defined and it was required to report on specific issues. These included the nature and extent of racism and racial discrimination in public higher education, particularly at university residences, the steps taken to combat discrimination (on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and disability, as well as race), and existing best practices and shortcomings. The committee was also expected to advise the Minister of Higher Education and higher education constituencies on the policies, strategies and interventions needed to combat discrimination and promote inclusive institutional cultures for staff and

students. Lastly, the committee had to identify implications for other sectors of the education system.⁵²

Prof Crain Soudien chaired the Ministerial Committee.⁵³ Their report was published on 30 November 2008⁵⁴ and, together with the report of the Ministerial Task Team, put the spotlight on the NWU's restructuring and transformation efforts since 2004. The central focus of both bodies was on ascertaining the state and progress in 2008 of the merger transformation process in accordance with government initiatives.⁵⁵

The Soudien report acknowledged the efforts universities had made but urged them to do more to become "healthy and productive". Specifically, the report said: "In the immediate short term, there is a need, on the one hand, for the system to utilise that which it has much more efficiently and productively, but on the other hand, it needs to be much more responsive to the legacy of issues of racism and classism, as well as to the pervasive issues of sexism and gender. In the short term, the primary requirement for institutions is to develop a deep sense of self-awareness with regard to their managerial and governance operations, and to develop internal modalities for dealing with these issues. One of the first tasks of a transforming university is for it to do an internal stocktaking exercise. It must ask itself, with regard to the objectives of turning itself into a healthy and productive institution, what it is doing⁵⁶ well and what it is doing less

satisfactorily. It also has to measure that which it deems to be positive and negative against the larger goals of transformation."⁵⁷

Reporting on the NWU, the Soudien committee indicated that the university sought to promote unity through a values based framework, focusing on symbols (in compliance with its new statute), the integration of policies, academic governance, the institutional culture and the language policy, as well as nurturing a new organisational culture.

The committee took a positive view of this and in particular the NWU's efforts to promote unity and diversity, even noting that this corresponded with the national motto, "many people make one or unity through diversity". The committee observed that the Constitution gives South Africans the right to co-exist in their different realities, "as long as our being any of these does not infringe on the rights of others".⁵⁸

References to the NWU in the Soudien report

In 2008, under the auspices of the NWU Human Rights Committee, the university conducted an Institutional Social Cohesion Audit.⁵⁹ The results of this are interpreted in the table below against the background of the Soudien report,⁶⁰ and were presented to the Institutional Forum in August 2009.

P 38 NWU's understanding of social cohesion	NWU understands the term 'social cohesion' as a practice. Seeking unity via value framework, focusing on symbols, compliance with NWU statute, integration of policies, academic governance, institutional culture, language policy and nurturing new organisational culture. <i>"Unity and diversity means in the first instance that no one should be forced to choose between any of these realities, but should be allowed to be all of these."</i>
P 68 Student matters	Different ways of treatment of black and white students – from cultural activities to formal student governance. Regular reference is made to "induction into campus life". Challenges experienced by black students upon entering the university, as they were not familiar with the customs and traditions of the institution. (A student has been suspended when approaching a donor, not knowing it was against university policy.)
Page 89 Curriculum reform	Facebook incident linked to Reitz incident. Apparently, this also points to the fact that little progress has been made in "addressing curriculum reform".
P 100 Language matters	Afrikaans being used at Potchefstroom Campus, with simultaneous interpreting into English. Unfair discrimination in only providing interpreting services in English and Afrikaans at IF meetings, thus denying "others the right to discuss matters in their home language".
P 106 Representivity of Convocation	Elections for Convocation were manipulated to maintain the dominance of the graduates of the former (historically white, Afrikaans medium) PU for CHE. Convocation information only on Potchefstroom Campus web pages

The Ministerial Committee reflected that NWU students spoke repeatedly of the different ways that white and black students were treated, from cultural activities to formal student governance. A regular difficulty that black students experienced was their induction into campus life when entering the university, because they were not familiar with the customs and traditions of the institution. The report stated that a student at NWU had claimed that he had been suspended for approaching a donor, not knowing that it was against the policy of the university for individuals to do so.⁶¹

The Reitz incident at the University of the Free State and the Facebook incident at NWU suggested to the Ministerial Committee that institutions had made limited progress in addressing curriculum reform. (Refer to sections 10.24.3, 11.3.1 and 18.3 for details.) The committee argued that these incidents of racism and other forms of discrimination should not come as a surprise because universities are a "microcosm of society". They challenged institutions to characterise their role in society given that the Education White Paper 3 described the socialisation of enlightened,

responsible and constructively critical citizens as one of the purposes and obligations of higher education.⁶²

The Ministerial Committee also argued that the parallel medium language policy at the historically Afrikaans-medium institutions discriminated against black students. A general perception among black students was that Afrikaans-speaking students were favoured in classes.⁶³ The committee referred to the practice at the NWU of using Afrikaans as the language of instruction at the Potchefstroom Campus and providing a simultaneous translation service into English. They remarked that this practice had been raised as unfair discrimination by the NWU Staff Association as it denied “*others the right to discuss matters in their home language*”.⁶⁴

The committee said the Staff Association had suggested that the elections for the Convocation were manipulated to maintain the dominance of the graduates of the former (historically white, Afrikaans medium) PU for CHE. As a result, the Executive Committee of the Convocation comprised 39 white and three black members.⁶⁵

Governance and transformation highlighted

Concerning student governance, the Ministerial Committee reported that the role of student political organisations was the key student governance issue that institutions had raised. The concerns raised were largely influenced by the perception that student political organisations were too focused on national political issues and not on serving or representing the interests of students on campus.⁶⁶

On the role of governance and management, the Ministerial Committee reported as follows: “*If the role of Councils is to provide leadership and to perform the role of oversee with regard to good governance, the role of Institutional Management is to provide leadership, develop policies and strategies, and to oversee their implementation – in short, to oversee the day-to-day running of the institution, in the context of the transformation agenda in higher education and, in particular, the need to root out all forms of discrimination, Institutional Management must provide transformational leadership, which is focused on effecting deep educational change.*”⁶⁷

The Ministerial Committee concluded its report with viewpoints on the state of governance and transformation at higher education institutions. For example, it stated that the governance structures and accountabilities at universities were not working optimally to ensure the viable success of their transformation projects. The committee blamed university Councils for their narrow understanding of their governance mandates and the fact that they left the business of developing policies to their management structures.

Similarly, it said that accountability at management level was problematic because the Vice-Chancellors should oversee the implementation of the transformation agenda and hold their managers accountable for this. The absence of a sense of ownership of transformation policies at middle and lower management levels needed urgent attention.

Another concern was that transformation structures such as Institutional Forums were marginalised and needed to be revisited and strengthened

These viewpoints informed the Ministerial Committee’s recommendations to the Minister of Education, as follows:

- The Minister should consider the development of a transformation compact between higher education institutions and the Department of Education. This should have clearly identified targets and commitments, and should be an integral part of institutional plans.
- Given the dominance of management, the Minister should review the size and composition of Councils to assess the appropriate balance between internal and external members, as well as the role of categories of members such as donors, the convocation and alumni.
- The review that the Minister has initiated into the role and functions of Institutional Forums was to be welcomed and supported; it was critical that these forums be strengthened.
- The Minister should consider establishing a permanent oversight committee to monitor the transformation of higher education.
- The Department of Education should facilitate the training of Council members, including holding an annual meeting to review the role, function and performance of Councils.
- Councils should develop a clear transformation framework, including transformation indicators with set targets. This should form the basis of the performance contract of the Vice-Chancellor.
- Each institution should develop a transformation charter, which would serve as the basis of a social compact with internal constituencies.
- Where it had been removed, the right of student political organisations to participate in SRC elections should be reinstated.⁶⁸

The NWU's response

The Executive Committee of the NWU Convocation instructed Adv Jan Henning and Adv Johan Kruger to comment on the Ministerial Committee's report. In doing so, they expressed concerns about the subjectivity of the committee's report, its failure to substantiate submissions made to the committee, the inaccuracy of some of the information used, and the fact that institutions, including the NWU, were never given the opportunity to repudiate claims made in the report.

"The merit of the report itself appears to be questionable based on the work process, including the lack of objective and independent investigation and substantiation of submissions and facts ... The report is furthermore and in principle primarily based on perception and untested subjective interpretation. One has to assume that certain conclusions and recommendations are hence based on incorrect assumptions, untested evidence and incorrect facts and should therefore be considered with caution," they wrote.⁶⁹

Adv Henning and Adv Kruger made it clear that while the Convocation questioned the conclusions drawn in the Ministerial Committee report, it was unequivocal in its view on racism and discrimination: *"The Convocation strongly condemns any form of discrimination including racism not only in higher education institutions but in society at large, but is nevertheless of the opinion that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for an institution to regulate individual and personal convictions over and above the implementation of all required policies and regulatory framework to combat and counteract discrimination and racism in all its forms"*.

They concluded the Convocation response with a reference to the use of Afrikaans. *"Finally, the Convocation supports the notion of mother tongue education and the recognition of Afrikaans as an African language."*⁷⁰

18.4 The visit of the Merger Unit in November 2009

The Department of Education announced in 2008 that the country's universities and FET colleges had completed the merger processes, and so was now turning its attention to the quality and relevance of academic programmes and governance after the merger and incorporation process. Through the department's strategic plan, these two types of higher education institutions were better funded than before. The time had now come to consider the progress that the merged institutions had made.⁷¹

On 26 November 2009, the Merger Unit visited the NWU to ascertain its progress with the merger and incorporation objectives⁷². The meeting took place in the office of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Theuns Eloff, and a discussion

document was prepared to direct the discussion so that a reworked document could be prepared and submitted to the Merger Unit, containing all the points raised.⁷³

18.5 The Higher Education Quality Committee Institutional Audit in March 2009

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is responsible for quality assurance and promotion through its permanent subcommittee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).⁷⁴

The HEQC developed a framework⁷⁵ and criteria⁷⁶ for performing institutional quality audits at all public and private higher education providers. This preparatory work of the HEQC has been clearly documented since 2004 and required higher education providers to establish their own effective quality management systems that should be able to provide reliable self-evaluation information for quality planning, external audits and public reporting.⁷⁷

The HEQC confirmed that it would conduct the NWU's Institutional Audit from Saturday, 14 March to Friday, 20 March 2009. At that stage, the work on the sixth draft of the self-evaluation report was on schedule and had been circulated for internal comments, which were due by mid-April 2008.⁷⁸

Meticulous preparations made

On 9 October 2008, Dr Eloff informed staff that the preparations for the HEQC Institutional Audit were entering their final phase, and that a site visit to each of the three campuses would take place between 15 and 20 March 2009. He explained that the core of the audit was an in-depth self-evaluation of the NWU mission and the links between planning, resource allocation and quality management in carrying out teaching-learning, research and the implementation of expertise. The preparatory work done to date had culminated in a properly documented portfolio that would be sent to the HEQC on 3 December 2008, after Council had approved it.

The portfolio included all the logistical aspects of the actual site visits and the names of the 600-plus people who would be interviewed, together with details of the venues, meeting rooms, facilities, process flows and documented evidence of the claims made in the portfolio.

Final information was sent out to all staff, and a full rehearsal was held during February 2009 for all staff members involved with the site visit. Workshops were held with the interviewees to explain the site visit process and interview requirements, and email and written confirmation was sent to them to confirm their attendance and logistical arrangements.⁷⁹



▲ Photo: HEQC Audit panel and members of management, 16 March 2009⁸⁰

The HEQC Institutional Audit Panel visited the NWU from 15 to 20 March 2009 as planned,⁸¹ and a few days later, on 26 and 27 March, Dr Eloff sent newsletters out to the university community.

“With regard to the HEQC Institutional Audit, I sincerely would like to thank all staff and students who were involved in the planning process, the drafting of the self-evaluation report as well as the interviews held last week. The final report will only be available towards the end of the year, but the panel in their oral debriefing session emphasised that they were very optimistic that the NWU has put in place strategies and quality assurance mechanisms that will ensure that we will achieve our goals to play an even more pivotal role in the higher education landscape.

“As expected, the panel has identified a number of challenges, including the need to create an environment in which all staff and students can have a sense of belonging; the need to further develop the administrative, managerial and academic capacity of all the campuses; and to put in motion steps to embrace the diversity of the institution. Obviously, we must continue with the process of improving our quality assurance processes after the HEQC Audit – not just those that the HEQC team will identify, but in the first place those gaps that we ourselves have identified in the self-evaluation process.”⁸²

Final audit report received

The NWU Audit Report reached the university more than a year later, after the HEQC approved the final report on 12 May 2010.⁸³ Dr L Lange, the Executive Director: Quality Assurance of the CHE, asked Dr Eloff to make the report widely available within the university. In addition, as a follow-up requirement, he requested the university to submit a document indicating how it planned to meet the recommendations for quality improvement contained in the audit report.⁸⁴ The NWU sent this Quality Improvement Plan to the HEQC on 27 November 2010.⁸⁵

The audit report, as expected, presented a number of challenges in relation to the NWU’s core business. These challenges were programme alignment, access, further development of the administrative, managerial and academic capacity on all campuses, and further development of steps to embrace the diversity of the university.⁸⁶

The audit report consisted of seven commendations and 18 recommendations.⁸⁷ The seven commendations singled out areas of strength, excellence and innovation in the core project of the NWU:⁸⁸

1. *“The HEQC commends North-West University on the development and implementation of a rigorous external programme evaluation system that supports quality improvement across the institution.*

2. The HEQC commends North-West University on its responsible financial management linked to planning and monitoring, and its infrastructural upgrading and expansion plans that take into account the imperatives to attain equivalence of provision across all three campuses.

3. The HEQC commends North-West University on the work of the Academic Development and Support Units in the Institutional Office and on the various campuses.

4. The HEQC commends North-West University on its innovative simultaneous interpreting initiative and encourages its extension to more modules and campuses, ensuring that best practices in interpreting with respect to teaching and learning are followed

5. The HEQC commends North-West University on the development of the Teaching Excellence Award based on a rating system equivalent to that for research output that acts as an instrument for the development and improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

6. The HEQC commends North-West University on the conceptualisation and implementation of the research core function through the research entities model that responds to the mission and vision of the institution and for its efficient and effective support for research.

7. The HEQC commends North-West University on the range of initiatives focused on improving staff qualifications and development of research capacity within the context of the research entities as well as outside this framework.”⁸⁹

The 18 recommendations in the audit report focused primarily on the quality of teaching-learning, but also encompassed diversity management, management and leadership, research and community engagement.⁹⁰

1. “The HEQC recommends that North-West University urgently addresses the racial imbalances in its student profile, given the propensity for black students on the Potchefstroom Campus to be studying in the distance mode, and the lack of diversity on the Mafikeng Campus.

2. The HEQC recommends that North-West University makes an urgent and concerted effort to increase the diversity of the Potchefstroom Campus, particularly through the increased employment of staff from the designated groups. Increasing diversity should also include developing academic offerings that provide increased

access to previously disadvantaged students who do not speak Afrikaans and engaging critically and proactively in the transformation of the campus culture.

3. The HEQC recommends that North-West University addresses the filling of staff vacancies at the Mafikeng Campus in particular as a matter of priority. This should include the identification of obstacles for the creation of a vibrant academic and social culture on this campus and the development of a strategy to address these obstacles with the participation of staff and students.

4. The HEQC recommends that North-West University urgently addresses the issue of improving the student academic, social, cultural and residential experience at the Mafikeng Campus.

5. The HEQC recommends that North-West University acts decisively through a comprehensive intervention to guarantee the sustainability of the academic activity at the Mafikeng Campus and of the administrative and management operations that underpin it.

6. The HEQC recommends that North-West University develops appropriate mechanisms to monitor, review and adapt the particular management model adopted and its application on the different campuses to guard against the possible over-centralising and over-bureaucratising of the institution and its potential burden on staff in a multi-campus environment.

7. The HEQC recommends that North-West University follows up on the implementation of the feedback resulting from the external reviews of the academic and support functions of the institution. Part of this effort should include better resources for the Quality Office and a review of the position of this function in the organisation of the university.

8. The HEQC recommends that North-West University puts the necessary mechanisms in place to ensure that the programme alignment process is speedily implemented and used effectively, with due sensitivity to different viewpoints to bring about curriculum transformation.

9. The HEQC recommends that North-West University reviews the relationship and roles of the School Directors and Subject Chairs in order to ensure that sufficient intellectual leadership is provided at all levels of the schools.

10. The HEQC recommends that North-West University explores further mechanisms for creating synergies in teaching and learning across different campuses, such as block teaching, as well as mechanisms for the transfer of good practices, such as an annual teaching and learning conference.

11. The HEQC recommends that North-West University ensures that the findings of the Yeld Report are implemented and that the services of the Academic Development and Support Unit are extended and used across all faculties.

12. The HEQC recommends that North-West University ensures that an appropriate, effective and consistent system exists across faculties/schools to provide students with feedback on their progress and to follow up on at-risk students.

13. The HEQC recommends that, notwithstanding the efforts that are being made, North-West University makes a significant investment to upgrade the libraries and expand the holdings on all campuses.

14. The HEQC recommends that North-West University urgently finds effective ways of addressing staff shortages and morale issues on the Mafikeng Campus which have the potential to compromise the quality of educational provision. Such measures need to circumvent the loss of academic experience and leadership capacity.

15. The HEQC recommends that North-West University actively pursues the recommendations on assessment emerging from internal and external programme reports, which include developing a systematic approach to deal with staff development in the area of assessment.

16. The HEQC recommends that North-West University improves its systems of research ethics clearance across all disciplines.

17. The HEQC recommends that North-West University develops appropriate policies on postgraduate education. These should include clear rules for the appointment of supervisors, the relationship between students and supervisors, and the reporting and monitoring obligations of supervisors. The newly created Higher Degrees Committee should take responsibility for the effective and consistent implementation of these policies across faculties and campuses.

18. The HEQC recommends that North-West University develops an overall strategy, plan and procedures to fully realise the potential of its approach to community.⁹¹

Quality Improvement Plan compiled

In the Quality Improvement Plan, the NWU responded as follows to the recommendations in the audit report:

“As far as recommendations are concerned that pertain to the establishment of improved infrastructure and the development of structures by means of which the effectiveness and efficiency of processes could be measured, the institution acknowledges that this could take place in a relatively short time period.

“However, as regards the management of matters like climate, culture and diversity, the NWU commits itself to continue with the work that was started in 2004 with the inception of the institution, but accepts that the implementation of this quality management process will be dealt with over a medium to longer term span.

“In terms of setting priorities regarding the attendance to the recommendations, the steering team was led by the action verbs used by the Audit Panel and distinguished between matters in need of i) immediate attention ii) decisive actions and iii) maintenance/development.”⁹²

On 11 June 2010, Dr Eloff acknowledged receipt of the official HEQC report, gave staff an overview of its findings and congratulated participants for the good results. He urged the university community to focus on the quality of their work as an integral part of their daily life.⁹³ He said he did not support the notion that the three campuses should reflect the demographic profile of the country but that at least 30% of the students on the Mafikeng Campus should be black.⁹⁴

Ms Sue Blaine, the Education Editor of the *Business Day* newspaper, wrote that universities such as the NWU and University of Johannesburg had, after the institutional audits, begun making improvements to their operations that the HEQC had recommended. She referred to the HEQC concern that despite a lot of investment, the Mafikeng Campus needed to improve its staff numbers and the student experience. Dr Eloff responded by saying that the increase in first-year applications from about 1 200 since the merger to around 8 000 in 2010 was proof of the improved status of the Mafikeng Campus. He attributed this increase largely to the resolute stance on unruly students and efforts to align admission requirements for all three campuses.⁹⁵

Several reports from the NWU were sent to the CHE to provide feedback on the planned implementation of the audit recommendations and to keep the HEQC continually abreast of the progress being made with the Quality

Improvement Plan. An interim report, entitled *Progress made by the NWU with the implementation of the NWU quality improvement plan*, was sent to Dr Mark Hay, the CHE's Executive Director: Quality Assurance, on 5 December 2011.⁹⁶

During March 2013, a second progress report was sent to the HEQC,⁹⁷ summarising the university's progress.

"In terms of the HEQC Improvement Plan, it is evident that strategic goals and action plans contained in NWU Institutional Plans (2012-14/2013-15) largely drive the rectification process. The planned realisation of the IP goals aims at addressing the recommendations contained in the improvement plan. The NWU Risk Register contains risk assessment indicators as regards the inherent risks posed by the way in which the recommendations might be handled. In general, the risk analysis points to the fact that the majority of the risks are tolerable or acceptable. Two of the risks are to be monitored closely, namely Recommendation one and two, and Recommendation 11.

"As regards the NWU Gaps Register, a consultative process was followed to learn from project sponsors and project leaders what progress has been made during the past year. It is evident that the majority of gaps have been closed successfully. In most of these instances, business processes have been put in place so as to ensure defined procedures by means of which the further management of these situations could be ensured

"A substantial number of gaps are in the final stages of management and would possibly be finalised in due course. There is a number of gaps that would still need substantial attention."⁹⁸

Dr Eloff sent the final 49-page post-audit report on 8 November 2013 to Prof Diane Grayson, the Director: Institutional Audits at the HEQC, and explained the extent to which the NWU had succeeded in implementing each of the recommendations made in the HEQC report of May 2010. He provided evidence to substantiate the NWU's success in implementing the recommendations.⁹⁹

On 26 May 2014, Prof Diane Grayson informed Prof Dan Kgwadi (the new Vice-Chancellor of the NWU from 1 May 2014) that the Institutional Audits Committee (IAC) of the CHE had considered the NWU's latest progress report at its meeting on 28 February 2014. While the IAC members recognised the progress made in addressing a number of the recommendations from the 2010 audit report, the committee found that recommendations one, two, three, five, 10, 13 and 14 had not been adequately addressed. The IAC expressed serious concern that the NWU had not adequately addressed the transformation

of the university as a whole. It therefore requested the NWU to resubmit its revised progress report by 1 October 2014.¹⁰⁰

18.6 The Ministry's 20 to 30-year strategic perspective for higher education

The Ministry's ongoing involvement in the affairs of higher education institutions was reflected in the 2010 strategic plan of the Department of Higher Education and Training. This plan, announced by Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training from 2009, had three goals for universities in particular.

The first goal was to increase the participation of men and women in undergraduate and postgraduate science, engineering and technology, in absolute numbers and in proportion to the population demographics for race and gender.

The second goal was to increase the size and calibre of the academic teaching and research population in order to generate the knowledge required for economic and societal development in the next 50 or more years.

Thirdly, it would be important to ensure that the level of investment in education was equivalent to the global average for the further and higher education and training systems.

To achieve these goals, the higher education sector should address five broad challenges: student success, quality, differentiation, knowledge production and relevance, and access.

Success: The poor performance of the schooling system created constraints to achieving success in the higher education sector. Poor school performance impeded access to programmes with specialised entry requirements, and meant that students were under prepared, in turn leading to high dropout and poor throughput rates. Universities should develop well-thought out and coherent responses that could address their internal efficiencies and racial disparities in student numbers. Such strategies should enhance graduation rates and enable universities to identify students who have the potential to become the new generation of academics and researchers.

Quality: Strategies should improve teaching, learning and the production of high-quality graduates. Improving the quality of the academic experience should include improving the broad support given to students, including an improved residential experience.

Differentiation: The differentiation debate in the system has not been concluded and remains a differentiation by effectiveness, geographical location, research output, the number of academic staff with doctorates, student

success, leadership capacity of institutions and differentiated market strategy to select more high-performing students. The funding system must be reviewed to promote differentiation that would steer the system towards meeting a diverse set of goals, justly and equitably.

Knowledge production and relevance: Performance in knowledge production is still uneven across universities and disciplines. Significant differences in knowledge production capacity need to be comprehensively analysed, and systemic and institutional strategies developed to address identified deficiencies.

Access: The Department of Education's strategic and operational plans stated that the capacity of the higher education system would have to increase substantially. *"Whatever the model's size and shape that determines access to universities, it is clear that we will need additional capacity over the next 20 to 30 years. If we are to achieve a 50% participation rate in universities and colleges with a growing number of young people in the 18 to 25-year age group, and achieve the goals of broader geographic access, the capacity of the system will have to increase."*¹⁰¹

During his 2013 Budget Vote in the National Assembly, Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, announced that two new universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape would open their doors in 2014.¹⁰² *"Much preparatory work has been done and I now expect to establish the two institutions as legal entities in the next month. R2.1 billion has been earmarked for the development of the universities over the next three years."*

18.7 The Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act, 2012

On 19 December 2012, the Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act, 23 of 2012, was published in the Government Gazette.¹⁰³ Its purpose was described as:

"To amend the Higher Education Act, 1997, so as to provide afresh for the establishment of a national institute for higher education; to extend the functions of a national institute for higher education; to provide for the appointment of an administrator for a national institute of higher education; to extend the powers and functions of an independent assessor; to give the Minister the power to intervene in the case of poor or non-performance or maladministration by a public higher education institution; to provide for the dissolution of the council as well as procedure for such dissolution; and to extend the powers of an administrator to temporarily take over the management, governance and administration of the council of a public higher education institution; and to

*amend the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008, so as to change the date on which the annual report of the South African Qualifications Authority must be submitted to the Minister; and to provide for matters connected herewith."*¹⁰⁴

18.8 Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation in the South African public universities

In his budget vote speech tabled in Parliament on 24 April 2012,¹⁰⁵ the Minister of Higher Education and Training announced his intention to constitute a ministerial oversight committee on transformation.

When announcing the establishment of the committee on 23 January 2013 in Johannesburg, Dr Nzimande said its creation dated back to the White Paper 3 of 1997, which set the framework for the transformation of the higher education sector. More than 12 years later, in 2008, the Soudien committee had concluded that the pace of transformation in the sector was painfully slow. One of its key recommendations had been that the Minister should consider establishing a permanent transformation oversight committee. This recommendation had given rise to the establishment of the Ministerial Oversight Committee in 2013.¹⁰⁶

The committee was officially established on 10 April 2013 as the Oversight Committee on Transformation in the South African Public Universities. Its seven members were Prof Malegapuru Makgoba (chairperson), Dr Mvuyo Tom, Ms Nazeema Mohamed, Ms Zingiswa Losi, Prof Andre Keet, Prof Shirley Walters and Mr Joe Mpsi.¹⁰⁷

The committee's task was to monitor the progress of transformation in public universities and to advise the Minister on policy to combat racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, as well as on policy to promote social cohesion and an institutional environment free of any constraints resulting from unfair discrimination. The committee should also advise the Minister on the role of universities in promoting the development of a free, fair and non-discriminatory society beyond the world of academia.¹⁰⁸

The Minister set comprehensive terms of reference for the committee. They included studying and evaluating the transformation frameworks, charters and annual reports of universities, and using the findings to develop a transformation charter and benchmarks for the entire sector. The committee should also suggest a mechanism for institutions to report on institutional and national transformation targets, identify best practices and challenges in the area of transformation, and bring to the Minister's attention any problem areas or incidents affecting universities transformation.¹⁰⁹

Mixed reaction to establishment of committee

The announcement of the committee's establishment attracted diverse reactions and comments. One academic called the committee "a permanent commissariat to police transformation that will no doubt massacre some universities" and another welcomed the move as long overdue. The CHE expressed its scepticism and doubted that the committee could perform the functions the Minister described. Higher Education South Africa (HESA), the association of vice-chancellors, expressed concern that the mandate of the committee appeared to duplicate the work of the CHE as statutory body.¹¹⁰ Another comment was that the committee could erode the authority of university councils.¹¹¹

The Ministerial Committee tabled its first report at a meeting of the parliamentary portfolio committee on higher education during October 2013. It declared that racial change in universities was not happening with the speed anticipated by government, and calculated that it could take 43 years to achieve racial balance among staff at universities and more than a dozen years before student intakes mirrored national demographics.

The oversight committee applied an "equity index"¹¹² to examine staff and student profiles across South Africa's 23 public universities, using the race demographics from the 2011 national census as the baseline. The study found that no South African university had reached the ideal overall equity index or fell within a 5% tolerance of the national demographics. The committee therefore proposed new admissions policies and funding penalties for untransformed institutions.¹¹³

The committee's work sparked an intense debate. Mr Vuyo Yekani, a former student leader at the University of the Western Cape, said: "It is an open secret that combating racism is central to the transformation project, and as such, it is inevitable that transformation strategies such as the oversight committee will create an irritation and some discomforts for the enemies of transformation and racial redress ... Championing transformation ... cannot be the sole responsibility of vice-chancellors, institutional forums and senior managers. All stakeholders have an important role to play."¹¹⁴

HESA responded by saying that its approach to transformation in higher education was "broader than racial and gender equity", even though equity remained an important dimension.¹¹⁵

Dr Theuns Eloff argued that an equity index based on national demographics could not be used as a point of departure as crucial factors had not been taken into account, such as the regions that universities served¹¹⁶ Other essential factors that had been ignored were the quality of higher education offered and the substandard

school education system that produced students entering universities. "Some regions also had higher concentrations of certain race groups. Correspondingly, the current equity index approach would land institutions like the historically disadvantaged University of Venda in trouble as it had too few white students, or the University of the Western Cape for having too many mixed-race students."

Mr Joe Mpisi, member of the Ministerial Oversight Committee, slammed the NWU as the only institution that had questioned the committee's report, while there were many challenges for the institution to focus on in terms of its equity index.¹¹⁷

18.9 The White Paper for Post School Education and Training

Two days after the chaotic registration scenes at the University of Johannesburg in January 2012, the Minister of Higher Education and Training released the Green Paper on *Post School Education and Training*.¹¹⁸ Two years after that, on 16 January 2014, Dr Nzimande launched the White Paper on *Post School Education and Training*. He said the document would create a diverse, integrated post school system with the capacity to absorb the youth and adults who had not been able to access the system in the past.

Explaining the innovative aims of the White Paper, he said: "If you ask me what is innovative about this White Paper, it is the fact that we have defined the mandate given by the president as creating education and training opportunities for all those who have left school, as well as for those adults who have never been to school but require education opportunities. The system must cater for illiterate people as well as those pursuing postdoctoral studies at our universities. Not a single South African who wants to further his or her education or acquire skills should be able to say they don't know where to go."¹¹⁹

Prof Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, who had studied the higher education sector, described this white paper as an encouraging tool that signals the revitalisation of the technical college system.¹²⁰ "For much of the 20 years of democracy, it has been unclear what was expected of the colleges: Are they glorified high schools or legitimate sites of good-quality post-school education? It will be important that the focus on colleges is not conceived of as separate from public universities in terms of resource allocation."

18.10 NWU's independent investigating task team probes welcoming and introduction programmes for 2014

Since the inception of the NWU, calls to accelerate transformation had been repeatedly made. Controversy erupted again in early 2014 amid reports that first-year students at the Potchefstroom Campus had used the “*Sieg heil*” salute.¹²¹

As a result of this incident, the Minister, Dr Nzimande, requested the chairperson of the NWU Council, Mr Peet van der Walt, to institute a thorough investigation into the induction practices on all campuses, including acts of fascism and Nazism that seemed to exist at the Potchefstroom Campus with the tacit approval of the university management. The Minister also requested Council to ensure that initiation practices were ceased with immediate effect, and asked Council to report to him within three months. The deadline given was 4 June 2014.¹²²

Council held an extraordinary meeting on 5 March 2014, and approved an action plan to address the reports of alleged Nazi-style saluting by first-year students, as well as alleged human rights violations associated with so-called initiation practices.

To give effect to the Minister’s first request, Council instructed the Vice-Chancellor as the accountable manager to see to it that all initiation practices were stopped immediately, along with any practice that could be construed as demeaning or an infringement of human rights.

Secondly, Council resolved to appoint an independent task team to investigate the welcoming and introduction of first-year students on all three campuses and to make recommendations about this.¹²³

Council reiterated its stance that it would not tolerate any infringements of human rights, unconditionally apologised and said it trusted that the measures to be put in place would prevent a reoccurrence of such incidents. The committee investigating the matter was requested to report back to Council by 22 May 2014.¹²⁴

Independent investigating team appointed

After the extraordinary meeting of Council on 5 March, the names of the five members of the independent investigating task team were announced¹²⁵

The members were:

- Dr Leon Wessels (chairperson), well-known South African lawyer and politician, deputy chair of the Constituent Assembly and member of the SA Human Rights Commission



▲ Dr Leon Wessels ¹²⁷

- Dr Somadoda Fikeni, acclaimed academic, community development activist and political analyst
- Ms Rhoda Kadalie, former member of the SA Human Rights Commission, founder of the Gender Equity Unit, Executive Director of Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust and women’s rights activist
- Adv Rehana Rawat, an advocate of the High Court, expert on human rights, labour law and arbitration, and chairperson of the NWU’s Human Rights Committee
- Dr Bismark Tyobeka, leading nuclear power expert and Chief Executive Officer of the National Nuclear Regulator of South Africa. As an alumnus of the Mafikeng Campus, he was honoured with an alumni award in 2013.¹²⁶

The scope of the investigating team’s duties was in line with the Minister’s request for a thorough investigation into induction, orientation and initiation practices. This included determining the level of understanding of fundamental human rights in the student community and evaluating the institutional and residential culture to determine whether it is open and welcoming. It also involved determining where there was a “*culture of intimidation, harassment, fear and purging*” at the university against staff and students who try to take a stand against such practices.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, the Institutional Student Representative Council (ISRC) had pledged their support in working together to create an aligned reception and introduction programme aimed at establishing a healthy and welcoming student culture on all three campuses.¹²⁹

On 22 April 2014, Dr Wessels reported good progress in the team’s investigation.¹³⁰ On the same day, the task team invited all NWU stakeholders to make submissions

by 6 May 2014, consisting of information, points of view and arguments relevant to the task team's mandate.¹³¹

During the week of 19 May, the task team gathered at the Sport Village in Potchefstroom to finalise their report.

According to the *Beeld* newspaper, which broke the news about the Nazi-style salute, this investigation gave the NWU the valuable opportunity to evaluate its reception and introduction programmes.¹³²

It also caused a war of words among Afrikaners in *Beeld* and the social media.

During this intense debate, Dr Wessels said orientation practice was not only an Afrikaner tradition. He found the first reference of this practice in 1684, and during 2008 a survey was done in America on "hazing". Dr Wessels said that over the course of a decade, he had not met any student leader or student dean who was in favour of the practice. It was inexplicable that no one had been able to stop this discredited practice.¹³³

The task team's report was handed to Council chairperson Mr Peet van der Walt on 27 May 2014 and was discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on 29 May.¹³⁴

At an extraordinary meeting of the NWU Council on 4 June 2014, Council members deliberated on the process to follow in dealing with the report.¹³⁵ Council resolved that more time was needed to study the content and recommendations of the report, after which a final report would be submitted to the Minister of Higher Education and Training.¹³⁶ Council scheduled a follow-up meeting for 19 and 20 June to discuss the report.¹³⁷

Meanwhile, on 2 June 2014, *Beeld* published a report predicting that the task team's work would have far-reaching consequences, and also reported that the team had studied two previous studies on the same topic.¹³⁸ These were the Human Rights Commission's 2001 investigation into initiation practices at institutions of higher learning and the 2003 investigation by Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert on the campus culture at the University of Stellenbosch.¹³⁹

Report sets the scene for more debate

Dr Wessels remarked on 3 June 2014 that the investigating team's report was not the last word on the topic but a point of departure for further debate in an academic environment.¹⁴⁰

Prof Dan Kgwadi said that during his term as Vice-Chancellor, no campus should appropriate one language or culture for only one racial group. He wanted to create an inclusive institutional culture for the NWU,¹⁴¹ and to accelerate transformation through a new vision to enhance the excellent characteristics of the university.¹⁴²

On 19 and 20 June 2014, the investigating team's report was discussed at length. Council's view was summed up in a media release issued on its behalf by Mr Louis Jacobs of Corporate Communication and Stakeholder Relations:

*"Council acknowledged the content of the report and expressed its gratitude towards the task team for the investigation and the preparation of the report. Council noted certain shortcomings with regard to the process and structure followed by the task team in finalising the report. It also took note of the fact that certain elements of the terms of reference of the task team had not been addressed"*¹⁴³

"However, it unanimously agreed that the content and recommendations made by the task team would be used as input for the answers to be provided to the Minister in response to the questions he had put to the Council. As a matter of urgency, the task team report will also be used as a working document in taking the university forward by addressing pertinent issues such as enhancing a culture of human rights."

"A core team from Council has been tasked to compile the report to be delivered to the Minister on 26 June, taking into account the inputs made by the task team, as well as the recommendations from Council."

"Council has again reiterated its stance that it will not tolerate any infringements of human rights at the university. In light hereof, the report delivered to the Minister would include decisive measures on how the NWU would continue to implement and strengthen its zero tolerance approach to prevent any infringements of human rights or any form of initiation during future reception and introduction programmes for first-year students."

*"Council resolved that the contents of the report presented to the Minister would be made public once the final report from the NWU Council had been presented to him."*¹⁴⁴

Dr Blade Nzimande addressed the media ahead of his budget vote on 21 July 2014. He said that sexism and racism were rife at some South African universities and that transformation in the sector had been painfully slow. His department had started the process of publishing the Social Inclusion Policy Framework, and all public educational institutions reporting to his department would have to abide by the good practices contained in it. He announced that *"vexing issues such as racism, discrimination based on gender, HIV/Aids and class will be confronted through this policy"*.¹⁴⁵ The Minister also expressed concern about the orientation programme for first-year students at the Potchefstroom Campus as it was authoritarian and semi-militaristic in nature.¹⁴⁶



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CHAPTER 19

Evaluating the success of mergers and incorporations

19. The restructuring of higher education

How successful was the restructuring of higher education in South Africa and what yardsticks or benchmarks can be used to measure this? Fortunately, the country has not been alone in undertaking mergers and incorporations. A glimpse at the global higher education landscape offers some valuable insight. Australia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are some of the nations that have tackled restructuring programmes.¹

19.1 The British experiment on collaborations, alliances and mergers (CAMs)²

The United Kingdom has substantial experience of university-level restructuring.

Alan Langlands, from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, has said that adaptive and sustainable institutions are essential for an effective higher education system that meets the needs of students, the economy and society. In this age of rapid change and opportunity, many institutions in England reconsidered their fundamental role, market position, structure and partnerships. For those institutions, it made sense to consider the pros and cons of Collaborations, Alliances and Mergers (CAMs).³

Langlands referred to the major CAM developments in many other countries, including various parts of Europe and in Wales. These activities were often actively promoted by governments, as was the case in South Africa, and aimed to strengthen institutions and improve performance against global competition.

The need for a CAM process was also identified in England, which experienced the same challenges. Langlands provided practical guidelines to institutions by setting out the lessons learned from a variety of case studies and other evidence.⁴

According to Langlands, CAMs were an important modernising feature of the higher education landscape for a long time. He acknowledged this long-standing mechanism for higher education change management, but found that even in 2012 relatively little substantial assessment of CAM results was generally available. Therefore, to support the higher education sector, the Higher Education Funding Council for England conducted a study, guided by an expert steering group, to learn from institutions' experience and improve the likelihood of success when collaborations, alliances and/or mergers were entered into.⁵

There were three main types of findings and lessons learned from this study, presented as questions:

- What form of relationship is most appropriate in this particular case?
 - This question was based on the core purposes of higher education institutions, namely teaching, research and knowledge exchange, and should be at the heart of all CAM processes.
 - This approach implied a strong focus on students, the academic community, the wider society, the 'public good' and business needs
 - Economies of scale could be important in advancing academic aims, for example by achieving critical mass in research or ensuring the viability of courses.
 - The complex issue about the size and scale of institutions was rarely a good argument for mergers.
 - Mergers could be a "*point of discontinuity*" with the past, to allow merging institutions to achieve a completely new identity.
 - Geography and distance sometimes constrain the effectiveness of mergers, so selective collaboration might be a more viable alternative.
 - Co-location is often necessary to deliver significant synergy or efficiency.
 - It is important to consider the impact on students and staff of any rationalisation of multi-site operations.
 - Whether to retain an existing brand or develop a new one is an important issue. This reflects the growing significance of name recognition, linked to institutional identity and differentiation, to prospective students, employees, employers and other partners and donors.⁶
- What evidence is necessary to inform decision-making in a CAM process?
 - The evidence to inform decision-making should reflect the nature of the proposal.

- Institutions should avoid seeing the CAM case for a particular proposal as being self-evident. A rigorous options review should precede any agreement in principle. Institutions should engage with dissenting views. If a proposal affects students, their interests and needs should be addressed
- CAM options should be tested for affordability. Public funding could be less likely in future, and a rigorous approach to costing and financing should be necessary.
- Merger costs were often underestimated, particularly in areas such as harmonising pay and benefits structures, ICT systems and administrative processes. The tendency to emphasise renewing of the buildings and infrastructure could easily be presented as a clear outcome from mergers. Other costs, such as development initiatives, could be more difficult to estimate, but should not be overlooked
- CAM institutions could bargain on the potential for economies of scale, over the longer term, in consultation with staff and other interested parties.
- Given the tendency to underestimate costs and risks, a due diligence exercise could reconsider or renegotiate the CAM process if necessary.⁷
- What kind of process to adopt to ensure the most effective outcome?
 - Leadership should steer the whole CAM process, handle the questions about the mission and strategy, overcome obstacles and negotiate with stakeholders.
 - The potential partners should develop a shared vision before acting. Clarity about objectives would energise the different parties and avoid wasted effort.
 - Communication and dialogue with stakeholders, especially staff and students, should be essential throughout the CAM process. Effective communication could reduce resistance. Expectations of participants should be managed.
 - The organisational structure for Senior Management and governance arrangements anticipated in the new institution or venture needed to be agreed at an early stage. If not, ambiguity could undermine trust and develop into obstacles.
- Adequate oversight of the CAM project should be established, in the form of a joint working group and/or an Interim Council.
- Project management should be used and assigned to a separate joint project team, with adequate resources to manage the whole CAM process and to ensure the continuity of existing operations until the implementation of the CAM proposals.
- Almost all institutions involved in CAM projects reported that they required more time, effort and money than they originally expected to conclude the process. This observation accords with private sector experience, which reported that the CAM benefits were often overestimated and the costs and degree of difficulty underestimated. A general spirit of optimism about the process could help to overcome obstacles.
- The CAM change process would be dynamic, often messy and subject to the influence of unexpected events and obstacles. CAM institutions should therefore agree to 'break points' in order to mitigate the risk of being swept along or overlooking warning signs.
- CAM institutions should agree to an implementation plan as an essential part of the process, and to review and modify the plan if necessary.
- Investment in the restructuring would often be necessary to deliver real benefits, and should be considered carefully.
- CAM partners should pay attention to the respective institutional cultures, which could affect the success or failure of CAM attempts to achieve organisational change.
- Government agencies that could provide practical support should be used. External donors should avoid inappropriate and inflexible monitoring arrangements.
- The role of proper governance arrangements should be recognised. Governing bodies need to be engaged from the outset, alongside senior management, in considering what form of relationship

might be most suitable for the proposed institution. The governing body should support senior managers, and in doing so would safeguard the interests of the institution.⁸

Mats Alvesson from Lund University in Sweden wrote during 2013 in a sceptical personal viewpoint that he observed a global trend of “*de-universitification*” or the McDonaldisation of universities in the recent massification in the transformation process of the higher education system:⁹ “*There is broad political agreement, in many Western countries, about the importance of the expansion of higher education, our existence in a knowledge society in which expertise and qualifications are central features. ‘Grandiosity for everyone’ could be the political slogan of our time. In my opinion much of this talk has limited substance and contains a considerable amount of simple trickery and self-deception.*”¹⁰

19.2 General evaluation of the restructuring and transformation process of the South African higher education sector

Various authors did research work on the restructuring and transformation of the South African higher education system, in order to evaluate the merger and incorporation process.

In 2003, V Soobrayan asked if legal frameworks directed merger outcomes. Soobrayan concluded after a study of five higher education mergers that in the context of the mergers, the legal frameworks had been inadequate as an instrument to support the merger, if legal action was needed. The reason was that the feasibility of legal challenges were closely aligned and mixed with the conception, distribution and extent of political and institutional power and therefore not often a purely legal matter.¹¹

Prof Malegapuru Makgoba, vice-chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, delivered a presentation at the *Colloquium on 10 Years of Democracy and Higher Education Change* in November 2004, and reflected that there were “*a variety of critics of the higher education restructuring process*”. These critics included people saying that the restructuring process was a front for an “*exclusivist Africanisation agenda and the inevitable drop in academic standards*”, while others charged that the merger and incorporation process had overlooked the need for “*epistemological redress and had not considered curriculum-related issues*”.

Another group argued that the architects of the restructuring plan had adopted a “*technicist*” approach that “*thinly masks their servility to market forces*” and which

would exacerbate rather than ameliorate existing inequalities. “*In other words, there are people who question the capacity of the restructuring process alone to bring about real transformation in our higher education institutions.*” Nicola Jenvey later asked if these words by Makgoba had been prophetic considering the contentious circumstances in higher education a decade later.¹²

Also in 2004, A Wyngaard and C Kapp mentioned two types of models for proposed mergers, namely the structural model and the process model. They identified three types of structural models, namely the co-federal, the federal and the unitary structure. They stated that merging institutions could apply each of these structural models in the South African context, with certain advantages and disadvantages linked to each model. To illustrate the structural model they mentioned examples of multi-campus institutions such as the Cape Technikon and the Peninsula Technikon that could effectively merge in a federal structure, while they thought that the Durban Institute of Technology and its counterpart could merge in a unitary structure.¹³

Wyngaard and Kapp proposed that the process model should be applicable to all mergers, whether the institutions used a co-federal, federal or unitary structure. The reason was that the process model spells out a short list of steps or a checklist of issues to be considered in the merger process. They referred to MM Botha who developed a 20-step model for mergers of choice (eg Natal Technikon and ML Sultan Technikon) in higher education and added a list of required skills to facilitate successful mergers.¹⁴

Owing to the importance of the human factor in mergers and incorporations Wyngaard and Kapp sent questionnaires to 35 members of universities, technikons, colleges of education and technical colleges in 2004 and received 20 completed responses on the following open-ended questions:

1. “*Please provide a brief background (historical/legal/procedural) of the merger in which you have been involved.*”
2. *How and by whom was the news of the merger announced to you?*
3. *How was this information received/interpreted/experienced by you?*
 - 3.1 *intellectually (cognitively)*
 - 3.2 *emotionally (feelings/attitude)?*
4. *How would you explain the process that was followed to facilitate/effect the merger?*

5. What has the impact of the merger been on:

5.1 the morale of staff in the institution

5.2 the department or unit where you work/ worked

5.3 you at a professional level

5.4 you as a person?

6. What has the impact of the merger been on:

6.1 the morale of staff in the institution

6.2 the department or unit where you work/ worked

6.3 you at a professional level

6.4 you as a person?

7. What has the impact of the merger been on:

7.1 equity (students and staff) in the institution

7.2 efficiency (did it actually save money?)

7.3 curriculum (rationalisation of programmes? Different and improved programmes?)

7.4 the organisation (What changes were effected? Were these worthwhile? Meaningful?)

7.5 the students (Were they involved in the process? How did they accept the new institutional identity?)

7.6 the physical site (How did buildings, equipment, facilities, change?)

8. Would you describe the merger as a success? Why? (Why not?)¹⁵

Their analysis from the completed responses to the questionnaires was as follows:

- A variety of approaches to the merger process were used and these differ on a continuum of approaches: from no process used at all, to the merger as an activity still in the future, or the forming of a transformation forum, the activity as a well-planned phased processes, the establishment of committees and task teams, and the establishment of a Change Management Office. The golden theme running through all of these approaches was a lack of forward planning and an absence of all the role players who should be involved, as well as a lack of continuous communication on the unfolding process.
- The facilitation of the process, although understandably varying from institution to institution, lacked proper prior planning and

some kind of scientific and logical thinking. It ranged from no process at all to a top-down decision, which was merely implemented with no discussion or indications of attempts at following some sort of logical procedure.

- The approach to the Further Education and Training sector seemed to differ from province to province.
- The colleges of education chosen had to merge with either a university or a technikon as from 1 January 2000.
- Evidence showed that colleges of education and technical colleges seemed to have been treated rather poorly.
- Although there seemed to have been much communication in the majority of cases, the nature of the communication and the information that was given still left people poorly informed. There were also cases where people were left in the dark or not properly involved
- Role players had mixed feelings and diverse perceptions in reaction to the news of the mergers.
- On an emotional level, the feelings and attitudes of staff members were mostly negative. This was reinforced by gossip and rumours among staff.
- In the case of a merger between a technikon and a university, the 'merger' was viewed by the technikon staff as being a "takeover".
- The impact of the merger was reflected in four areas:
 - The reported morale of the staff as a general trend of the responses was negative and described as very low. The impact on staff morale was predominantly negative, led to poor attitudes, staff resignations and uncertainty, lower loyalty and accountability, and even despair. One respondent identified three categories of morale among staff members, namely:
 1. The despondent group who went into a miserable state of mind
 2. The nasty group who wanted to identify scapegoats and were described as being complaining and attacking mudslingers
 - 3 The starry-eyed yet cautious group

who kept their heads amid all the turmoil, hoping for the best and working towards a better future.

- The impact on the department or the work unit varied from no impact at all to a total closure or disappearance of that particular department or unit.
 - On a professional level and considering the role of staff, the merger meant the end of a career or some; for others it was a case of survival, while others experienced it as *'a wake-up call'* and the opening up of new possibilities with the potential for growth and new opportunities.
 - On a personal level, the impact of the mergers reflects the whole spectrum of reactions from predominantly negative reactions to a realisation that one has to accept reality and contribute to the shaping of one's own destiny in a positive way. Wyngaard and Kapp reported that the most depressing impact of the mergers on people was on their self-confidence and self-worth.¹⁶
- About one third of the respondents could not reflect during 2004 on the impact of the merger on equity, efficiency, curricula, the organisation, the students and the physical site, because it was too early in the process to respond to this question. The responses varied as follows:
 - For most of the respondents, the merger had no visible or significant impact on equity.
 - The main effect on the impact on curricula was the phasing out of duplication.
 - The question on the impact on the organisation received mixed responses from *"no impact"*, to *"too early to tell"*, to *"no meaningful changes because two institutions were pasted together"*.
 - Students were either not even aware of the merger or not involved at all, while others were involved at representative levels such as Institutional Forums or Students Representative Council (SRC) representation.
 - The physical site did not change in the majority of the cases due to the merger, but some reported pooling of services such as media and of equipment.¹⁷
- In response to the final question requiring an overall opinion on the success of the merger, some respondents indicated that it would be premature to judge, and Wyngaard and Kapp grouped the feedback about the merger concept into positive and negative views:
 - The positive views of mergers focused mainly on the following factors:
 - Better utilisation of staff qualifications
 - Less duplication of programmes
 - Sharing of resources and facilities
 - A more cost-effective operation in terms of economies of scale
 - Improved academic quality over time
 - **Two positive responses were quoted:** *"h" Another respondent said, "It will be publicly described as a success no matter what happens at the rock face of the staff and student realities. If success means the obliteration of any vestige of the previous racial identities of the two institutions, then the merger will be a resounding success."*¹⁸
 - Respondents justified their negative responses with the following arguments:
 - It would have been more cost-effective to keep the two institutions separate and to focus on different types of programmes.
 - The process took too long and wrong decisions were made; staff members were still negative and traumatised, managers were still negative and excellent staff members (intellectual capital) were lost due to resignation.
 - The process was poorly managed.
 - Areas such as a new identity, unity among staff, the legal procedures and the support from the Department of Education were still uncertain.
 - Fiscally it would take a very long time to balance the books.
 - One of the respondents was quoted as follows: *"No, I am not in favour of mergers of the kind that I have experienced. There may be other ways of effecting mergers that are more user-friendly"*.¹⁹

Wyngaard and Kapp concluded that the scenario for higher education in the post-1994 South Africa called for action and the answer of government was a total shake-up of the system as stipulated in the Size and Shape document. *“The rationale behind this document was mainly a justification on political and economic grounds and very little on academic considerations. The consequence would be (and to some extent was) a totally different further and higher education landscape caused by mergers, take-overs and closures at a large scale.”*²⁰

Their research since 2002 could be considered as a benchmark for evaluating the complex change management process associated with mergers. In 2004, they proposed the following lessons learnt or factors to be taken into consideration for success with the merger process:

- *“Proper prior planning seems to have been lacking in most of the cases on which respondents have reported. It seems as if little (no) attention was paid to experiences of similar situations in other countries. This once again emphasises the ‘unscientific’ approach of higher education institutions to their own existence and states the point that universities are not ‘learning organisations’.*
- *A well-planned and well-timed merger implementation plan that takes account of the ‘cultures’ of the different institutions is developed according to logical and realistic phases or stages and it takes into account the life cycle of all the merging institutions.*
- *Continuous and open participation of all staff involved, continuous feedback and opportunities for input, discussion, debate and questioning for all stakeholders and assurance that no staff member would be retrenched.*
- *Strong and reliable institutional leadership whose authority and credentials are respected by all the parties is required.*
- *There should be strong and strategic leadership that has accepted the political arrangements for the mergers and then deploys its energy and resources for optimal positioning of its staff, students and the programme offerings.*
- *It is invaluable to have a strong and loyal staff complement whose participation and commitment is ensured and sustained by institutional leadership throughout the merger process in a consistent and transparent manner.”*²¹

- *“There should be ongoing proactive monitoring and auditing to ensure that the process stays on track.*
- *A merger will be less complicated for a party which has a strong and verifiable financial position, has well-qualified and performing staff and a strong and reliable student enrolment.*
- *Well-planned post-merger management and contingency planning are essential to ensure that the merger is properly wrapped up.”*²²

Wyngaard and Kapp hoped that when government planned future mergers, role players at that stage would apply the lessons learnt from previous experience to avoid the devastating effect mergers may have on their most valuable asset, their people.²³

In the same futuristic spirit, Prof Sampie Terreblanche of the University of Stellenbosch highlighted three trends that could harm the ethos of universities in future if not managed carefully:

- The trend towards professionalising academic courses, which implies that professional bodies should not be allowed to dictate the contents of the relevant curriculum for their statutory purposes.
- The trend towards over-commercialising university expertise in the marketplace with the aim of finding additional sources of income.
- The trend towards developing organisational structures and managing universities like a corporate body, and in the process harming the traditional fellowship among colleagues.²⁴

In August 2004 Hall, Symes and Luescher published a research report for the CHE on the governance of the mergers in the South African Higher Education sector. The report had the following three objectives for monitoring and eventually evaluating the merger and incorporation processes:

- *“Describing and analysing the state of governance at public higher education institutions with special focus on the role of councils, senates, institutional forums and executive management and the relationship between these four structures;*
- *Establishing whether, how effectively and with what consequences co-operative governance had been implemented at higher education institutions in South Africa;*
- *Making recommendations on how to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in higher education governance with due*

cognisance of such principles as democracy, academic freedom and equity.”²⁵

The key findings, interpretations and conclusions of Hall and his partners were as follows:

- *“Successful restructuring outcomes will depend upon the ability of state and institutions to negotiate specific mergers and incorporations to common benefit.*
- *There is a danger that the principle of ‘equal partnership’ in mergers, and especially in incorporations, may not be applied consistently in practice; governance in the pre-merger phase must give careful attention to this.*
- *Councils should carefully assess the specific due diligence needs of the merger or incorporation in which they are involved, notwithstanding the due diligence guidelines that have been published by the Ministry.*
- *A Memorandum of Agreement and merger plan are key frameworks for the governance of a merger process. Management should develop these documents during the pre-merger phase. Management should also develop mechanisms to ensure that goodwill and momentum could be established throughout the transitional and integration phases of the merger.*
- *Given inherent challenges posed by and for the Interim Council, institutions must take into account the specific circumstances of their merger in selecting a preferred model for the Interim Council.*
- *In governance terms, the process of establishing institutional culture and identity requires conscious attempts to plan, implement and monitor institutional development; the Council of the merged institution must exercise its accountability in this respect.*
- *A defined vision and mission for the institution should drive decisions respecting academic integration.*
- *Models for multi-campus governance should be evaluated in terms of their likely impact on effective operational and academic integration, as well as on the creation of a new institutional culture and identity in the merged institution.”²⁶*

This investigation of the CHE resulted in the publication of a Research Report²⁷ and a Policy Report,²⁸ which represented the CHE’s intended advice to the Minister on proposals to enhance the governance of higher education institutions.²⁹

Hall, Symes and Luescher also mentioned that the merger and incorporation process has at least three substantive phases. This is evident from the stipulated functions for the CHE in paragraph 5(2)³⁰ of the Higher Education Act of 1997, and from evidence in the international literature on higher education mergers. The submissions of 2002 from the merging institutions to the Minister also mentioned that dividing the merger process into distinct phases would contribute to the effectiveness and successful implementation of the merger and incorporation.

These three phases were as follows:

- The pre-merger phase
- The transitional phase (or interim phase)
- The integration phase (or post-merger phase)³¹

These phases were important for conceptualising the sequence of steps in effective models and ensuring good governance throughout the merger and incorporation process. In 2001, MM Botha described two different models for mergers and incorporations.

Confederal structure

The first was the confederal structure, which MM Botha described as a formalised and permanent union in which the constituent elements retain full autonomy. A characteristic of the confederal structure is the mutual consent to collaborate and cooperate on issues of common interest, together with a contract between the parties that describes the obligations and rights of each party regarding the collaboration. No one party would be able to dictate matters outside the cooperation agreement to the other.

The advantages of the confederal structure are that it develops and preserves distinct niches, allows for greater economies of scale and promotes unity in the sector.

The disadvantages of the confederal structure is that it is more difficult to establish than a confederation, can initially have an adverse effect on morale, and has staff implications.

Unitary structure

The second model that MM Botha described was the unitary structure. Here, the existing parties merge into a single organisation with one central administration. Certain functions and powers are decentralised if necessary, but a single identity would be essential.

The advantages of the unitary structure are that it allows greater economies of scale, eliminates duplication and overlap, and encourages greater exchange of expertise.

Its disadvantages are that different missions and culture could confound such a merger, there would be a total loss of own identity and culture, and the impact on staff would be enormous.³²

Construction of a merger

According to MM Botha, the literature focused on one issue or a few selected issues to describe a merger process, with no comprehensive merger model readily available, due to the uniqueness of each case. He compiled a process to construct a merger and incorporation, and explained that the literature on this kind of advice consists only of hints, short lists of steps or checklists of issues to be considered during a merger and incorporation exercise:

- Six key areas that needed special attention when planning and executing a merger exercise:
 - Selecting a partner
 - Establishing the ground rules
 - Setting up a task force
 - Managing the process
 - Ensuring quality
 - Maintaining an external focus.
- Skills required to facilitate successful mergers and incorporations:
 - Matching of goals and objectives
 - Establishing a partnership philosophy, which could include the following aspects:
 - Communication goals
 - Performance goals
 - Dispute resolution strategies
 - Evaluation mechanisms
 - A commitment agreement in the form of a memorandum of understanding.
- Putting a human resource plan in place
- Creating a merger contract that included the following stipulations:
 - The possibility of backing out
 - Management inputs from each partner
 - Fair and equitable control mechanisms
 - Rewards agreements
 - Agreement to avoid exploitation
 - Integrating the partnership into normal

communication structures

- Shared evaluation procedures
- Realistic expectations
- An effort to imagine the future.
- Ensure an adequate due diligence exercise
- Establish a well-developed rationale for the merger
- Reassure that possible synergies were understood
- Communicate goals and progress
- Move quickly through the transition period to create permanence.³³

Merger of choice

Although a blueprint for a comprehensive merger and incorporation process or procedure would be difficult to design, MM Botha presented the following step-by-step model for mergers of choice in higher education. (If the Ministry of Education ordered a merger, steps 1, 3, and 5, would be redundant and step 7 would need adaptation):

1. *“Top management (TM) decides whether the possibility of a merger is to be investigated. If so, an internal Investigating Committee (IC) is established.*

2. *The IC assesses the institution, determining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis or something similar).*

3. *The IC makes recommendations to top management on whether a merger would be to the advantage of the institution, informed by the previous assessment.*

4. *Communication to the constituency of the institution is imperative at this stage; inputs must be invited and considered.*

5. *If a merger is a viable option, the IC identifies a number of potential merger partners, arranged in priority order.*

6. *The IC drafts a basic proposal document, with variations tailored to each potential partner, as a merger scenario with any one of them would be unique.*

7. *A Merger Negotiating Delegation (MND) approaches the institution that appears at the top of the priority list; if they are not receptive, the next one is approached.*

8. *Once a potential partner has responded positively, set up a joint task team (JTT) under the leadership of a Project Manager (PM).*
9. *Communication with the constituencies of both institutions must take place at this stage.*
10. *The Joint Technical Team (JTT) conducts a process of due diligence, identifies the synergies of the partners and the goals of the merger.*
11. *Constituencies comment on the synergies and goals.*
12. *The JTT identifies all relevant issues and sets up joint sub-teams (JST) to deal with each issue. The issues would include at least institutional culture, academic programmes, personnel, structure, governance, finance, facilities, support services and client base.*
13. *The Joint Strategic Team's (JST) report to the JTT and a roll-out plan, with time frames, is created, informed by the JST's reports.*
14. *Constituencies comment on the roll-out plan.*
15. *Once the roll-out plan is finalised, the merger is announced and the plan is set in motion.*
16. *The progress and efficiency of the plan is continuously monitored by the project manager and the JTT; adaptations are made if and when necessary; quality assurance forms parts of this monitoring process.*
17. *Regular feedback is provided to constituencies.*
18. *Post-merger integration is continuously facilitated.*
19. *Sound change management principles are adhered to throughout.*
20. *Closure is reached and communicated.*" ³⁴

Execution

Botha concluded that the execution of this systematic model should not necessarily be chronological, due to the circumstances of each case. The time spent on each step would also depend on the circumstances of each case. This kind of description of mergers also illustrated the complexity of process with many opportunities for failure if not planned and managed properly. While the higher education institutions in South Africa had no choice as to their merger partners, the need for collaboration to serve regional needs should facilitate their merger process. The numbers of staff members involved in the merger process and the time and energy

spent would certainly require additional resources, guidance and assistance, to ensure that the quality of the core business should not deteriorate.³⁵ This was a fact recognised by Minister Kader Asmal as early as February 2001 in the National Plan for Higher Education.³⁶

Salim Vally also evaluated the trends in the South African higher education sector against the background of contemporary publications on the topic. He identified a reluctance on the part of universities to enrol students from poor backgrounds and allow broader access into the sector. The reasons for this trend were the pressure on throughput, the perception of the success of their alumni in the marketplace, the shrinking financial allocations to education, and a collective dialogue for efficiency and competitiveness that had side-lined previous commitments to access, equity and genuine transformation. He said that these developments followed a global market utopia, which observed higher education as a commodity, emphasising a new managerialism spurred on by market-driven notions of competition, privatisation and consumption that adopt corporate models of management in order to reduce costs with the aim of maximising the financial viability of institutions.³⁷

In 2007, GJ van der Westhuizen did a thorough descriptive analysis of the publications on the restructuring or transformation process in the higher education sector since 1999, with reference to topics such as framing, design and reporting, as reflected in the published studies on this subject. His findings provided an inclusive A-Z overview of the range of report types that have been published and the different topics used by scholars for the evaluation of this transformation process and goals:

- The evaluation purposes, designs and forms of reporting vary to suit different audiences.
- The studies focused on the full range of anticipated transformation goals, such as governance, capacity building, mergers, research performance, or on the progress towards more than one goal.
- The democratisation goals, defined as learning for democratic participation, participative governance, access and participation, and transparency.
- The development and responsiveness goals have been defined in terms of capacity building, mobility, institutional mix and responsive programmes.
- The evaluation of progress towards the efficiency and effectiveness goals which refer to appropriate size and shape, standards of

academic practice, single systems and cost-effective management.

- The quality and public accountability goals described in terms of flexible learning, social responsibility and community service.
- The reports by the CHE and Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) seem most comprehensive and cover to a greater or lesser extent all the areas of transformation as outlined in the Education White Paper 3.
- The scope of evaluations ranged from system-wide or national to regional and institutional.
- The kinds of reform interventions evaluated by the various studies were mainly at the level of the institution, and include strategic planning, actions to increase regional cooperation, and changes in policies to improve equity, quality and efficiency. A study by CHET looked at capacity-building interventions based on models adopted by funders.
- The purposes of evaluations vary. The statements of evaluation purposes ranged from the assessment of “*lessons learned*” to gauge progress towards transformation and identify future challenges, and the development of proposals for improvement. The evaluation intent of the majority of studies was to “*review transformation*”, to “*assess movement*” of the system towards transformation goals, or to “*review a decade of changes*”.
- The evaluation of the structure of the reports:
 - The studies focused on analysing status, practices and trends, for example in research and governance. Some studies were conducted with the purpose of using a specific framework to describe and review changes in higher education.
 - The evaluation designs were purposeful, and with good examples of technical, rational evaluations, but weak in accounting for the complexities of reform evaluation.
 - The studies were meaningfully framed and well contextualised
 - The majority of reports were rather weak in their reference to relevant theories and international trends in evaluation practice and design.
 - The reports were also weak in their references to recent articulations of

evaluation theory and consideration of other evaluation design options.

- Most reports acknowledged that evaluating progress in transformation is complex, but that methods of analysis lack sophistication, eg statistical analyses were mostly descriptive with no complex regression analyses utilised.
- The reports were weak on the presentation of theories of change and the evaluation of the interventions. Evaluators of transformation in higher education in South Africa work with a very limited repertoire of evaluation designs. Only a few reports articulated how certain policies and policy implementation actions were supposed to bring about the desired change in the institution or system. Only a few questions were asked about the value or nature of the transformation processes and the impact of the interventions themselves.
- The discussion of findings and recommendations proposed across all studies were constructive with the clear intent to contribute towards change and transformation, but the usefulness of many reports was limited because they produced findings that were directly aimed at policy makers. There was no evaluation in the reports of the consequences of the transformation interventions in the higher education system or the expected changes in the higher education landscape. The efforts of some scholars were noted to refine indicators of the responsiveness goal and to achieve progress towards developing newer and more responsive methodologies for the evaluation of education reform.³⁸

This study of GJ van der Westhuizen was an attempt to recognise the difficulties of evaluating the South African higher education transformation work, and illustrated that evaluations of the transformation process should become more competent by design to contribute to the progress of transformation in the sector.³⁹

Mr Gwede Mantashe, the secretary general of the ANC, declared in 2008 that failed university mergers were examined or reviewed for possible solutions, because there were questions asked about the success of some mergers.⁴⁰ However, three years later, in the merged higher education landscape, the circumstances of institutions were mixed. Since April 2011, five universities have been placed under administration for reasons including maladministration, corruption and financial crises. These universities are the Vaal University of Technology in the Vaal Triangle, the Central University of

Technology in the Free State, which challenged the decision in court, the Tshwane University of Technology,⁴¹ the University of Zululand,⁴² and Walter Sisulu University in Mthatha.⁴³

In 2004, CN van der Westhuizen described the human side of the incorporation of the College of Education in Pretoria into the University of Pretoria as the School of Teacher Training, by analysing the emotional phases experienced by staff members in the context of the five stages in the 1986 Kübler-Ross grief model:

- **Stage 1:** Denial and isolation
- **Stage 2:** Anger
- **Stage 3:** Bargaining
- **Stage 4:** Depression
- **Stage 5:** Acceptance

The study of Van der Westhuizen illustrated the need for a more humane approach to these kinds of change processes, thus allowing merged institutions to function more effectively.⁴⁴ G Goldman studied the concept of mergers and concluded that the existing literature appears to have directed limited attention to individual experiences of a merger. *“More detailed knowledge of how individuals experience change will enable business leaders to tailor change management interventions to negate the effect of these often overlooked human aspects of large-scale change and facilitate more effective roll-out of change interventions.”*⁴⁵

In 2004, Linda Chisholm explained the changes that have been achieved 10 years after the end of Apartheid. On the structural side there was significant change, eg. 18 racially divided educational departments were restructured into nine; the rationale for policy making and application has changed; education budgets were redesigned to overcome racial disparities; education control has been decentralised; educational institutions have been opened to all races; curricula design was modified; management and administration was reorganised; innovative forms of assessment, and certification were introduced by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); the training of teachers was redirected to the higher education sector; and the higher education sector was restructured on a mass scale.

On the social side, the reformed educational system favoured an expanding, racially mixed, middle class.⁴⁶ Prof Thandwa Mthembu researched the audited data of the public higher education system and found that there had been a 60% increase in student enrolments, from 590 000 in 1996 to a total of 938 000 students in 2011, which illustrated that the process of massification by government was fruitful. These figures indicated that African enrolment increased to 68% of the total

enrolments in 2011 while the white student numbers declined to 19% of the total.⁴⁷

This social change was a considerable achievement, but the shift in favour of the middle class was not the intended goal of the transformation process. The intention of the restructuring policy was in fact the redress of access for the poor. This did not mean that transformation had not taken place since 1994. In the democratisation of society, the social position of individuals changed, because the context within which they live has changed and in turn influenced the social strategies and choices of individuals. The reconfigured and realigned social system provided opportunities to all.⁴⁸

The story of the restructuring and transformation of the higher education sector in South Africa was in a sense a clash of different forces, which hampered the full realisation of government’s goals. While national policy, market forces, institutional reforms, industry and regional initiatives accelerated differentiation, it is also true that there were inhibitors in the form of resource constraints, managerial and governance challenges, funding structures, and the absence of size and shape debates. The demand for access and equity appears as the driver for articulation while national policies, internal management and governance structures, and the labour market inhibit its growth.⁴⁹

Prof John Higgins from the University of Cape Town wrote a chapter in the publication, *The Europa World of Learning 2015*, and argued that academic freedom is given an unusually privileged place in the South African Constitution, but found that in some crucial respects it is an ambivalent and perhaps ultimately a contradictory and self-defeating right.⁵⁰ He identified the policy framework proposed by the National Commission on Higher Education’s 1996 report, *A Framework for Transformation*, as the first restriction.⁵¹ *“By narrowing down the scope of academic freedom to a subset of an individual’s right to freedom of expression or belief, the report sought to assert scope for state intervention, presented in the guise of a democratically sanctioned notion of cooperative governance – with some uneasiness in the formulations.”*⁵² He said that this kind of restriction continued in the decade following the report and the Higher Education Act of 1997.⁵³

Prof Higgins found proof for his argument in the following events.

Firstly, he referred to the 2008 report of the Council on Higher Education, *Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability in South African Higher Education*.⁵⁴ This report summarised the changing ways in which policy was put into practice from 1997 to 2007, and he stated that the CHE *“notes that the reason for its report was the continued*

*uncertainty over and agitation surrounding the related ideas of academic freedom and institutional autonomy – in particular, concerns and claims that government steering of higher education risked becoming ‘interference’.*⁵⁵ He mentioned that the CHE’s report concluded with the remark that it was essential to recognise *“the government’s right to and responsibility to lead system-level change but also that it was equally essential to reject the view that the government has the only authoritative grasp of what is required of higher education”.*⁵⁶

Secondly, some observers interpreted the Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act of 2012 as an act of authoritative intervention by government. This kind of authoritarianism was also evident in the fact that neither the CHE, the statutory organisation that exists precisely to advise the minister on higher education matters, nor the Higher Education South Africa (HESA) association that represents all vice-chancellors, was consulted before the introduction of the new Act.

Prof Higgins quoted the uneasiness of two Vice-Chancellors on the 2012 Act. Prof Barney Pityana, former vice-chancellor of Unisa, argued that, *“rather as in apartheid-style legislating”,* the new Nzimande regulations *“give the minister open-ended and ill-defined powers to intervene in higher education institutions well beyond the powers already available to him”.* Prof Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Johannesburg, said that the new legislation *“undermines the careful balance struck between university autonomy and public accountability crafted by the Constitution and the initial Higher Education Act”.* The new Act not only gives, *“one individual enormous power over the higher education system” but “also confuses the ‘public’ with the ‘state’”.*⁵⁷ This kind of operational strategy by the ministry could also be observed as a centralistic move.⁵⁸

A third step seen as limiting institutional autonomy was the establishment in 2013 of the oversight committee that was tasked to oversee the transformation process at universities, chaired by Prof Makgoba, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Prof Higgins said that these events provoked considerable controversy and reflected on Minister Blade Nzimande’s own words that the *“spectre of state interference in the work of universities, generating fears of political interference by a minister bent on extending his control and crushing any opposition to it”.*⁵⁹ He concluded with the assumption that *“it seems as if the constitutional imperative embodies the ways in which academic freedom has perhaps always been an inconvenient ideal, one that it is easier and more comfortable to support in theory than to observe in practice”.*⁶⁰

Claus Nygaard and Dina Zoe Belluigi argued that the core aim of higher education is to facilitate student

learning. They therefore proposed a contextualised evaluation methodology, guided by 10 key questions in their proposed evaluation approach.⁶¹ The view of Prof Adam Habib, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, on the role of higher education in South Africa is that this sector can fundamentally equalise the playing field in the country’s racial and economic transformation, if it is not simply the preserve of the rich but also the preserve of all available talent.⁶²

Prof Tinyiko Sam Maluleke described the higher education system after 20 years of democracy as follows: *“Gone are the exclusively Afrikaans-medium universities – well, almost. The 36 universities of the apartheid era have given way to a tighter set of 25 rejuvenated institutions with markedly progressive and dynamic missions. The leadership of South African universities today is much more diverse than it was 20 years ago – in terms of race, gender, nationality and skills set. Now with just under one million students, the sector has almost doubled its 1994 enrolment figures, with the vast majority of the influx coming from the so-called ‘designated groups’.* The comprehensive profile of a South African university has changed drastically. Over the past decade the country’s research output has doubled and the sector’s international collaborations have tripled The transformation goals of higher education have been as clear as they have been comprehensive. Many challenges remain. Ten years since the state-driven public university mergers, we can confirm that, although they have been a remarkable transformation tool, they have not always brought about a fundamental transformation of culture among staff and students. Some of the mergers could more accurately be described as takeovers or federal arrangements. Nor have the universities left untouched by mergers necessarily fared any better when it comes to the transformation of their cultures. There are worrying social cohesion gaps across the higher education sector. The long shadow of apartheid is still widely cast upon the broad landscape of the higher education sector. In a country where the majority is black, black people remain a minority in the academy. Black people, especially black women, remain the most under qualified and the most junior among the teaching staff of South African universities. As if this was not bad enough, black students generally take much longer to complete their qualifications – if they do not drop out – because of a whole range of issues that mostly have little to do with talent and academic ability. The participation rate of black people must be significantly enhanced Twenty years later, the world has changed drastically. Knowledge has become the real fuel that drives development. In this world, higher education is no longer a luxury but a necessary resource for global competitiveness.”⁶³

Prof Maluleke said that out of the three conventional mandates of South African universities, namely tuition, community engagement and research, it is clear that research is the hardest activity to accomplish. He acknowledged that the higher education sector is small and inadequately equipped, but in April 2011 accused some universities of proceeding as if the research function does or should fall outside the scope of transformation. He proposed three solutions to enhance the national research output:

- To ensure that academics in the system are enabled and encouraged to produce research, managements should focus on enabling the large number of staff members without doctorates to obtain their degrees. The strategy should be to provide them with fellowships and scholarships to support them while studying.
- To bid farewell to the “ridiculous” competition between South African universities.
- To increase the remuneration and recognition of academics, especially in the lower ranks.⁶⁴

The South African higher education system has not performed well in global rankings. The current annual national research output of the higher education system in South Africa is the equivalent of what a university such as Harvard in the United States produces in one year.⁶⁵ Only three of the 25 South African universities could obtain a position among the 400 universities mentioned in the world university ranking of 2013-2014, and only five could obtain a position in the BRICS and emerging economies ranking in 2014.⁶⁶

19.3 External viewpoints and evaluations of the merger and incorporation process

The CHE developed a Monitoring and Evaluation System to manage the merger and incorporation process in relation to institutional progress on the transformation agenda. The four criteria it used were equity, efficiency, quality and responsiveness.^{67 68}

These criteria corresponded clearly with the 1996 proposals of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), which were acknowledged as the key funding principles for the transformed higher education system since 1994. These principles were:

- Equity and redress - the funding of higher education should ensure that the system becomes an equitable one.
- Development - the funding of higher education should ensure that the system could be responsive to the needs of a developing economy that aspires to become internationally

competitive. The funding formula should encourage responsive programmes in institutions, which would sustain the vocational and employment needs of the economy.

- Effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability - the funding of higher education should ensure that the system achieves its predetermined goals at the lowest possible cost.
- Shared costs - the funding of higher education should ensure that the costs of higher education must be shared by the government and students or their families, because of the public and private benefits generated by the sector.⁶⁹

In September 2008, the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper published a special edition on mergers, which saw the newspapers reporting visiting merged institutions and included an article by Ms Monako Dibetle on *Untangling the merger mess*.^{70 71} Ms Dibetle reported a mixed bag of perceptions on the success of the mergers and listed institutions that were likely to be reviewed due to their lack on the merger process.

According to the reporter, the NWU was among the group of institutions who were likely to be reviewed, and based this perception largely on the statements made at the Platform for Public Deliberation held at the University of Johannesburg in September 2008.

At that event, Mr Gwede Mantashe, ANC secretary general, and Prof Barney Pitso, Vice-Chancellor of Unisa, were keynote speakers. Mr Mantashe said that the failed university mergers were examined for possible solutions. Referring to the NWU, Prof Pitso said the NWU was unmanageable. “*Effectively there are still two separate universities*”. Furthermore, Mr Lucky Phosa, South African Union of Students’ chairperson, said that “*the Mafikeng Campus remains isolated four years after the merger and student support services are a major issue. The Vaal and Potchefstroom Campuses still get preferential treatment in terms of student support. I don’t think the merger is bridging the gap between the two merged institutions.*”⁷²

Four years earlier, in August 2010, Prof Kader Asmal, former Minister of Education, had spoken about the criteria for judging the success or otherwise of higher education mergers. In a speech at the Cape Town International Book Fair, he referred to the ANC’s Policy Framework for Education (the so-called Yellow Book) which stated: “*In the end, a policy is judged in the court of real life: did it win sufficient support? Has it proved capable of implementation? Has it succeeded in achieving its objectives? What benefit has it brought to society?*”⁷³ He said that it is the above-mentioned

questions that needed to be asked and answered in evaluating the restructuring of higher education.

In his evaluation, two central and substantive goals underpinned the institutional restructuring:

- Imagining new possibilities for higher education institutions, free from racial prisms
- Making higher education institutions responsive to the changing skills and knowledge needs of South Africa in the context of globalisation.

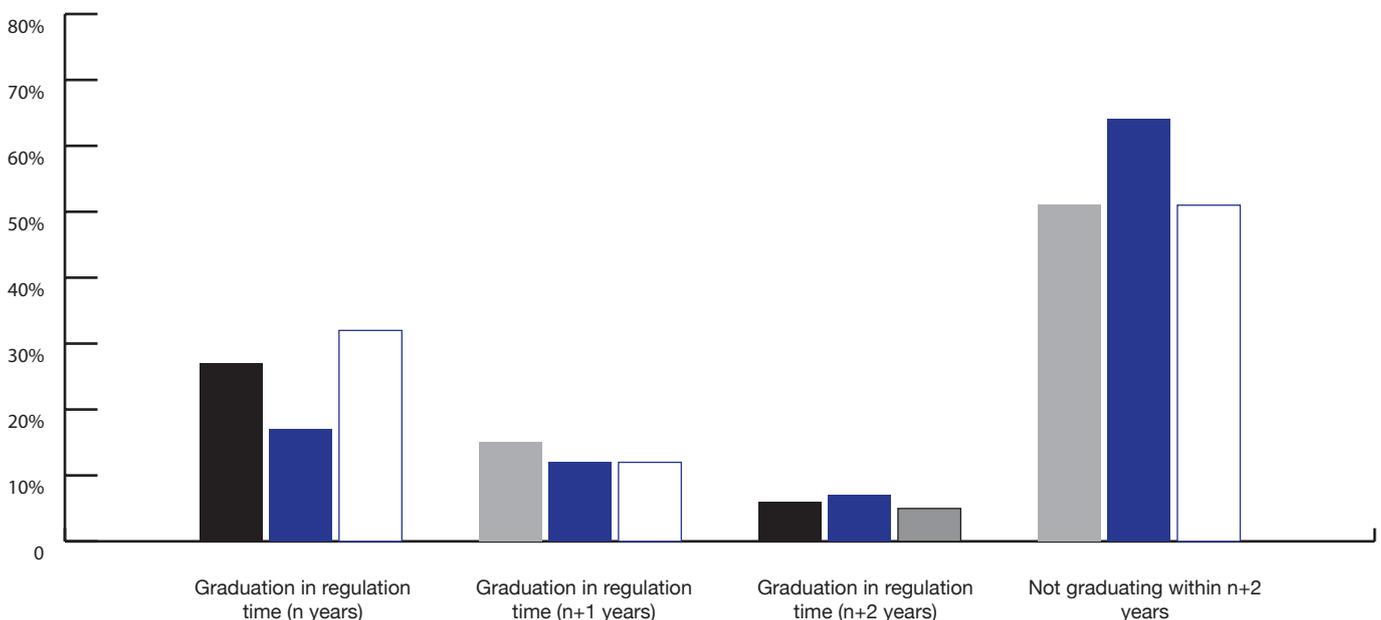
Prof Asmal admitted that merging institutions' efforts to create new institutional identity and culture had met with challenges. He then referred to the NWU and said that the creation of a federal structure had reinforced the perception that the former PU for CHE was not interested in transformation and sought to protect its narrow self-interests.⁷⁴

The NWU reacted strongly, saying this was not the case as the university was a unitary, multi-campus institution with a decentralised business model to ensure effective management of the geographically separated campuses. If Prof Asmal took the trouble to compare the teaching and research outputs, as well as the financial

wellbeing of comparable merged institutions with each other, he would come to a different conclusion.⁷⁵

After almost 20 years of democratic rule in South Africa, David Macfarlane from the *Mail & Guardian* reported in August 2013 on the CHE's Report of the Task Team on Undergraduate Curriculum Structure.⁷⁶ He said that the "poor academic preparation at school is the dominant learning-related reason for poor university performance – but there is no prospect that the schooling sector will be able to produce the numbers of adequately prepared matriculants that higher education requires in the foreseeable future".⁷⁷ This accusation was based on the findings of a Task Team chaired by Prof Njabulo S Ndebele. They confirmed by means of multi-year undergraduate cohort tracking that although South Africa had since 1994 witnessed significant growth in enrolment in both the schooling and higher education sectors, graduate output had not kept pace with the country's needs. The next graph illustrates the high attrition and low graduation rates that have largely neutralised important gains in student access at universities after 2004. Therefore, this report outlined some key points on the implementation of a proposed flexible curriculum structure for universities.⁷⁸

The high attrition and low graduation rates of the 2005 cohort⁷⁹



	Graduation in regulation time (n years)	Graduation in regulation time (n+1 years)	Graduation in regulation time (n+2 years)	Not graduating within n+2 years
General B degrees	27%	15%	6%	51%
Diplomas	17%	12%	7%	64%
Professional B degrees	32%	12%	5%	51%

19.4 The South African higher education restructuring process in relation to African countries

By 2008, the trend towards restructuring higher education had spread from South Africa to at least 12 African countries.⁸⁰ However, a World Bank Working Paper declared in that year that a “*size and shape debate*” was notably absent in most of these countries. This was unfortunate given that such a debate could lead to resourceful thinking on what ought to be the objectives of higher education in achieving national development objectives. This kind of debate on differentiation and articulation in African tertiary systems was still inadequate in 2008.⁸¹

Hans de Wit has asked what Europe’s role should be in revitalising African higher education. He emphasised that African higher education has always been very international in many countries, but that observers should take the needs of individual countries into account. Analysts should not lose sight of the disparity between African countries in terms of their individual wealth and stability.⁸² The African Union Education Report of 2014 confirmed this focus on the prospects of individual countries. This report indicated that many African countries weaken the African Union’s vision of a prosperous continent driven by a knowledge economy because education was not a priority in their development plans. Progress towards improving education access and quality at all levels in African countries has been too slow.⁸³

Meanwhile the University of Pretoria also embarked on an African development initiative following the April 2014 public lecture of the Chairperson of the African Union, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, on the role of research in African universities. She shared her vision of a combined effort to build research universities to bring about the necessary development on the continent of Africa. This lecture paved the way for the planning and introduction of a new initiative, the African Development Focus, at the University of Pretoria.⁸⁴

The second publication of *African Innovation Outlook II* supported this initiative. The first publication was launched during June 2014 with the aim of ensuring reliable indicators for planning and the monitoring of the state of science, technology and innovation across the African continent. The number of participating countries nearly doubled from 19 in the first outlook survey in 2010 to 35 countries in the second assignment for the 2014 publication.⁸⁵

The development strategy of the African Development Bank could also enhance Africa’s progress. The bank’s four-year Human Capital Strategy for 2014 - 2018 identified education, skills development, science, technology, innovation and youth employment as urgent priorities. As part of its strategy, the bank proposed “*a New Education Model for Africa, with a radical shift from a bricks and mortar approach to a model that supports critical thinking, the application of cutting-edge education technologies, and public-private partnerships*”.⁸⁶

The challenge for NWU, which aspires to be a pre-eminent university in Africa, implies participation in developmental debates on higher education on the African continent.

NWU – considered as the merger underdog after 2004, which outperforms other similar mergers after a decade.

19.5 Various internal self-evaluations of the NWU’s merger and incorporation process⁸⁷

19.5.1 Internal evaluation of the overall merger and incorporation strategy since 2004

In 2007, Dr Jannie Jacobsz from the NWU Quality Office completed a dissertation on the topic, *Forces in the merging of universities – a case study*, in which he researched the inside story of the NWU merger and incorporation process. His evaluation sheds some light on the broad perceptions and attitudes of staff members in the handling of the merger and incorporation process.⁸⁸

He analysed the data from interviews with the two Vice-Chancellors of the merging universities, conducted in July 2004, seven months after the merger had taken place. This analysis reveals their insights during the heat of the difficult first six months since the founding of the NWU.⁸⁹ The interview data analysed was grouped thematically into the following eight different groups of themes, which the author named “*forces*”:⁹⁰ government, university management, University Council, peers on other campuses, students and alumni, strategy, culture, and resources. The next overleaf table summarises the data from the interviews.⁹¹

Summarised findings in approach to the merger and incorporation ⁹²

Theme or act of force	Act of force	Finding
Government	Power enforced	“Not collaborative but autocratic by constructing both the game and rules with no clear educational motive. As an irresistible force with the juridical base, they enforced transformation and development with political correctness. Respondents were disoriented, angry and frustrated and could do nothing about the government’s decision other than to manage it. This is due to an inappropriately exploited political power base that made the merger unavoidable. Although the minister of education had little empathy with the position of the respondents’ constituencies, the possibility of improved university management was envisioned.
Management	Limited momentum	Different negotiating styles negatively affected the impetus towards merger implementation.
	Opposing directions	Much tension and conflict surfaced in a stormy start between the two former management teams due to a lack of trust and possible prejudice due to the enforced nature of the negotiations.
	Equilibrium	The negotiations were utilised as a tactical weapon and hence turned the negativity into a relationship of trust.
Council	Limited resistance	The respective Councils had to accept the merger by assisting the relevant management teams in managing the merger.
	Power, limited direction	The new Council appeared not to have been composed according to agreement but according to the government’s agenda and authority. This possibly led to limited direction with the merger six months into it.
Peers	Psychological distance, tension	Peers on campuses had reservations about the merger, causing a psychological distance due to differences associated with institutional culture and values. Reference to “Potchefication” ⁹³ on the Mafikeng Campus contributed to tension; however, leadership ensured that tension was limited and that peers on campuses collaborated.
Students and alumni	Direction	No reference was made to existing students but only to the future generation of students emanating from the merger. Alumni had limited reservations about the direction of the merger.
Strategy	Direction	Much difficulty was experienced in deciding on a merger strategy, both before the merger and even six months into it. Staff had to support the strategy and their behaviour was driven by conviction.
Culture	Direction	Many differences were highlighted in terms of campus cultures. Acceptance of unique campus cultures brought calm, but with the reservation that government would not be satisfied.
Resources	Strenuous	The ability to ensure sufficient resource provision within an expensive merger context was flagged as a potential restraining factor.

Dr Jacobsz’ analysis of the data collected 30 months after the merger and incorporation from questionnaires completed by groups of Campus Vice-Rectors, academic School Directors and Heads of subject groups, provided insight into their perceptions.⁹⁴

Based on feedback Dr Jacobsz concluded that “it could be derived that government acted as a limited restraining factor in the merger process due to its autocratic way of announcing and enforcing the merger. The bias of government became evident with the appointment of Council members, where government selected candidates that favoured government. This move from government could be described as the cause for Council being selected by respondents as the largest restraining factor in the merger process and not government itself. Government evidently overplayed its governance role by contributing to the establishment of a perceived disruptive Council that was not trusted by academic managers that participated in this research. Academic managers

who participated in this research clearly indicated that they were negative towards anything stemming from Council. Respondents furthermore indicated to an overwhelming extent that they did not have any understanding for the way in which Council acted or moved within the merger. Respondents also indicated that their own behaviour and way of operating within the merger was not in support of Council. The contrary with regard to the university’s management team was established when respondents indicated that they understood management’s actions within the merger.”⁹⁵

In the light of these perceptions, the task of merging and incorporating three very different institutions and diverse organisational cultures was therefore indeed a daunting one. In retrospect, the following factors steered the process:

- A “can do” attitude, driven by the needs of the country and the province and an honest will to succeed

- Eliminating uncertainty as far as possible and moving with speed in selected areas, such as establishing a permanent Council – instead of an interim one. On the other hand, choosing to let selected facets of the new university develop at a slower pace, but with subsequent greater buy-in, such as the logo and pay-off line: *“Innovation through diversity”*.
- Focusing firstly on the core business and its stability and improvement, and parallel to that, instituting a process of sustainable transformation, including equity, redress, access and policies.
- Using a functional and pragmatic approach to management, utilising best practice from the private and public sectors, such as the decentralised management model and monetary incentives.
- One of the leading principles in the establishment of the NWU was unity through diversity. It remains a cornerstone of its functioning, and is derived from the constitutional principle (embedded in the country’s logo), as well as the practical situation of diversity in and on the three campuses and the Institutional Office. Both Council and management go to great lengths to maintain this balance.
- After a difficult start, the different roles of the Council and management were delineated and respected, resulting among others in the NWU winning the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance, as the best-governed university in South Africa year after year since 2007.
- During 2010, six years into the merger, the following self portrait of NWU was developed:
 - *“The NWU has grown from a fledgling merged entity to a leading and respected university, the fourth largest in the country in terms of student heads and one of the most stable and successful of the mergers.”*
 - *“The NWU is playing its full role in providing well-educated graduates and diplomats to the country and Southern Africa. It also contributes to new knowledge through research, with its overall research output being at number six in the country in 2007.”*
- *“It is making an exceptional contribution in terms of the implementation of expertise, both commercially and community directed. The last fact was underscored by the NWU winning in 2008 the Department of Science and Technology Innovation Fund’s competition for the most technologically innovative university in the country, ahead of UCT, US and UP.”*
- *“The NWU is on the right track with this strategy, because at the conference of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) during June 2014 in Yokohama, Japan, the focus of these leaders was the development of innovation and technology in higher education to meet the world’s rapidly changing needs.”⁹⁶*
- *“The NWU is also a symbol of what is possible in terms of reconciliation, the right balance between unity and diversity and a sufficiently comprehensive approach to transformation. We have embarked vigorously on the tasks of aligning admission requirements, policy frameworks and academic programmes. We are close to the goal of having no qualitative or perceptual differences between the qualities of degrees completed on our various campuses.”*
- *“An overarching institutional culture is being established, mainly through a set of four do values: integrity, commitment, accountability and respect.”⁹⁷*

These viewpoints and observations did not mean that there were no other challenges at the NWU. Student unrest, violence and destruction of property occurred at the Mafikeng Campus during 2008, leading to the closure of the campus on a number of occasions. The Council of the NWU responded fully to the report by a Ministerial Task Team on this in March 2009. However, even from this very unfortunate process, some good came – because management had taken firm action against unruly behaviour and started to change the campus culture.

In essence, the merger objectives were general in nature, but focused on two areas: equity and efficiency. With regard to equity, the NWU had set its feet firmly on that difficult road, with reachable but stretch targets set in the Institutional Plan. Concerning efficiency, the merger objectives were even closer to being fully realised, given that the core business of the NWU remained stable and thriving.

The following summary of the position only five years into the merger gives a clear indication of the viability of the university and its achievements:

Description	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total student enrolment	40 145	38 596	38 709	44 726	47 008
Undergraduate pass rate (contact and distance)	75.2%	78.8%	78.4%	79.5%	81.2%
Graduation rate (number of degrees as a percentage of total heads)	24%	20%	25%	25%	26%
Total degrees and diplomas awarded	9 657	7 746	9 825	11 345	12 337
Master's degrees awarded	626	700	765	618	583
PhDs awarded	87	85	110	124	100
Article equivalents published (total)	275	326	361	376	513
NRF-rated researchers	73	85	82	95	103
Total research output	798	865	1 074	1 061	1 089
Total turnover (R million)	R1014	R1134	R1272	R1436	R1671
Total surplus for the year (R million)	R15	R69	R71	R85	R71
Surplus recurrent business (R million)	R15	R54	R63	R66	R82
Staff cost/total cost, percentage	53.2%	52.4%	52.6%	48.8%	50%
Percentage income from government	45.1%	44.1%	42.8%	39.8%	40.0%
Self-generated income, (R million)	R341	R396	R453	R542	R644
Capital expenditure on new buildings, (R million)	R5,9	R29,3	R48,6	R55,5	R48,5

The only merger objective of the Minister of Education in which the NWU did not make progress, was the “*development and provision of, in particular, technikon-type programmes*”. The Councils of both former universities, as well as the NWU Council, had specifically decided against this, as it did not fit the Vision and Mission of the NWU and was not deemed to be in the best interest of the newly established university.

The NWU's strategy of focusing on the core business, while embarking on a path of sustainable transformation, has proven to be correct, even though this was not deemed to be “politically correct” and sometimes even against the conventional wisdom in higher education.

With its pay-off line of “*Innovation through Diversity*”, it was positioning itself strategically in terms of its innovativeness in management, research and processes, as well as its multicultural and multilingual character. The latter fact was recognised in 2008 when the Pan-South African Language Board recognised the NWU as the university that had done most for multilingualism and nation building in the previous 10 years since 2004.

The state of the NWU was more than the sum of its original component parts and each of the campuses felt that they had “*gained*” from the merger-incorporation. In the view of the Council and Senior Management of the NWU, the merger-incorporation has been so successful that, even if they had the option of de-merging, most of the managers would turn down this opportunity.

During 2009, the management strategy was that in the scope of the next five years, the NWU should reach the stage of becoming a balanced teaching learning and research institution. An undergraduate success rate of 81.2% was reached in 2008, and the aim was to improve it even further. The published article equivalents had grown from 275 in 2004 to 512 in 2008, but the aim was to enhance research productivity. The fact that 11% of academic staff were NRF rated in 2009 provided a good foundation for this. In terms of quality and efficiency, there was room for improvement. With regard to transformation, the redress process should gain further momentum on the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle campuses, especially in infrastructure, the student experience and equity of academic outputs. The challenge of greater diversity in terms of staff demography remained a challenge. There were also new initiatives in community engagement and internationalisation.

Since 2004 and in completing the merger and incorporation objectives successfully, the NWU had indeed joined the ranks of leading universities in South Africa.⁹⁸

The Institutional Plan for 2010-2012 stated that the success of the NWU as a merged university was appreciated in the higher education sector and beyond, because the NWU achieved success by emphasising unity and diversity, while striking a balance between efficiency and experience on the one hand, and equity and development on the other.

This conclusion was underpinned by the fact that the NWU had also met the targets stipulated in the previous Institutional Plans. In this regard, the process evolved as follows:

- The overarching strategic objective for 2004 was to consolidate and increase the momentum of the merger-integration process and through that, to achieve a sense of permanency in terms of effectively functioning structures, the smooth continuation of the core business (teaching-learning, research and implementation of expertise), and starting with a process of aligning or establishing policies, processes and systems.
- In 2005, the focus was on completing the merger integration and incorporation; improving the quality and output of the core business; staff development and especially performance management; and finalising a vision and mission statement.
- The first Institutional Plan for the period 2006-2008 focused on the overall strategy of moving from a tuition-based university with focused research towards becoming an effective and transformed balanced tuition and research university. To achieve this, the NWU in 2006 and 2007 specifically focused on transformation; quality and efficiency; and relevance and impact as overarching strategies.
- At the end of 2007, the mission and mission elements were thoroughly revised and accordingly, goals were set in the 2008-2010 Institutional Plan in order to become a balanced teaching learning and research university and implement its expertise in an innovative way.
- In 2008, a start was made in adding scenario development as an integrated part of the Institutional Plan. The parameters of this process were developed in 2008 and further refined in 2009 and the first element of this process was included in the Institutional Plan 2009-2011 as the idealised design.

The NWU had therefore made substantive progress towards achieving the targets outlined in the Institutional Plans up to 2009.⁹⁹

19.5.2 10 reasons to rank the NWU as one of the successful mergers in South Africa

In October 2008, the NWU Institutional Management listed 10 reasons to motivate its contention about the success of the merger and incorporation process:

1. Core business first, and parallel to that a comprehensive and sustainable transformation strategy
2. Business model: one university with an Institutional Office and three campuses managed as business units, based on principles of unity and diversity
3. Programmes: diversity, access, without wasting resources and no “*academic engineering*”
4. Teaching-learning: in the top five nationally
5. Research: in the top eight nationally
6. Innovation and commercialisation: in top five.
7. Performance agreements: one of two universities with institution-wide application
8. Language: functional multilingualism (best practice)
9. Values (four practical do values) and a human rights culture
10. Equity: slow but steady progress, especially at senior levels.¹⁰⁰

19.5.3 Lessons learned

In October 2009, Dr MJ Venter presented an internal view on the lessons learned by NWU during the merger and incorporation process and provided an overview of the progress made.¹⁰¹

The creation of vision statements or organisation development: which one should be addressed first in the foundation phase of the new institution?

The Merger Guidelines from the Department of Education of April 2003 provided extensive direction to managers on the approach to and conduct of the merger process.¹⁰² Apart from various prescribed activities in the guidelines and reports such as a three-year rolling plan based on a very specific model of scenario preparation for growth, the guidelines allowed the flexibility of own initiative to managers by saying that how “*these guidelines are taken up and used is, for the most part, a matter of choice*”.¹⁰³ This opportunity was fully seized in the formation of the new NWU.

One of the general guidelines was that the newly established management (whether interim or not) should focus immediately on a structured process of building a shared vision and, early on in this process, create shared symbols. This should be done through consensus or at least consensus building. “*Institutions should agree on a preliminary vision and mission for the new institution as soon as possible as this is closely linked to the*

*development of a merger plan. Almost every aspect of the merger or incorporation will flow from the initial identification of the character, qualities, values, ethos and trajectory of the new institution. The projected new identity can be a powerful symbolic mechanism for renewal around which staff and students coalesce and in relation to which they use their energies to create a new whole out of the disparate parts of the old institutions.*¹⁰⁴

Many of the merging universities adopted this advice, and embarked on various processes of developing vision statements and designing (and debating) new logos. Much of this activity was based on very unrealistic assumptions about human nature in a merger, and many vision statements became the typical “*World Leader*” or at least “*Continental Leader*” wish lists.

Managers at NWU also had pressure from various sources to embark on this quest, but decided to first investigate the nature and commercial experience in managing to gain confidence in the path of conducting the merger and Incorporation process. This strategic approach to the merger process was not merely supported by the acting Vice-Chancellor; it was indeed led by him, and participation of the whole management team was at that stage mandatory. Various case studies of South African and international mergers were studied and discussed, and the management as a team systematically digested a substantial number of “*general merger-related insights for managers*”. The management team read and discussed good publications on mergers such as the following books:¹⁰⁵

- *The Morning After*¹⁰⁶
- *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*¹⁰⁷
- *Good to great: why some companies make the leap and others do not*¹⁰⁸
- *Structure in Fives*¹⁰⁹

The most important lesson that was emphasised everywhere was that in a merger just about every force works to draw attention away from the core business of the organisation. Therefore the most important job of management at the outset of the merger was to ensure that the momentum and successes of the core business were kept as intact as possible. A moving vehicle could be steered; a stationary one not. If momentum was lost to any significant extent, it would be extremely difficult to regain. The competitive forces in the higher education environment would then capitalise on the inherent uncertainties of the situation and cherry-pick competent staff members, which in turn would cause enough doubt in the minds of current and prospective students to change choice of university to any one of the stable non-merging entities, making it even more difficult to rebuild momentum afterwards.

The second lesson learned was about the nature of staff insecurity, and merger experience indicated a perfectly natural sequence of fear. Notwithstanding any proclamation by a minister, individual job security (“*Will I still have a job?*”) was the first preoccupation of an individual. Once this was assured, position insecurity (“*Will I still have my job?*”) filled the vacuum and only after that assurance did general insecurity (“*Will this merger work?*”) start to become a topic.

This two-pronged insight of keeping the momentum and allaying fear and insecurity was used to develop the merger management strategy. In general, terms, the strategy revolved around two sequential sets of activity:

- Developing an organisational structure for the new university, because that would indicate the positions and the place of staff in the positions, bringing about some security to allow staff to focus on the core business.
- Developing and implementing a minimal set of formal processes to allow the structure to operate.¹¹⁰

The chosen structure – which was the subject of much discussion within and outside the university – was the most straightforward and elementary structure on both macro and micro level for the geographical circumstances. On macro level, it was a straightforward divisional structure of an Institutional Office and three campuses, and on micro level a no-frills functional structure in both the Institutional Office and the campuses. The importance of the crucial “*other*” coordinating mechanisms, essential around any structure, was vested in service level agreements among colleagues and different operational units at the Institutional Office or on a campus. This fact was often overlooked as if structure alone could address all coordination.

Driving the design there was a management belief that accountability was the cornerstone of management. Hence, at any specific site and for every significant operational unit, a specific individual must be solely accountable for the performance of the unit, given adequate direction, resources and general support. Due to the cumulative nature of outputs, units were invariably grouped together to enhance coordination of final output, but such grouping must not affect accountability.

The operational processes: crucial for stability

Structure should not guide results; processes should. It was quickly realised that to keep momentum in the core functions going, most current processes should be defined as “*alive and prescribed until formally replaced*”. However, it was also clear from literature and merger experience that the managerial truism “*when the paradigm shifts, everything resets to zero*” is indeed true.

To counter possible paralysis caused by the merger, a certain minimal number of energising processes were quickly needed. The issue was clear: identify and create a few essential and simple but adequate processes fast!¹¹¹

Two vital operational processes were designed and implemented as part of the creation of the new amalgamated institution.

A performance management process (PMP) with the capability to translate whatever vision is decided upon, into individual task agreements, was deemed essential. The rationale was easy: it is a wasted exercise to debate and create vision and mission statements unless the organisation has the capability to translate the vision into action. It is important to assure the existence of instruments that would force the implementation first; otherwise, the unity derived from collective visioning would disappear into a vacuum of inaction.

In step with the “*core business*” philosophy, the initial target of the PMP was academic staff. If they had clarity about the organisational expectations of their contribution, that should already energise the support needed to deliver the results agreed with the task agreement. This task agreement tied back directly to the “*then current*” vision worded in terms of the existing plans for teaching load and throughput expectations,¹¹² research goals and publications, implementation of expertise and third income stream contracting goals. An essential aspect of the processes was the availability of measurement data. This was enabled either by the fact that many data elements were needed for Higher Education Management Information System (Hemis) reporting purposes and thus available directly or in some proxy form.

Certain crucial support staff elements were encouraged and assisted to enter into formal service level agreements with each other and with faculties and schools, again to tighten up the “*accountability philosophy*”. However, this did not work as well as expected since it was discovered that very little useful data on the output of support staff units was captured in any usable form in a system.¹¹³

Apart from the formality of the PMP (formal agreement in writing, and according to prescribed rules and time scales) which represented the “*iron fist*”, the “*velvet glove*” was implemented in the form of individual frequent and regular eye-to-eye discussions on progress, obstacles and assistance. As this was difficult to directly control over so many organisational units, effort was put into making this part of the culture of the organisation. It was eventually moderately successful.

The second simple but adequate process put into place was a participative budgeting system. In all the merging units the typical “*allocation model*” of budgeting was mostly used: top management alone knew the expected income levels, they centrally top sliced those for a number of not generally known purposes, and allocated the rest of the available income to the operational units according to some set of formulae. The units have to make do with the allocation or find other sources of income, a certain percentage of which they could keep for discretionary use.

Management created the (simple but adequate) systems to apply the exact state funding formulae to all income-generating units down to at least faculty level, and in certain instances even to school level. Management also allocated all other formal income streams to the income-generating units, and requested estimates of third stream income estimates for all organisational units (including Institutional Office units and other support groups that earn no income).

In turn all units budgeted for the cost and capital requirements to reach their goals. These budgetary centres were established to sub-school level, and thus quite deep into the organisation. An elaborate discussion and approval process from the bottom up was implemented. The necessary two or even three cycles of discussion (about budget balancing and cuts to be effected) were programmed into the calendar.

This staff-intensive process had many rewards: the myth that “management has this hoard of hidden funds” slowly disappeared because of the visibility of the budgets to Deans and above; the role of contribution (or cross-subsidisation) became clear and visible (and of course a bone of contention!); questioning of the real or monetary contribution of units emerged in the culture; the necessity and power of financial viability became a point of discussion.¹¹⁴

It quickly became clear that the Potchefstroom Business School especially could not be sustained with the different financial and HR systems used in the merged entities, and it was decided to implement an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to introduce uniformity in data sources and integration between finance and HR data across all campuses. This was also done fast, rather than elaborately. The philosophy was that the quality of the old systems was such that even if time and resources were spent to clear the older data and design new processes, the old systems did not have the means to quality assure the integrity of the data. Thus, it was better to get a unified system in, put all available data into the new and manageable repository, and work systematically towards clearing the data via systems designed to assure that the data would stay clean.

Tying the operational processes together

The first two years of the merger focused on a dual approach: keeping the momentum going and creating and implementing minimal new processes that would assist in the future steering of the university.

The discussions leading to an initial vision and the development of initial symbols such as a university logo and regalia were not superficial but also not excessively deep. The approach could best be described as one where management allowed the discussions to go as deep as necessary to obtain adequate consensus to proceed. The approval of the logo was a good example: the initial logo, implemented in January 2004, carried the symbolism of the two merging universities. At that stage, the organisational structure was still in its infancy and emotions still focused on the “merger” and this was captured in the symbol of the first logo.¹¹⁵

As time went by, face-to-face interaction allowed trust to grow and recognition of the need to develop a deeper level of common and shared vision surfaced spontaneously. This was the right time to deepen the discussion on sharing dreams, vision and symbols. The implications of redoing the logo and regalia were a small price to pay for the unity derived from visioning in a trusting environment. The new logo symbolising the interdependence of the three campuses forming the university was implemented in March 2007.

During the development of the vision, the overall approach evolved. On the one hand, management discovered that a vision – to define the mountain that the NWU community wanted to conquer – could easily be too vague or general to assure a shared understanding. The one or more intermediate “foothills” before reaching the top of the mountain served as a useful guide. Management also discovered that it is worthwhile at this stage to spend time on semantics: this set of semantics ultimately became a common or shared vocabulary. When the visioning process and the resulting mission and goals were completed, colleagues again endeavoured to establish a participative, replicable process to build a review of the vision, mission and goals into the NWU culture and to tie vision, mission and goals firmly into the PMP and task agreements. To assure the commonality of values and vocabulary, management started a compulsory management training week in 2007 at Senior Management level. By discussing the management values, models and styles, senior management not only strengthened the understanding of the meaning of the specific vocabulary but also the trust between managers.

While reviewing the progress in 2007, a glaringly obvious “*ex post facto*” insight was found: a properly formulated and formally documented Institutional (rolling)

Plan, based on the agreed upon goals, was essential. Moreover, all goals must be included in the plan, and the plan may not contain other or unwritten goals not tied to the vision. During the development phase, management sought to develop the Institutional Plan in a bottom-up/top down iterative manner similar to the PBS. This changed approach reinforced the firm belief that “(s) *he who executes must plan*”. The processes are not yet flawless, but by utilising the plan-do-check-act iteration, it improves with every cycle.¹¹⁶

The complexity of the new merged institution

As managers gained experience with the new organisation, colleagues came to understand both the benefits and the challenges inherent in utilising any divisional structure stretching over many kilometres.

The truth is that no structure could fulfil all coordination needs of an organisation. This viewpoint implied that one should deliberately decide which elements would be coordinated via the structure and which would be coordinated by other means. Management deemed local or geographical accountability as of prime importance and structured operational planning around that issue. However, what one gains in accountability, one could lose in diversity. Therefore, the language became: “*diversity one gets for free, unity must be earned*”.¹¹⁷ Ms Phyllis Jackson, Vice-President of Diversity at Charles Schwab, a financial corporation in the USA, supported this perception: “*Corporate diversity happens, she claims, when individuals learn to be authentic – comfortable in their own skin – so that they can communicate respectfully and effectively with clients and colleagues regardless of their personal identity.*”¹¹⁸

This following perception holds for any divisional organisation: the contest is always between local autonomy versus central control. NWU managers needed to create lateral mechanisms to strengthen unity. Looking for such mechanisms, colleagues discovered that there were many, and these were not new mechanisms for a university. Examples of such lateral unifying mechanisms are standing committees of Senate to coordinate curriculum matters and academic discourse across the campuses. Other mechanisms are the system of performance measurement at the Institutional Office aimed at unification and the deliberate attempt to create a common vocabulary.

Management therefore realised that the process of building unifying linkages is never-ending in exactly the same way that no organisational structure ever stays unchanged. Ever-repeating polarities (or dilemmas) within situations are when coordinating mechanisms need to be introduced or changed. For example, how do colleagues dynamically keep on balancing unity needs with diversity pressures; what should management

centralise and what should it decentralise? These are typical issues in any divisional structure.¹¹⁹

In this process of experiencing and deliberating, management learnt a number of valuable lessons on how to deal with organisational complexity. Some of these insights were as follows:

- Try to lessen the centralisation/decentralisation debate by distinguishing between “bits” which could easily be centralised, and “atoms” which were more location-bound.
- Invest in regular, formalised face-to-face coordination meetings rather than rely on technology to avoid travelling.
- Do not split “*planning*” and “*doing*” because “(s) *he who executes must plan*”.
- By all means learn from others but recognise the importance of context.
- Stopping rules to eliminate unnecessary tasks and “*not-to-do*” decisions was important.
- Tension between divisions and the centre was natural and energising, but must be managed and not ignored as it could spiral out of control.

Continuation of organisational development

If organisational development is never complete, what are the next activities on NWU’s “*to-do*” list especially after the HEQC’s institutional Audit of 2010? The nature of these activities is such that the university would not be able to tick the “*to-do*” list off as completed, since they are actually perennial topics in any organisation, demanding the constant attention of management.

Management initially put a lot of effort into developing an appropriate infrastructure and solid basis to collate and analyse management information. From that a variety of metrics were derived. Colleagues quickly realised that it is all very well to measure with a hundred metrics, but by doing so one loses one’s steering ability. To steer by utilising internal metrics, they have to be whittled down to the “*crucial few*” and even the “*few*” must themselves be changed from time to time.¹²⁰

Management also discovered that one should use benchmarks and external comparisons with circumspection: it is not always easy to translate an external single-campus university benchmark into an internal campus steering instrument! Colleagues discovered that even sectoral agreement on the definition of some of the concepts in use might be lacking.

This led to another insight. Many of the definitions were to be measured via longitudinal studies and resulted in “*ex post facto*” insight rather than in “*in action*”

steering instruments. In most cases, management used snapshot-type proxies instead of or to complement longitudinal studies, but even these (like “*graduation rate*” as a proxy for cohort throughput) are after the fact rather than an in-process steering instrument.

Conclusion

The main lessons management learnt weaving the way through the management process of the merger that created the NWU could be summarised as follows:

It was very easy to become “*academic*” about the management of a university in general. Impressive qualifications did not necessarily imply good management skills. Metric overload was easy to create and it destroyed one’s steering capability. Such scrutiny needed sectoral agreement on definition and method for serious benchmarking, or else the exercise would become a marketing game.¹²¹

Ultimately senior management discovered that the centre may hold, but not automatically and not without great and constant efforts by all.¹²²

19.5.4 The NWU Institutional Profile, December 2013

As a contextual framework for the internationally led review panel of 2014, the office of the Vice-Chancellor on 9 December 2013 developed a 104-page document on the achievements of the merger and incorporation process since 2004. He concluded the report with the following synopsis: “*The merger-incorporation process was by no means easy, but proactive and innovative actions supported by a dedicated management team and staff ensured that the NWU is today more than the sum of its component parts.*”¹²³

Given the disruptive potential of any merger, the NWU concentrated on certainty, efficiency and effectiveness first, while it initiated a parallel sustainable transformation process. It was a case of “*core business first*”. In this way, management avoided the pitfalls of uncertainty and demoralisation inherent in many change processes. In summary, the following salient features of the 10 years from 2004 to 2014 can be highlighted:

- The strategy of focusing on the NWU’s core business, while embarking on a path of sustainable transformation, has paid off.
- The NWU was realistic in setting its mission and targets. In the first 10 years, the main goal was (merely) to become a balanced teaching-learning and research university. The achievement of this goal is in sight.
- The student component increased by more 30%.

- The permanent staff complement grew by almost 30%. The unintended consequence of this growth was that the growing staff numbers negatively affected the initial “*end-state*” employment equity targets.
- Between 2008 and 2014, the NWU has had uninterrupted academic activities and stability on all campuses without any student unrest.
- The strong improvement in the undergraduate pass rate across all campuses, from an average of 75,2% in 2004 to 84,6% in 2012, provides an indication of the vitality of the teaching-learning environment at the NWU. The first-year dropout rate for first-time entering student cohorts of 2005 to 2010 was an average of 12,5%. This small percentage was largely achieved through supplemental instruction models, as well as peer support, and is in stark contrast to the national dropout average of 20% – 30%. Underlying this, equity of provision contributed largely to comparable equity of outcome.
- Arguably, one of the biggest challenges for the newly established NWU was to improve its research output in a sustainable manner. This was done by creating an enabling research environment and establishing a research culture. This strategy is being carried out by establishing research entities in a developmental manner, starting with entry point focus areas, followed by niche areas, then research units and ultimately centres of excellence. It is further enhanced by means of substantive investment, and financial and other incentives for researchers who perform well. The total number of research article equivalents increased from 275 in 2004 to 935 in 2012 - an increase of 240%.
- The NWU now stands at 0.75 articles published per full time equivalent staff member per year, up from less than 0.4 in 2005. Obviously, the growth in staff numbers had an impact on the initial ratio targets.
- Like the rest of the sector, the NWU also experiences challenges in maintaining steady growth in delivering PhD and master’s students.
- The NWU is a financially stable institution. In terms of profitability and growth, total income has increased by 120% since the merger in 2004, and the total income for 2013 was over R3 billion.
- Through a policy of functional multilingualism, the NWU avoided the pitfalls of language becoming politicised, but rather made it a symbol of desirable diversity.
- A pleasant, safe and enriching student experience on campuses, conducive to academic activity and producing well-rounded graduates, has been established.
- The NWU management model has contributed substantially to stability and growth. The main components of this model are three campuses managed as decentralised business units, each with a campus rector and all three served by an institutional office.
- The NWU has declared itself an institution that will be managed effectively, with individually accountable managers, in a spirit of transparency. This has resulted in a performance management system applicable to all academics and managers, in which recognition and incentives play an important role.

In a nutshell: the NWU is now in a much better position than its predecessors were prior to the merger. In fact, Management and Council are convinced that even if given the (theoretical) option of de-merging, the opportunity would be turned down. This is possibly the best measure of the success of the merger-incorporation.

Looking at the key deliverables of the NWU, all indications are that the university has given the State a good return on its investment (in the form of subsidy income). The NWU has performed better than its subsidy position. For example, in the years 2008 to 2011, the university outperformed its subsidy position on all scores except articles published. This is shown in the next table.

The State's return on its investment in the NWU, 2008-2011

	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	% of sector	Relative position among SA universities	% of sector	Relative position among SA universities	% of sector	Relative position among SA universities	% of sector	Relative position among SA universities
Funding from the State	5.17%	7	5.50%	7	5.80%	7	5.70%	8
Graduates produced	9.30%	3	9.30%	2	9.80%	2	9.33%	2
Unweighted teaching outputs	9.30%	2	9.40%	2	10%	2	9.5%	2
Weighted teaching outputs	7.50%	5	7.50%	4	7.85%	3	7.56%	3
Total research outputs	6.90%	6	6.80%	6	7.10%	6	6.73%	6
Master's degrees	7.70%	6	8.10%	6	7.30%	6	6.9%	6
Doctoral degrees	8.50%	6	8.90%	6	9.10%	5	7.3%	6
Articles published	6%	7	4.90%	9	6%	8	6.56%	8

19.5.5 The Internationally led review panel, January 2014

19.5.5.1 The assignment of the review panel

To evaluate the NWU's progress in its first 10 years and the extent to which it had met the many targets set in 2004, the university commissioned an internationally led review panel to evaluate the merger and incorporation process.¹²⁴ This set the scene for a new stage of development that would coincide with the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dan Kgwadi, in 2014.

According to Prof Kgwadi, the motivation for appointing the internationally led review panel was to provide a retrospective evaluation after 10 years and in doing so to provide independent input into the process of establishing a revised vision, mission and strategic agenda for the NWU's next decade.¹²⁵

The chairperson of the panel was Prof Frans van Vugt (president of the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities). The panel members were Prof Barney Pityana (former vice-chancellor of UNISA), Dr Torben Rasmussen (former director general of the Department of Higher Education in Denmark), Dr Nico Cloete (director of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation), Prof Lynn Meek (professorial fellow at the LH Martin Institute of Higher Education Leadership and Management at the University of Melbourne in

Australia), Prof Mala Singh (former member of the Higher Education Quality Committee and Council on Higher Education in South Africa) and Prof Ian Bunting (former chief director in the Department of Education, South Africa) who also acted as scribe.¹²⁶

The 2014 report of this International Review Panel contained the results of their review process of the 10-year performance of the NWU. The review consisted of two parts: an internal self-study titled *NWU Institutional profile to determine the extent to which the initial merger objectives and mission have been accomplished*, compiled in December 2013,¹²⁷ and an external international review by the panel during January 2014.

The review panel's report was based on numerous sessions with various stakeholders, such as the institutional management, campus managements, academics, student leaders and a number of external parties. During a workshop of the NWU Council held on 15 April 2014, the content of this report was received and noted Council also decided in the interest of openness and transparency to publish the report to the broader external community.¹²⁸

19.5.5.2 The final report of the review panel

The internationally led panel was commissioned with a twofold task and their findings were based on their interpretation of its assignment. This was to assess the

extent to which the NWU had accomplished the initial merger objectives as stipulated by the government in 2002, and to assess the extent to which the university had made progress in pursuing the various elements of its mission.

The panel's final report was their independent analysis of documents and data received, and the interviews during the review visits at the institutional office and campuses. The structure of the report corresponded with that of the NWU Institutional Profile of December 2013:

- **Part 1** addressed the seven merger objectives; the panel evaluated the performance of the NWU according to each objective.

- **Part 2** reflected on the panel's evaluation of NWU's five mission elements.¹²⁹

The review panel noted that their review should be read against the specific context of the major changes under way in South African society since 1994. The panel stated that it had sought to consider this context while analysing and interpreting the information on the position, purpose and performance of the university. It also mentioned that as international experience shows, 10 years was a relatively short period to make a definitive judgement about the results of a merger of higher education institutions.¹³⁰

Summary of merger objectives and conclusions of the panel ¹³¹

Merger objectives		Conclusions drawn by panel	
		Has NWU met objective?	Summary of basis for conclusions
1	“Overcoming the apartheid-induced divide	Not in full	Present management structures and practices are not fully conducive to achieving transformation goals. Structures and mechanisms designed to encourage co-operation between campuses are not in place. More emphasis needs to be placed on developing an integrated NWU culture and identity.
2	Promoting a more equitable staff and student body	No	Racial and gender imbalances persist in composition of student and academic staff bodies. Separate racial targets per campus are not effective ways in themselves of ensuring that campuses are not exclusionary.
3	Enabling the provision of a wider range of vocational programmes	Not applicable	NWU did not accept this as a merger objective. NWU has nevertheless made progress in developing a comprehensive suite of academic programmes.
4	Building administrative and academic capacity	Not in full	Good progress has been made in developing academic capacity. Improvements in management capacities are still possible.
5	Consolidating the deployment and use of academic personnel	Not applicable	Academic staff mobility across campuses has not been actively supported
6	Building research capacity	Yes	Objective has been met across all campuses. Improvements in capacity have led to increased research outputs.
7	Enhancing sustainability through increased size	Yes	Financial management has been sound, and sustainability has been enhanced through enrolment growth. Infrastructure provision has improved through new and renovated buildings on all campuses.”

Summary of mission element goals and conclusions of panel ¹³²

Mission elements			Conclusions drawn by panel	
1	Transformation	Ten goals set by NWU related to: access, alignment, diversity, equity, increased unity, quality, redress, resource allocation, student experience, success	Not in full	NWU has put in place policies and practices designed to meet goals, but their full implementation remains problematic. Student access and equity policy goals have not been met. Progress in developing an institution-wide culture has been slow. Progress in student social integration has been slow. Equity problems persist in profiles of academic and professional management staff.
2	Teaching-learning	Balance (a) equity and access, and (b) quality and success	Not in full	Alignment of academic programmes through the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) has begun, and progress has been made on developing an institution-wide quality framework. Success rates and graduate outputs have improved on all campuses, and are now good. Inequities in student body affect teaching-learning activities. No institution-wide oversight of all teaching-learning programmes is in place.
3	Research	Improve research profile to become one of top five research universities in South Africa	Not in full	NWU has made major gains in terms of research outputs. NWU's current research aspirations require considerable and unrealistic investments.
4	Implementation of expertise	(a) Support technology transfer activities, patents, (b) make community service part of core business of NWU	Yes	Processes on technology transfer are strong. NWU is in top four of South African universities in patent applications and grants. Strong evidence is available that NWU is promoting local and regional development.
5	Effective governance and management	Provide a well-managed and financially stable institution	Not in full	Governance and merger model stabilised campuses during first years of merger. The model has not enabled an NWU-wide identity and culture to be developed. Steering and integrative management capacity at the centre needs to be stronger. NWU is a financially stable institution, with strong financial management. Financial support of students has increased, through use of both NSFAS and NWU funds."

Commendations

- *“Those involved in NWU’s building of research capacity and of expertise in technology transfer should be commended for the successes that they have achieved.*
- *Those involved in NWU’s promotion of local and regional development and community engagement should be commended for their successful efforts.*
- *NWU’s executive should be commended for its financial management of the institution and for its resulting financial stability.” ¹³³*

Recommendations

- **Transformation**
“In addressing the transformation issues raised in this report, NWU should consider implementing the following recommendations:

1. NWU should make a strong commitment to making progress with respect to:

- *improving student access and integration*
- *improving the equity profiles of academic and senior administrative staff*
- *addressing adverse issues of institutional culture.*

2. NWU should re-evaluate its language policies with a view to making English as well as Afrikaans the languages of communication and instruction on the Potchefstroom campus.

3. In the development of effective mechanisms for creating an institutional culture and a strong set of common institutional values, NWU should address the concept in its vision statement of ‘being a pre-eminent university in Africa’, and in doing this should reflect on its self-understanding of its Africa-orientation.

4. As a crucial aspect of its transformation approach, NWU should put in place policies that both embrace the values of the South African national constitution and promote diversity and human rights.

5. As part of a process of developing common institutional loyalties NWU should consider establishing pan-university sporting teams, particularly in those areas where the university engages in national and international sporting events.

6. NWU should develop more proactive university-wide human resource policies for recruiting and retaining staff in areas of significant racial and gender imbalance.

7. NWU should develop incentives for staff mobility across campuses within the context of either replacing campus-specific contracts with more generic university-wide contracts or making campus-specific contracts more flexible.¹³⁴

■ **Teaching and learning**

“In addressing the teaching and learning issues raised in this report, NWU should consider implementing the following recommendations:

1. NWU needs to ensure that teaching-learning activities are given equal prominence to research in terms of staff rewards and workload allocations.

2. NWU should build a profile of excellence in teaching-learning across all campuses.

3. As part of its search for excellence in teaching-learning, NWU should explore new curricula and learning and teaching pedagogies aligned with the demands of a transforming environment.

4. NWU should pay attention to monitoring its academic performance in teaching and learning, particularly regarding dropout rates and undergraduate success rates.

5. NWU should develop a better monitoring approach to academic performance in distance learning programmes, comparable to the performance monitoring in contact programmes, and treat distance learning as a university-wide rather than a campus-specific activity.

6. NWU should make improvements in its administrative and management systems with respect to academic activities, especially regarding teaching-learning issues and the use of information technology facilities across campuses.

7. The Deputy Vice Chancellor for teaching and learning should exercise full executive authority in reinforcing NWU’s efforts regarding the successful alignments of academic programmes across the three campuses.”¹³⁵

■ **Research**

“In addressing the research issues raised in this report, NWU should consider implementing the following recommendations:

1. NWU should critically and realistically assess the aspirational and quality implications of its research mission.

2. NWU should enhance research capacity by putting more emphasis on science and technology disciplines and fields in line with regional and national targets.

3. NWU should strengthen research strategic planning, with clear mechanisms laid out for identifying and supporting research priorities.

4. NWU should identify niche research areas of demonstrable local/regional relevance as a university-wide responsibility.

5. NWU should devote more effort to creating and supporting researcher mobility across the campuses, according to the academic needs of specific research initiatives.”¹³⁶

■ **Governance**

“In addressing the governance issues raised in this report, NWU should consider implementing the following recommendation:

1. As a matter of priority NWU should review its present model of governance and management to enable it to develop an integrated NWU culture and identity, and to strengthen steering capacity over the institution as a whole.”¹³⁷

19.5.5.3 The response to the report

The final report of the internationally led panel was released on 15 April 2014.¹³⁸ During a workshop of the NWU Council held on 15 April 2014, Mr Peet van der Walt, chairperson of the NWU Council, thanked the panel for its work. On behalf of Council he commended Dr Theuns Eloff, the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, and the Institutional Management for the courageous step of initiating this evaluation of the NWU’s stratagems.¹³⁹

Prof Dan Kgwadi, the new Vice-Chancellor, assured all stakeholders of the NWU that a process of consultation with internal and external stakeholders would follow to develop a strategic agenda and plan for the university. He invited members of the university community to comment on the report through established

structures.¹⁴⁰ His view on the internationally led review panel's report was as follows: *"The commissioning of this international evaluation and the receipt of its findings and recommendations are viewed as a significant milestone for the NWU. Institutional Management is committed to embrace the challenges identified in the report, to prepare a strategic agenda for Council's endorsement, and thereafter to execute, communicate and monitor the strategic goals to ensure success."*¹⁴¹

Although Ms Victoria John from *Mail & Guardian* reported on the high praise that the independent report had for NWU's 10 years of solid financial stability and huge increases in research outputs, she highlighted the following two substantial differences between the internal report of December 2013 and the report from the international review panel:

- The independent report contradicts North-West University's recently published claim that in terms of organisational unity and the management model, it has bridged its racial divisions and addressed historical inequalities. The independent review declared that the NWU's management model *"placed the university in an 'iron cage' that restricted transformation and the building of a united university culture and single university brand"*.
- The independent report declared that the NWU's management structures and practices are not fully conducive to achieving transformation goals and that racial and gender imbalances persist on campuses in the composition of student numbers and academic staff bodies.¹⁴²

Ms Susan Cilliers from *Beeld* reported that the panel praised the development of research capacity on campuses along with the levels of technology transfer, financial management and community engagement achieved. She concluded with the panel's recommendations that the management model should develop an integrated NWU culture and enhance student access, social integration and the equity profile of staff members. The NWU should also define its understanding of its vision to be a pre-eminent university in Africa.¹⁴³

19.5.6 The NWU of the future: the best is yet to come

If there is one lesson the NWU has learnt in its first 10 years, it is that change is not only inevitable but desirable. An approach that worked yesterday may no longer be suitable for today, still less for tomorrow. Keenly aware of the need to adapt to constantly changing

skills requirements, evolving technologies and new generations of students, among many other things, the university in July 2014 embarked on a strategy review process.

This review was prompted by the outcome of a major, internationally led evaluation in 2013/14, which showed that while the NWU was performing very well in certain areas, there was a need to revisit its strategic direction to address shortcomings in other areas.

The strategy review, expected to be completed before the end of 2015, is about formulating a new strategic agenda for the NWU for the next 10 years. The process started with a "bosberaad" in July 2014, followed by extensive and ongoing consultation with stakeholders, including students, student leaders, staff, donors, alumni and community leaders.

The review process has been challenging and even controversial at times, particularly when the conversation has turned to the possibility of changing the university's management model – a debate that touched a nerve among some stakeholders concerned about the future of their language and culture, as well as the standard of teaching-learning and research.

The university has responded by putting the strategy review process into perspective, reassuring stakeholders that the outcome of the review would be in the best interests of the NWU.

To quote Council chairperson Adv Johan Kruger in a press release issued on 31 July 2015: *"Council is overseeing this process and wants to give all stakeholders the assurance that it will act responsibly. All decisions taken will be with only the best interest of the NWU at heart."*¹⁴⁴

Prof Dan Kgwadi, NWU Vice-Chancellor, has expressed similar sentiments on numerous occasions.

"I want to make it very clear that we may deliberate and negotiate many things, but not the quality of our core business," he wrote in the July 2015 edition of the *NWU & U*, the university's alumni magazine. "The high standards that we currently maintain for our teaching-learning and research are non-negotiable. Whatever new management model may ultimately be approved, it will have to be quality based."

He went on to say that robust, reasoned debate on the future of the university was vital. " .. Remember, we need different opinions and viewpoints, because from these diverse fragments will emerge a united and resilient foundation that will ensure this institution's future success."¹⁴⁵



Results	Internationally led Review Panel on merger objectives 2014 ¹⁵⁶		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present management practices are not fully conducive to achieving transformation goals. No structures and mechanisms designed to encourage cooperation between campuses are not in place. More emphasis needs to be placed on developing an integrated NWU culture and identity. Financial management has been sound, and sustainability has been enhanced through enrolment growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good progress has been made in developing academic capacity. Improvements in management capacities are still possible. 	
	International Quacquarelli Symonds grading system Commendations, 2013 ¹⁵⁵		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four stars: facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two stars: Teaching Two stars: faculty specific arrangements. 	
	HEQC Report 2010: Recommendations ¹⁵⁴		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the diversity of the Potchefstroom Campus Filling of staff vacancies at Mafikeng Campus Improving the student academic, social, cultural and residential experience at Mafikeng Guard against the possible over-centralising and over-bureaucratising of the institution Roles of the School Directors and Subject Chairs Upgrade the libraries Addressing staff shortages and morale issues on the Mafikeng Campus Racial imbalances in its student profile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guarantee the sustainability of the academic activity at the Mafikeng Campus Enhance academic and support functions Synergies in teaching and learning across different campuses 	
	HEQC Report, 2010: Commendations ¹⁵³		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible financial management Improving staff qualifications and research capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simultaneous interpreting 	
	HEQC Report, 2010 challenges ¹⁵²		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the administrative, managerial and academic capacity building on all campuses Steps to embrace the diversity of NWU 		
Criteria	Criteria for the HEQC's Audit System ¹⁵¹	Criterion	1 2	Teaching and learning, research and community engagement	
		Sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitness of purpose of institutional mission, goals and objectives in response to local, national and international context (including transformation issues) Links between planning, resource allocation and quality management 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of the quality of teaching and learning Academic support services Short courses, exported and partnership programmes, programmes offered at tuition centres and satellite campuses Certification
		Area			General quality-related arrangements for teaching and learning
Criteria	Framework for self-evaluation ¹⁵⁰		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional, national and international imperative Vision, mission, strategies and goals 		
	HEQC Audit Criteria, 2004 ¹⁴⁹		Area 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fitness for purpose Links between <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Resource allocation Quality management 	Area 2 Teaching learning	
	CHE, 2004 ¹⁴⁸		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality 	
	Gazetted Reasons, 2002 ¹⁴⁷		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcome apartheid induced divide More comprehensive career-oriented programmes Enhance administrative, managerial and academic abilities Enhance sustained viability through increased size of institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More representative staff and students 	
	Education White Paper 3, (1997) ¹⁴⁶		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity and redress by means of gender and racial equity Communicative praxis eg effective communication and participation 		

Results	Internationally led Review Panel on merger objectives 2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial and gender imbalances persist in composition of student and academic staff bodies. Separate radial targets per campus are not effective ways in themselves of ensuring that campuses are not exclusionary. 	
	International Quacquarelli Symonds grading system Commendations, 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three stars: student employability. Three stars: programme accreditation 	
	HEQC Report 2010: Recommendations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme alignment process implemented Implement the Yeld Report Provide students with feedback on their progress and to follow up on at-risk students Staff development in assessment 	
	HEQC Report, 2010: Commendations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of external programme evaluation system Academic Development and Support Units Teaching Excellence Award 	
	HEQC Report, 2010 challenges		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme alignment Access 	
Criteria	Criteria for the HEQC's Audit System	Criterion	7 8 9 10	11 12 13 14
		Sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme management Programme design and approval Staffing Programme review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of assessment Moderation system Explicitness, fairness and consistency of assessment practices. Security of recording and documenting assessment data Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
	Area	Quality-related arrangements for programme development, management and review; and for student assessment and success	Programme development, management and review	Student assessment and success
Criteria	Framework for self-evaluation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational and Business processes Quality assurance 	
	HEQC Audit Criteria, 2004			
	CHE, 2004			
	Gazetted Reasons, 2002			
	Education White Paper 3, (1997)			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in capacity have led to increased research outputs. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those involved in NWU's promotion of local and regional development and community engagement should be commended. ¹⁵⁷ 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two stars: research Three stars: internationalisation of research arrangements Five stars: innovation, patents 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three stars: Community engagement 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve systems of research ethics clearance Develop appropriate policies on postgraduate education 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall strategy, plan and procedures to fully realise the potential of its approach to community 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research entities model 						
Research	15	16	17	Community engagement	18	Benchmarks and, surveys.	19
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General quality-related arrangements for research (for all higher education institutions) 	Quality-related arrangements for research (in-depth evaluation for research intensive institutions)	Quality-related arrangements for postgraduate education				
	Area 2 Research				Area 2 Community Engagement		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsiveness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage intercampus collaboration and research ability Build research capability 						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical inquiry in knowledge production 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship and cultural change

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RESOURCES

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND CONCEPTS

Concepts

- **Merger:** The incorporation of one body into another in such a way that it loses its structural and procedural identity and becomes absorbed in the host body or institution.¹
- **Democratisation:** The process of transforming authoritarian and elitist structures and procedures of governance, whether they be of a despotic or oligarchical nature, into structures and procedures which provide for participation in decision-making processes, either directly or through elected representatives, of everybody affected by decisions and actions of public control.²
- **CHE:** means the Council on Higher Education established by section 4 of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.³
- **Higher education institution:** means any institution that provides higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.⁴
- **Higher education (HE):** means all learning programmes leading to qualifications higher than grade 12 or its equivalent in terms of the National Qualifications Framework as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), and includes tertiary education as contemplated in Schedule 4 of the Constitution of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.⁵
- **Higher Education Quality Committee:** means the committee of the CHE established in terms of section 7 (1) of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.⁶
- **Institutional Forum:** means the body contemplated in section 31 of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.⁷
- **Institutional Statute:** means any statute made by the council of a public higher education institution under section 32 of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.⁸
- **SAQA:** means the South African Qualification Authority established by section 3 of the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995) of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997.⁹
- **Collaboration:** two or more partners working together in a particular area of business, which may involve combining existing operations, pooling areas of expertise or creating something entirely new.¹⁰
- **Merger:** two or more partners combining to create a single institution, which may retain the name and legal status of one of them or be an entirely new legal entity. In the 'holding company' model, one institution can have subsidiaries that retain separate names, brands and operations, to varying degrees. Federations can be seen as a more flexible version of full merger.¹¹

- **Institutional audit:** An improvement orientated, external evaluation of institutional arrangements for quality in teaching and learning, research and community engagement, based on a self-evaluation conducted by the institution. The external evaluation is conducted by a panel of peers and experts against the HEQC's criteria and other quality requirements set by the institution itself. The audit panel's report forms the basis of the HEQC's report to the audited institution with commendations on good practice and recommendations for improvement.¹²

Abbreviations

- ABET: Adult Basic Education and Training
- ACSSS: Advisory Committee on Student Support Services
- ACU: Association of Commonwealth Universities
- ADC: Academic Development Centre
- ADS: Academic Development and Support
- AECT: Association for Educational and Communication Technology
- All blade server enclosures, except MFK, have been moved to water cooled enclosures or HP Modular Cooling Systems (MCS)
- AMBA: Association of Masters in Business Administration
- APS: Admission Points Score
- APS-model: admission points score for admission requirements
- ASAHI: Association of Vice Chancellors of Historically Disadvantaged Tertiary Institutions in South Africa¹³
- ATKV: Afrikaanse Taal- en kultuurvereniging
- AZASCO: Azanian Students Convention
- BBBEE: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
- Be Active Programme:
- BMF: Black Management Forum
- *Bosberaad*: strategic planning session
- BP: Budget Process
- BTF: Broad Transformation Forum
- CA: Chartered Accountant
- CAM: Collaborations, Alliances and Mergers (British)
- CAR committee: C=coordination, A=alignment, R=rationalization
- CARs committees (C=coordination; A=alignment; R=rationalization).
- CARS committees: C=coordination; A=alignment; R=rationalization Committees

- CCFO: Critical Cross-Field Outcomes
- CCMA: Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
- CE: Community engagement
- CENETS: Centre for Education in Traffic Safety
- CENQAM: Centre for Quality Assurance of Medicines
- CEO: Chief Executive Officer
- CESM categories or Classification of Educational Subject Matter: A set of classifications aiming to provide a single coherent system for categorising subject matter irrespective of the level of instruction or type of institution.¹⁴
- CHE: Council on Higher Education
- CHEPS: Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies at Twente University
- CHET: Centre for Higher Education Transformation
- CIF: Campus Institutional Forum (CIF) of Vista University Sebokeng Campus
- Cohort: The first-time entry students in a particular year who have enrolled for a three or four-year higher education programme.¹⁵
- COLISA: Consortium of Open Learning Institutions of South Africa
- COMSCO: Commercial and Management Student Committee of Vista University
- COSATU
- CRM: Customer Relationship Management
- CST: Core Steering Team
- CTA: NRF's Cherenkov Telescopic Array
- CText: Centre for Text Technology
- CTP: Committee of Technikon Principals
- CUP: Committee of University Principals
- DALRO: Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation
- DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training
- DoE: Department of Education
- DVC: Deputy-Vice-Chancellor
- EAP: Employee Assistance Programme
- EDTP SETA: Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
- EDUCASE
- e-Fundi: electronic learning platform or virtual learning sites
- EHW: Employee Health and Wellness
- ELSA test:
- EMC: Executive Management Committee
- EMC: Extended Management Committee
- EPE processes: External Programme Evaluation processes
- EQUIP: Education Quality Improvement Partnership Programme
- ESATI: Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions
- ExecuWell programme
- FCCD p356
- FET: Further Education and Training
- Field of study: Enrolments are divided into four broad fields or areas of study, calculated by aggregating enrolments by CESM category:
- Business and Commerce (Band C): CESM 04
- Education (Ed): CESM 07¹⁶
- Humanities (Hum): CESM 03, 05, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 20
- Science, Engineering and Technology (SET): CESM 01, 02, 06, 08, 09, 10, 13, 14, 15 and 16
- First Things First Campaign
- FTE: Full-time equivalent. Student norm to calculate student numbers for subsidy. Student enrolments are calculated (a) by assigning to each course a fraction representing the weighting it has in the curriculum of a qualification, and (b) by multiplying the headcount enrolment of that course by this fraction.¹⁷ Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)
- GV: current growth-vector
- HAIs: Historically Advantaged Institutions
- HDIs: Historically Disadvantaged Institutions
- HE sector: Higher Education sector
- HE: Higher Education
- HEA
- HEAIDS: Higher Education HIV-Aids Programme
- HEI: Higher Education Institutions
- HEMIS: Higher Education Management Information System
- HEQC: Higher Education Qualifications Committee
- HEQC: Higher Education Quality Committee
- HESA: Higher Education South Africa

- HPI: High Performance Institute on the Potchefstroom Campus
- HR: Human Resources
- IAUP: International Association of University Presidents
- IC: Investigating Committee
- ICAS: Institutional Committee for Academic Standards
- ICBID: Institutional Corporate and Branding Identity Committee
- ICE: Interim Council Elect
- ICE: Interim Council Elect
- ICNL: Institutional Course for New Lecturers
- ICRI: Institutional Committee for Research and Innovation
- ICT Strategic Plan:
- ICTL: Institutional Committee for Teaching and Learning
- IDP: Integrated Development Plans
- IEASA: International Education Association of South Africa
- IF: Institutional Forum
- IFRS: International Financial Reporting Standards
- IM: Institutional Management
- IMC: Institutional Management Committee
- IMM: Institutional Management Meeting
- INSINQ SHARE: electronic records management platform of the NWU
- Insiq: Quality in Nursing and Midwifery
- IO: Institutional Office
- IOHS: Institutional Occupational Health and Safety
- IP: Institutional Plan or Intellectual Property
- IPE and EPE processes
- IPE: Internal Programme Evaluation
- ISRC: Institutional Student Representative Council
- IT Advisory Board
- ITEA: Institutional Teaching Excellence Award
- ITTVV: Incorporation Task Team Vista and Vaal Triangle Campus (ITTVV)
- JIPSA: Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
- JMC: Joint Management Committee
- JMC: Joint Management Committee
- JOC: Joint Oversight Committee
- JOT: Joint Operational Team
- JSC: Joint Senates Committee
- JST: Joint Strategic Team
- JTT: Joint Technical Team
- KFS: Kuali Financial System
- KOI (NWU renewal project for ERP: HR and ERP: FIN and in the collaboration projects with Kuali development
- KOI Project - NWU Renewal project for ERP:HR and ERP:FIN
- Komitee vir Administratiewe Beheer: A committee of the Reformed Church
- LMS: Learning Management System
- Masim: Material Science Innovation and Modelling
- MBWA: management by walking around
- MC: Mafikeng Campus
- MC: Management Committee (being Campus Rector plus direct reports like Campus Vice-Rectors plus Campus Registrars)
- MEC: Member of the Executive Committee of a Province
- MND: Merger Negotiating Delegation
- M score: Points are awarded for the six best symbols (taking faculty and programme-specific requirements into account) on the Grade 11 (N-Score) or Grade 12 (M Score).¹⁸
- MUST: Multilingual Speech Technologies
- NADEOSA: The National Association of Distance Education and Open Learning in South Africa
- NCHE: National Commission on Higher Education
- NCV: National Certificate Vocational
- NDP: National Development Plan
- NEHAWU: National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union
- NGO's: Non-Governmental Organisations
- NHEI: New Higher Education Institution
- NIF: National Innovation Fund
- NIPMO: National Intellectual Property Management Office
- NLDTF: National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund
- NMMU: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

- Nowets: North-West Education and Training System, of 1998.
- NPHE: National Plan for Higher Education
- NQF: National Qualifications Framework
- NRF: National Research Foundation
- NSC: National Senior Certificate
- NSC: National Senior Certificate
- NSFAS: National Student Financial Aid Scheme
- NTESU: National Tertiary Education Staff Union
- NWG: National Working Group
- NWU archive: North-West University archive
- NWU: North-West University
- ODS: Operation Data Store
- OpenCollab, a software development company previously known as Psybergate Cape Town. The NWU had a minority shareholding in the company for 11 years. When it was transformed and renamed OpenCollab, the NWU purchased the majority share as a strategic investment to establish a South African community source support capability for institutions using Kualii or Sakai.
- Optentia: Optentia Research Focus Area
- PANSALB: Pan-South African Language Board
- PASMA: Pan-Africanist Student Movement of Azania
- PASSOC: Public Administration Students Society of Vista University
- PC: Potchefstroom Campus
- PM: Project Manager
- Potchefication: Mafikeng staff members arguing that policies and procedures from the previous Potchefstroom University were forced on the Mafikeng campus. Mafikeng staff members used the word “Potchefication” in a negative sense, implying that all initiatives on the Mafikeng campus were driven to ensure compliance with the Potchefstroom campus agenda.
- PQM: Programme and Qualification Mix
- PU for CHE: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education
- PUCHE: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education
- RAU: Rand Afrikaans University
- RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning
- SABS: South African Bureau of Standards
- SAGRA: South African Graduate Recruiters Association
- SAHECEF: South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum
- SAICA: South Africa Institute of Chartered Accountants
- SAIDE: South African Institute for Distance Education
- SAKAI-based e-Fundi Learning Management System
- SAPSE formula: Funding formula for the South African Post-Secondary Education
- SAQA: South African Qualifications Authority
- SAS: Student Administrative Systems
- SASCO: South African Student Congress
- SASM: South African Students Movement
- SASO: South African Students Organisation
- SAT: Standardised Assessment Tests
- SATAP: Standardised Assessment Tests for Access and Placement
- SAUVCA: South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association
- SDCE: Senate Discretionary Conditional Exemptions
- Sediba Project
- Senex: Senate Executive Committee
- SENEX: Senate Executive Committee
- SET: Science, Engineering and Technology
- SI: Supplemental Instruction
- SIS: Standard Institutional Statute
- SOA: Services Oriented Architecture
- SoTL: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- SRC: Student Representative Council
- SRCS: Student RAG Community Service
- Student success rates: The success rate refers to the total number of courses passed by students in a given academic year relative to course enrolments. It is calculated by dividing the total number of FTE degree credits (courses completed) by FTE enrolments. These calculations, for a programme or for an institution as a whole, produce weighted average success rates.¹⁹
- Student: staff ratio: This refers to the average number of students per academic staff member and gives an indication of the average teaching load carried by each academic staff member. It is calculated by dividing the number of FTE academic staff by the number of FTE students.²⁰
- TA: Task Agreements
- TAL test: Test for Academic Literacy

- TENET and Rural Campus Connection Project, sponsored by the Department of Higher Education and Training, and overseen by Higher Education South Africa.
- THRIP: Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme
- Throughput rates: The throughput rate calculates the number of first-time entry undergraduate students of a specific cohort of a specific year who have graduated either within the minimum time, or up to 2 years beyond the minimum time, to the number of students in the baseline enrolments of that cohort.²¹
- TLT: Teaching and Learning Technology
- TM: Top Management
- TNW: Technikon North-West
- TOC: Transformation Oversight Committee
- TRADE: Trade and Development
- TSA: Technikon South Africa
- UCT: University of Cape Town
- UDW: University of Durban Westville
- UFH: University of Fort Hare
- UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal
- UNIBO: University of Bophuthatswana
- UNIN: University of the North
- UNIVPREP: University Preparatory Programme
- UNISA: University of South Africa
- Unitra: University of Transkei
- Unizul: University of Zululand
- UNW: University of North-West
- UODL: Unit for Open Distance Learning
- UODL: Unit for Open Distance Learning
- UP: University of Pretoria
- UPE: University of Port Elizabeth
- UWC: University of the Western Cape
- Vaalpukke: Vaal Triangle as satellite campus of PUCHE
- VC: Vice-Chancellor
- VEL system
- VERKA awards
- VHFEC: Vaal Higher and Further Education Consortium
- VJOBS: A network of partners working together to achieve an immense online recruitment reach in South Africa.
- VTC archive: Vaal Triangle Archive
- VTC: Vaal Triangle Campus
- VUDEC: Vista University Distance Education Centre
- VUT: Vaal University of Technology
- Wits: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg



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