FORGING UNITY: THE STORY OF THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY'S FIRST 10 YEARS

"*Forging Unity* is groundbreaking. It is the first critical analysis of the impact of the institutional restructuring in the mid-2000's to reshape the contours of apartheid in higher education. **Cornia Pretorius**, through charting the birth-pangs of the North-West University, which emerged out of the merger of the erstwhile Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and University of the North West, lays bare the challenges in overcoming deep-seated cultural and social traditions and values in the process of creating a new institution that transcends the racial fault-lines of the past. With a journalist's eye for the human, she sensitively unpacks the backroom intrigues and machinations, the fears and pain, hopes and aspirations, and ultimately goodwill that enabled the establishment of the university. Pretorius illustrates the power of leadership in managing change, including the limits resulting from an inability and/or unwillingness to break from the shackles of the social and cultural ties that bind individuals and institutions to their communities. This is a lesson that all universities should take heed of in the wake of the recent student turmoil that swept across South Africa. That this "warts and all" telling of the story was commissioned by the university should be applauded. It is in the best tradition of what public accountability means and should be held as a mirror to be emulated.

- Ahmed Essop was the CEO of the Council on Higher Education (2010-2015) and a senior official in the Department of Education at the time of the mergers.

"*Journalist* **Cornia Pretorius** *has written the history of one of South Africa's most unlikely mergers as splendidly as only she can – fast-paced, informed, fascinating and balanced. At times more detective novel than history of a tertiary institution, this is a must-read for anyone interested in the continuing transformation of the great societal laboratory which it is our privilege as South Africans to live in. It shines the light on reform and reconciliation in the North West – a part of our country about which too many progressive South Africans have a blind spot because of its distance from metropolitan centres. It tells the story of a forced marriage strengthened by goodwill but plagued by fallibility and folly because the new South Africa is still shaped by so many old South African challenges and attitudes. As such it is a roller-coaster ride of sinners who try, fail, pick themselves up and try again, as good South Africans do. It is a book everyone interested in education transformation, and anyone interested in South Africa should enjoy for it is the story of our time and our beloved country, told by an author who is a master of her craft.*

- Jan-Jan Joubert is the Parliamentary Bureau Chief of the *Sunday Times*

"Daniel Woolf, in his seminal *A Global History of History* (2011, Cambridge University Press) notes that the word history, derived from its Greek root also means to investigate, to inquire, and even to discover. The words journal, journalist and journalism in turn are derived from their Latin root diurna – the "story of the day". And "story", of course, is newsroom jargon for news reports and articles. If history thus serves as synonym for journalism and its task to investigate, inquire and discover, leading to a story, then this narrative of the North West University's first decade according to a journalistic method of storytelling is aptly subtitled *The story of North-West University's first 10 years*. It reminds one of a well-known adage of journalism and history, namely that "journalism is in fact history on the run", and that "journalism is also the recording of history while the facts are not all in". Indeed, the facts may never be "all in", but as one draft of history – and what a complex history – this is one such "story". In fact: South African history captured in a time capsule called *The Story of the North-West University*.

- Prof Lizette Rabe is Chair: Journalism Department, Stellenbosch University

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FORGING UNITY

THE STORY OF THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY'S FIRST 10 YEARS

FORGING UNITY:

The story of the North-West University's first years

by Cornia Pretorius

Commissioned by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor of North-West University. However, the opinions expressed in this book are the author's and not that of the university.

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Every attempt has been made to ensure that the information in this book is accurate and up-to-date. However, information may change subsequent to the publication of this book.

Dedicated to the people of North-West University who are not afraid of change.

"History...is the scene where the ghosts of the past comingle daily with the living... in a habitus of a haunted house."

— Prof Harry Harootunian

If my history by story and reflection disturbs the moral lethargy of the living to change in their present the consequences of their past, then it fulfils a need.

— Craig Dening

RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Forging Unity: The story of the North-West University's first years is a popular history that focuses on the human side of the merger and its dramas. It should be read in conjunction with Prof Piet Prinsloo's ***North-West University (NWU): A merger and incorporation story, 2004-2014***, which is available at **https://repository.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/26017**

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INTRODUCTION

As a historian, I have learned that, in fact, not everyone who reaches back into history can survive it. And it is not only reaching back that endangers us; sometimes history itself reaches inexorably forward for us with its shadowy claw. - Elizabeth Kostova[1]

News is the first rough draft of history. This saying is attributed to Alan Barth, who was an editorial writer at The Washington Post for three decades until he retired in 1972. Perhaps the words have become trite, even abused, as reporters invoke them as justification for incompleteness, inaccuracies or one-sidedness. But Barth probably wanted to capture another dimension of the journalistic endeavour: the difficulties, frustrations and dangers one has to face in a genuine attempt to get to the heart of a story. The point is this: as one sets off to tell a story yet untold, all the effort in the world can yield nothing but a first draft of history. This book should be viewed as the first rough draft of a journalistic history of the North-West University (NWU).

Beginnings and endings

Although the plan was to focus on the first decade of the NWU, 2004 to 2014, one had to retreat to the formative years of the NWU when Prof Kader Asmal, the Minister of Education, overthrew the existing order in higher education and forcibly created the university. The story therefore goes back to a few years before the institution's establishment.

Like the beginning, the ending of the first decade of the NWU had no definitive moment. Its tenth year, which was supposed to be a period of celebration, threw up some unexpected twists and turns for the university to traverse. It was in 2014 that the daily newspaper reported that students on the Potchefstroom Campus used a gesture that appeared to be similar to the Nazi Sieg Heil salute, and that this suggested the presence of an underlying militaristic, even fascist culture on campus – in particular in the residences. The Nazi story and the events it triggered were therefore included, upon request of the project managers, because they appeared to bring closure to one era and launch the NWU into a new one.

Best and worst times

Dr Theuns Eloff, the first Vice-Chancellor of the NWU, commissioned the book. His instruction was: "I do not want a sugarcoated version". When Prof Dan Kgwadi succeeded Eloff in March 2014, he did not stop the project. He wanted it to carry on in the same vein. One has to give them credit for that. Corporate history suggests that it takes exceptional guts for the head of an organisation to allow a journalist such freedom. It has the potential to undermine every effort by the public relations people – the reputation police – and to present the university, its merger, in a particular way. Although there are many examples of independent corporate history writing, this kind of assignment and the free rein that supposedly come with it turned out to be extremely challenging. The process of writing became even more complicated because of the project's life cycle. It was commissioned during the best of times but was completed during the worst of times. Nevertheless, until the release of the proof copy of this book in November 2015 no-one from the NWU tried to limit access to information or people and sanitise the story of a difficult, painful merger.

Vantage points

I was seconded from the Potchefstroom Campus, where I worked as a lecturer, to the NWU's Institutional Office in Potchefstroom to work on the book. The move

was approved on condition that I use my work on the book as part of a Master's degree. I became part of an interdisciplinary study of journalism and history, but in a corporate context. The book remained focused on people, their emotions, experiences and attitudes at a particular time, including the historical present.

So this book focuses on the human side of the merger and on its dramas, and attempts to present the popular version of the NWU's merger story. That is why it must, ideally, be read together with the more formal and in-depth document that former Vaal Triangle Campus Rector Prof Piet Prinsloo has compiled. It has not been published at the time of completion of this book.

Shortcomings

The book is bound to have shortcomings. It had to capture a story that has many layers – technical and organisational issues intertwining with the political-transformational and overlapping with emotional experiences. The new institution was cemented with a combination of goodwill, fear and hostility. There were so many people involved in and touched by the merger yet so few of them have had a voice in this first draft. Hopefully more people will come forward with colourful vignettes and add to this version – in wikistyle. I hope it will stimulate more debate at a university that has for some time been at war with itself.

Having said that I am concerned, as a journalist, that the book does not tell all sides of the story in equal depth. Remember, this merger was between two very different worlds. When it came together there were casualties. People were hurt. Some resigned. Others were pushed away. Of those who stayed, some have continued to resent the merger. Few of them wanted to share their experiences. Some refused point blank. Others did not respond to messages, emails and text messages over the period of a year. In one instance an interviewee did not pitch for an interview. Still, the book sought to respect the silent voices. Silence also conveys a message. Subsequently some moments might have remained underexposed.

The book pays also much attention to the foundational phase of the NWU. This was one of the roughest patches of its existence. From then on it focuses on key moments and connects some dots and shows patterns that have become embedded in the NWU's institutional character. It attempts to return to the human interest, the characters, the triumphs and also the failures.

Perhaps the emphasis of the book rests too heavily on the early stages and then again on events towards the end of the first 10 years. There are many stories sandwiched between the beginning and the end that deserve to be told: successes and failures. The timeline hopefully helps to illuminate this period.

Evidence

The university made primary and secondary sources available including hundreds of pages of official resources such as minutes of meetings, letters, background notes and reports. Some were marked "confidential" at the time. A stack of newspaper clippings offered more of an outside perspective on the merger. These provided the framework, the scaffolding if you will, of the merger story. But it had to be further supported by the more anecdotal, the personal and the emotional. About 100 people eventually shared their insights. It is in no way an exhaustive list, but the further gathering of oral evidence was important. At the same time, this also posed a challenge. Not only do memories fade or become tainted by the lapse of time; some of the important repositories of the institution's memory had, sadly, died.

More challenges

There were several other challenges such as the constant temptation to delve too deep into individual events, in particular if information appeared to be wanting. In such instances I had to remind myself that the book was about the NWU and that individual moments were only relevant when connected, enabling the onlooker to discern how the university has taken shape over the last decade.

Another difficulty was to compile the histories of the individual merging campuses. Whereas there are two books about the former PU for CHE, including its Vaal Campus, there is no written history of the former UNW. So while the UNW's backstory is based on interviews and some articles, the PU for CHE's is essentially a summary of key moments, taken from the existing

books. For the purposes of this book, these histories are valuable in helping the reader to understand the response of the former PU for CHE to the merger.

The chapter on 2014 perhaps posed the greatest challenge. The crisis triggered by the closure of the Wapad student newspaper played out in front of me and involved colleagues and friends. At the time I was an employee of the School of Communication Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus (I resigned in November 2014). Although I prefer not to use the term "objectivity" as I prefer "fairness", I had to approach the chapter with caution. Not only did I allow time to pass before writing the section, I also attempted to rely more on external resources (documents, newspaper clippings, minutes of meetings) and less on my own observations and recollections. Still, when one is so close to an event your view could be blurred.

Then there was the difficulty of the NWU as a fast-moving, unfolding story – the historical present. From the beginning of 2014 when the Sieg Heil catastrophe exploded, coupled with a strategic planning process for the next 10 years, many elements of the story of the NWU had to be constantly reviewed. Then, just as I was about to finish the book I had to step back due to health problems. This caused a further unwelcome delay.

Finally

In conclusion, a few general remarks are warranted. The names of the two universities involved in the merger were used in alphabetical order. The abbreviation PU for CHE was, with a few exceptions, used for the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. Similarly UNW was used for the old University of North-West. Being cognisant of Potchefication I could have switched the order or changed it. However, I decided from the point of view of editorial ease to stick to the alphabetical usage of the names.

Some of the book's characters continue to be part of the unfolding story of the NWU; others have played their roles and moved on to other endeavours. This is captured in the section "Then and Now" at the back of the book. Either way, these actors have helped connect the dots and illuminate the patterns that make up the complex dynamics of the university at this point of its existence. I am grateful to everyone who shared their perspectives on the making of a university whose story is still unfolding. Time will tell whether this first rough draft of a popular history of the NWU's first years does justice to the institution and its people.

■■■

Am I writer first or am I historian? …There need not always be dichotomy or dispute. The two functions need not be, in fact should not be, at war. The goal is fusion. In the long run the best writer is the best historian. – Barbara Tuchman [2]

PROLOGUE
BRICKSGATE

"The Council may discharge the Vice-Chancellor from office by a vote with a majority of two-thirds of all the members of the Council."
– Statute of the North-West University [1]

"…I know this was the time the Vice-Chancellor should have been fired because the Council had all the evidence to get rid of him."
– Japhta Ngonyama, Mafikeng Student Representative Council, 2004-2005 [2]

On 3 September 2005 the morning air in Potchefstroom was crisp. An hour and 45 minutes away from Johannesburg's mild weather, this part of the North West Province had sweltering days in early spring but icy nights. In fact, the previous night the temperature in the town had plummeted to freezing point.

The early morning chill could not temper the heat inside the Drosdy room of the city's Elgro Hotel where a special Council meeting of the North-West University (NWU) had entered its second day.[3]

The Elgro Hotel and convention centre, a three-star establishment in the older part of town, is within shouting distance of the Potchefstroom Post Office, the Magistrates' Court and, at a stretch, the uptight red face-brick building of the North West Police head office. It was chosen as the meeting venue because it was supposedly neutral ground for the roughly 30 people who constituted the Council: business people, academics, community leaders, students.

Fault lines form

The NWU had been founded a mere 18 months before by combining the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE) or Puk[4] and the University of North-West (UNW). In the Council, the governing body, the fault line was conspicuous and maintained by powerful perceptions. On the one side were the people from the PU for CHE. On the other side the people from the UNW. Big brother Potch vs little brother Mafikeng. Us and them. Them and us.

On this Saturday morning the Vice-Chancellor was about to be fired.[5]

Dr Theuns Eloff was liked by most in the room, but not everyone trusted him. Some believed he did not care for Mafikeng. Others feared he would change Potch too much. Fierce opposition met firm support.

The build-up to the morning's drama had started the previous day.[6]

The NWU management had asked the Council to approve a plan to build another residence on the Mafikeng Campus.[7]

But late in the afternoon Japhta Ngonyama, the SRC Secretary from the Mafikeng Campus, objected, opening a door through which Eloff could be pushed into unemployment. Ngonyama was attending on behalf of the Mafikeng SRC President Oscar Kgantlapale, who was on suspension at the time.

"I stood up and said: 'No, the university has already started delivering bricks there and they started erecting foundations." [As students] we celebrated the erection of the new reses, but the manner in which they were erected was not in line with what should have happened. It should have been sanctioned by the Council of the university [first]."

The question to Eloff was straightforward: "Have the bricks been delivered?"

Eloff looked at Johan Rost. The Institutional Director: Finance and Facilities knew nothing. He looked at Dan Kgwadi. The Mafikeng Campus Rector knew nothing.

"No," said Eloff.

February 1995
President Nelson Mandela appoints the National Commission on Higher Education to overhaul the system.

August 1996
The National Commission on Higher Education releases a framework for transformation.

An explosive Council meeting during which the Vice-Chancellor was nearly fired over a pile of bricks took place at the Elgro Hotel, 60 Wolmarans Street, Potchefstroom.
Photo: Nico Blignaut

Like a ton of bricks …

Prof Annette Combrink, Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, turned deathly cold. As a politician her trouble radar is above average.[8]

"I left the meeting in a hurry and phoned Louis (van der Ryst). Those …bricks. Take them away or think of an excuse!" Van der Ryst was the terrain manager.

Combrink, an Eloff ally, hoped this would prevent a pile of bricks from ending his career prematurely.

The subsequent attack on Eloff was fierce and along the following lines: He had overplayed his hand. He and Kgwadi were deceiving the Council, the supreme governing structure of the university which had appointed them and which they had to account to. He had done his own thing and as an afterthought asked the Council for its approval.

Eloff said he would get the facts and report back to the Council the next morning. If construction work had started, he said, he would resign.

Van der Ryst, who later moved to the Vaal Triangle Campus, was called in and had to make a statement at about 10 o'clock in the evening.

"We were busy with a building and rented a grader to level the grassy area between the new building and the place where the new residence was to be built as it was a fire hazard. The grader was hired for 12 hours, but the work it was hired for was done after nine hours. Since another residence was going to be built, the grader was put to good use in the next three hours. In addition, we had a problem to get bricks [for the building that was in progress]. Suddenly a huge load of bricks arrived. The driver asked the people at the gate. They said they did not know but since the grader was preparing a certain area they could offload it there. They simply offloaded the bricks on the wrong location."[9]

By Saturday morning Eloff was comfortable reporting back to Council. Subsequent events, however, caught him completely off guard.

"Instead of accepting [the explanation], those eight men [representing Mafikeng] reacted to say: 'Why should we believe you?' They wanted the audit committee of the Council to drive to Mafikeng to see for themselves whether management was lying."

"I was making notes. I knew I should answer them but I was getting angrier by the minute. And when I get angry, I don't shout, I speak softer and softer. And after they had their outburst they asked the Vice-Chancellor to respond," Eloff says.

"I told them as a management we were doing our best for the university and the Council did not support us, and that the group in the corner just tried to find fault. We told you the truth. You can check. There is no problem. There is no trust. But when I finished – I spoke for a long time – I realised on my right hand, where the Council chair was sitting, everything was not well."

The air was thick with tension when Litha Nyhonyha, the Chairperson of Council, instructed all the managers – the non-voting members of the Council – to leave the room.

"Council will remain, and the Vice-Chancellor, to discuss the unacceptable way the Vice-Chancellor has spoken down to the Council," he said.[10]

Moment of truth

The representatives from the old PU for CHE realised that Eloff could be fired. Although some of them neither liked nor trusted Eloff, he was still someone they could relate to and he understood their world, their concerns and their expectations. He was still one of them.

The non-voting members and the secretariat were relegated to the small office of the Elgro Hotel's manager where they watched rugby. The All Blacks were thrashing the Wallabies in a Tri Nations rugby match.[11]

Eventually Eloff capitulated.

"I said: 'If it came across that I spoke down to Council, I didn't mean that, but I have a problem with the attitude of some [Council members]'."

After an hour and a half the matter was settled.

Eloff's defiance when he was confronted about the bricks by the Chairperson, Nyhonyha, tipped the scale into a full-blown confrontation.

Nyhonyha, a businessman and Ministerial appointee, says he remembers the way Eloff was addressing his bosses and it was unacceptable.

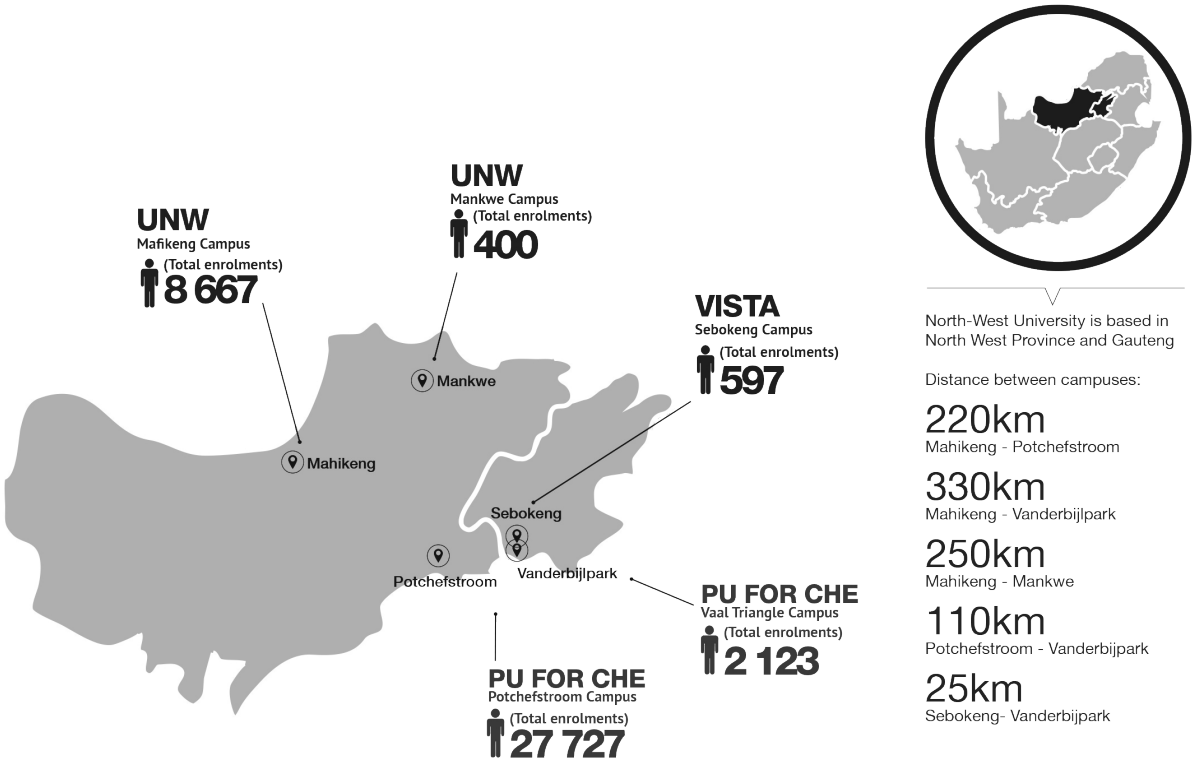
This is how the minutes captured the moment: "Some members felt that the way the Vice-Chancellor had responded to the issue about the building of the residences on the Mafikeng Campus, was disrespectful. Other members felt that the Vice-Chancellor had the right to raise issues, and did not experience it as disrespectful towards Council. There were also those members who judged that some members of Council quite often do not show respect to the management in general and the Vice-Chancellor in particular."

It showed the "lack of trust in the Council," the minutes stated.[12]

July 1997
Prof Sibusiso Bengu, Minister of Education, releases *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. It informs later legislation.

November 1997
The Higher Education Act is signed into law.

"…what I know as a former student is we were not happy with the merger itself. It was favouring one side above the other side. The Mafikeng side… previously black with people mostly relying on bursaries to study while Potchefstroom was formerly white and not relying on bursaries to do everything."
Japhta Ngonyama, a student leader from the Mafikeng Campus (2004-2005), blew the whistle on Bricksgate.
Photo: Johan Pretorius



▲ The distances between North-West University's four campuses and the enrolments of each campus at the time of the merger.

It was uncharacteristic of Eloff to lose his temper. He hardly ever does. Mr Consensus – his nickname amongst some in the South African university sector where he had also been a prominent leader – had a reputation for keeping his cool. After all, finding common ground between feuding parties was a skill he had honed over the years – in particular as a political negotiator at Codesa (Convention for a democratic South Africa), amongst others, during South Africa's democratic transition in the early 1990s.

Nyhonyha spoke of a "misalignment" that was developing. According to him the Vice-Chancellor was too slow to drive transformation.[13]

But the altercation laid bare the antipathy within the Council's ranks. In effect, many of the Council members were still stubbornly coming to terms with the very existence of the NWU. These dissidents were quietly disapproving of the new university.

The late Prof Kader Asmal, the second post-apartheid Minister of Education, shrunk the higher education sector in what he liked to call the "reshaping of the apartheid-induced spatial geography of higher education".[14]

The extent of Asmal's reform was monumental. Thirty-six universities became 23[15], 152 teacher training colleges became 50, then 27 and later zero as they were incorporated into universities.[16]

As part of Asmal's project the NWU was established. The PU for CHE and its Vaal Triangle Campus merged with the UNW in Mafikeng and its Mankwe Campus, which later closed. The Vaal Triangle Campus also had to incorporate the Sebokeng Campus staff and students of Vista University, a multi-campus institution that was closed as part of the restructuring.[17]

The new NWU was thus scattered across two provinces and four campuses. Some physical distances had to be

January 2000
Education Minister Kader Asmal asks the Council on Higher Education for advice on the "size and shape" of the system.

April 2001
Asmal appoints businessman Saki Macozoma to lead the National Working Group to refine the size and shape report.

Council members who attended the dramatic meeting in the Elgro Hotel. Professors Johan Rost (top row, centre), Annette Combrink and Dries du Plooy (bottom left) were amongst the Council members who witnessed the clash between the Chairperson of the NWU Council Litha Nyhonyha (top left) and the Vice-Chancellor Dr Theuns Eloff (bottom right). Prof Dan Kgwadi (bottom centre) was also there. Photos: Maclez Studio

crossed. The people of the Vista Campus in Sebokeng were only 25km from their new home, the Vaal Triangle Campus. But from the Vaal to Potchefstroom it is 110km, from Mafikeng to Potchefstroom 220 km and from Mahikeng to the Vaal 330km. The Mankwe Campus, which was part of the UNW, was about 250km from Mahikeng.

The great divide

When the pragmatic Naledi Pandor replaced Kader Asmal as the Minister of Education in 2004, she said she posed some bold questions about the NWU to her department's merger unit.[18]

"It would be interesting if someone tried to drive between Potch and Mahikeng and see what it costs. Let us pretend we live in Potchefstroom and work there, and that we have to be in touch with colleagues on a regular basis, because you did not have proper use of emails or the internet wasn't up and running. How would these institutions communicate? What was it going to cost? Who is going to travel?"

Interestingly enough, at some point the NWU asked members of the Department of Education's merger unit to drive the distances to see and feel the impact for themselves.[19]

Eric Mafuna, a facilitator during the merger process, observes: "[A] cruel card was dealt to North-West. [N]o other institution[s] had to deal with similar [difficulties], possibly Turfloop and Medunsa were the other very difficult [merger]. Because when you look at North West [Province] – yes, it is logical that in the same region you needed to bring the institutions of higher learning together. However, there are challenges that are insurmountable in the short to medium term. The issue of geography. The issue of resource allocation. And then there will be, say maybe cultural, language issues. If you look at the student body or the students who were coming through to the institution… they come from fairly dissimilar backgrounds…"[20]

Indeed if the campuses were far apart geographically, ideologically they were even further removed from each other. There were pronounced demographic – racial – differences between campuses.

Consequently their histories, institutional cultures and world views barely overlapped except perhaps in one area. Both had nationalist roots. One was created for Christian Afrikaners, the other for the Batswana.

The University of North-West, previously known as the University of Bophuthatswana (Unibo) was set up following the passing of the University of Bophuthatswana Act in 1978.[21] Bophuthatswana had been an "independent" homeland since 1977 ruled by the United Christian Democratic Party's Lucas Mangope. But Unibo's roots stretch further back to the 1960s when the community raised more than R100 000 for the tertiary education of the Batswana people. Unibo attracted academics internationally and a fair number of student activists who wanted to escape the apartheid government repression in neighbouring South Africa. The Mail & Guardian wrote in 2003: "Severely destabilised after 1994, it had small pockets of excellence and uniqueness in 2003, but overall the university's management appeared to be collapsing."

Demographically its 647 permanent staff members were mostly black and its 8 667 registered students almost exclusively so, and mainly from a rural Tswana background."[22] In addition the UNW had a small satellite campus, Mankwe, in the Mogwase area near the Pilansberg. Formerly a college for training teachers, it had been incorporated into the UNW as part of the government's rationalisation of teacher training colleges.[23]

In contrast, the PU for CHE had for years been a bastion of white Afrikaner nationalism, unapologetically so, strong in culturally positioning the Afrikaner through exclusive think tanks such as the Broederbond. Born from a theological school in 1869 it was a well-managed teaching university attempting a transition to research, also with elements of international excellence and niche areas.[24] Its demography was very different from the UNW with mostly white (and male) staff. As for its 27 727 students, 16 839 were on the main and satellite campuses and were whites from various parts of the country. In addition, 10 888 or about 40% were distance learning students or black in-service teachers. While the black students were mostly from deep rural areas, the campus students were predominantly conservative Afrikaners.[25]

The Vaal Triangle Campus of Potchefstroom was quietly relieved that as the little sister, even stepsister, it could just tag along without saying much. In fact, it did not feel much affected by the "bigger" merger. At the time of the merger it had only 2 123 students and 110 staff.[26]

But the Vaal Triangle Campus had to deal with Vista, an incorporation that was characterised by much furore. Vista,

December 2001
The National Working Group recommends mergers to reduce the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21.

30 May 2002
The Cabinet approves the government's proposals to restructure the higher education system.

which had one distance education campus and seven contact campuses across the country, had since its inception existed to ensure that black students stayed in the townships instead of seeking higher education at "white" universities.[27] The Sebokeng Campus in particular was home to leftist politics. It was inevitable that there would be a clash of ideas when its 597 black students and 51 black and white faculty members and support staff started arriving on the Vaal Triangle Campus from 2004.[28]

In short, the creation of the NWU was a symbol of the restructuring of the entire higher education sector. As the only merger between a primarily white and primarily black university, its success was critical for those in favour of Asmal's grand project.[29] But barely out of the starting blocks, the Council meeting of September 2005 revealed that the NWU merger was taking strain.

Council of contrasts

The tensions continued to surface in the Council chambers where the struggle for power over the still-unfolding merger was playing out. Different worlds would come grudgingly together: black and white, right wing and left wing, activist and old guard.

The crux of it all was this: the way in which the NWU merger was unfolding was frustrating Asmal's idea of a unitary merger and the white but politically connected Eloff was blamed for thwarting the Minister's perceived intention and slowing down transformation. Moreover he was seen as favouring Potchefstroom.

This made Eloff a prime target, followed closely by the Mafikeng Campus Rector Prof Dan Kgwadi.

Despite the problems some Council members had with Eloff, friend and foe must have realised that to keep the merger from crumbling his professional survival was necessary. His managerial and people skills were critical for a merger that was complicated and painful. In fact, managerialism would over time become a powerful tool to build the NWU.

Bricksgate was therefore an endurance test for the new university, the first of many in the history of the NWU.

Starting point

Why start this story with Bricksgate? First off, it captured the spirit of the establishment phase of the merger, roughly from 2004 to 2006. This was a period characterised by conflict, racial divisions and a forceful Vice-Chancellor who wanted to move ahead quickly in pursuit of results. The merger was executed by managers while the rest had to stay calm and carry on. Those were troubled days but against all odds, the NWU survived the rough patches. Following an integration phase from 2006 to 2008, it consolidated itself as an institution and then entered a post-merger phase.

In the Council alone, the contrast between the Bricksgate days and what became of the university 10 years later was striking. At the time of concluding this book, however, a series of events had catapulted the university back into the era when Council was a battleground between opposing groups and the Vice-Chancellor had once again become a target. But first, a step back into the corridors of power where it all started.

CHAPTER 1
A STEP BACK

There were mutters of agreement all round (sic) the table and the most far-reaching educational policy ever adopted in South Africa was through. There had not even been a vote."
– Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, 1999-2004 [1]

By 2004, the year of the NWU's birth, South African universities were punch-drunk from government reports, plans, a green and white paper, as well as the drafting of a new Higher Education Act. In the preceding decade most universities had had little choice but to try and mould their institutional personas in line with these new policies.

As if the evolving legislative front during the 1990s was not creating a tough enough environment for managers, the men and women at the coalface were also feeling the changes rippling through their lecture halls. There were violent student protests on most campuses about money, politics and the pace and extent of change.[2] There were dramatic leadership implosions because of corruption, mismanagement and conflict born of clashing ideologies.[3] At the same time the global trends of rapid technological growth, an increase in populations and a surge in demand for education were influencing the functioning of universities.[4]

When the late Asmal (8 October 1934 – 22 June 2011) became the second post-apartheid Minister of Education, he wanted to elevate the reform of the higher education sector to a new level. Despite all their efforts, the government of President Thabo Mbeki did not believe that the universities had done enough to embrace the spirit of change. In short, President Nelson Mandela's era of reconciliation was being replaced by a more confrontational approach. Mbeki openly attacked institutions and behind him he had the energetic, razor-sharp and also sometimes arrogant Asmal, who was adamant about leaving a legacy.[5] He asked the Council on Higher Education, his consultative body on university matters, to advise him on the reconstruction of the sector.[6]

In his autobiography *Politics in my blood,* Asmal admits that the reforms he was spearheading would prove to be amongst his most difficult and controversial projects.[7]

Long, slow simmer in higher education

The higher education sector's transformation had started nearly a decade earlier.

In February 1995 Mandela appointed the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE).[8] This was less than a year after millions of South Africans had queued to vote in South Africa's first democratic election.

Eighteen months later the NCHE's report *A framework for transformation*, emerged and started to dislodge existing policies ranging from teaching and learning, research and community engagement to quality assurance, governance and internationalisation.

It became the foundational policy for the green paper and white paper – and for the legislation to follow.

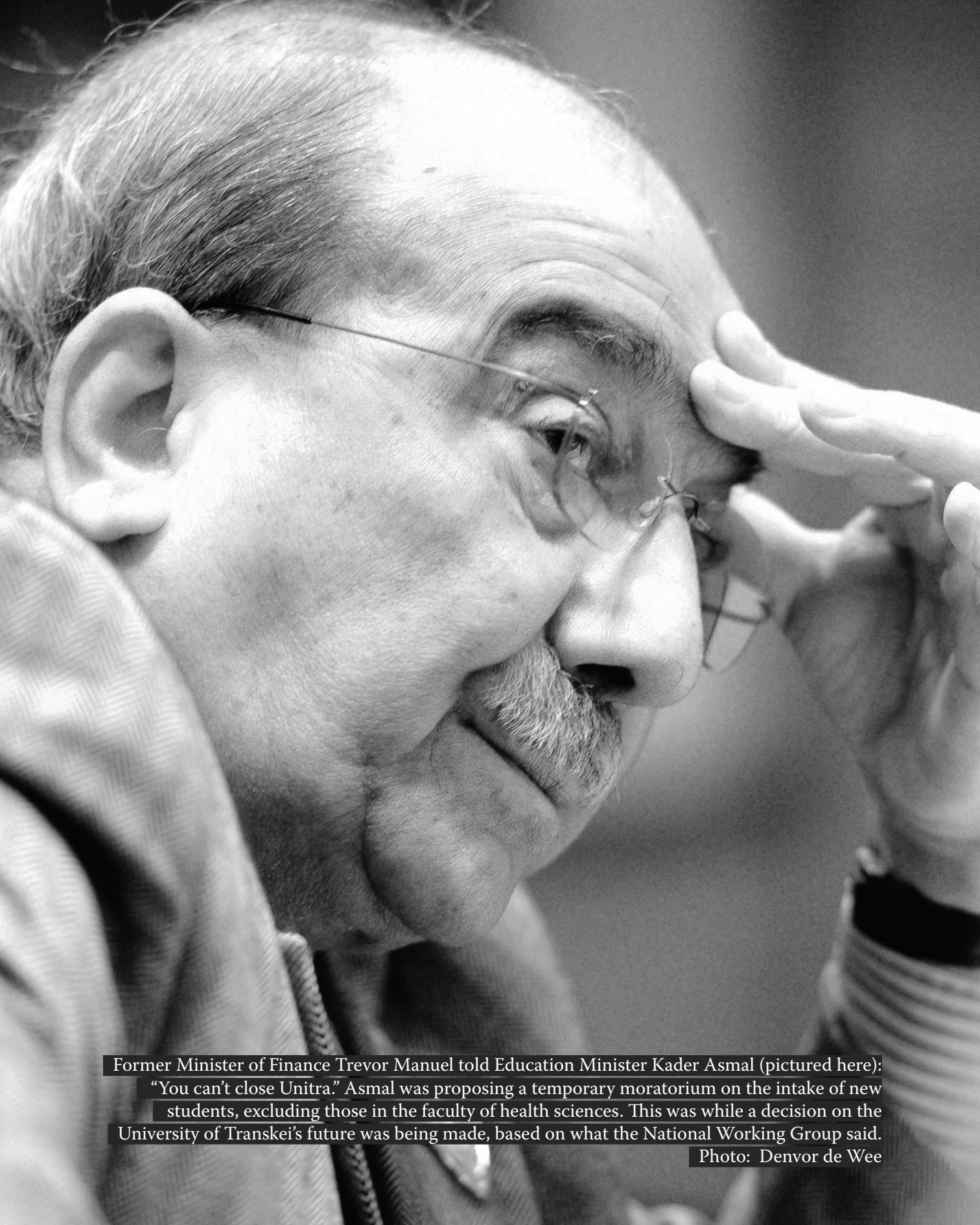
On 24 July 1997, Prof Sibusiso Bengu, the first post-apartheid Minister of Education, released the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education.* Based on the NCHE report, it marked a phase of putting into action the government's new policies.[9]

For the future the government wanted a transformed and coherent system that could offer greater access to a richer diversity of people, in particular black and female students. In addition, the envisaged higher education landscape had to gear itself towards an economy which was becoming increasingly technological and which required the highest levels of skills and the most advanced research. Higher education was stepping into the age of globalisation thanks to the Internet and all its possibilities that were about to be unlocked by the likes of Sergey Brin, Larry Page and Mark Zuckerberg, who respectively came up with of Google and Facebook.

The White Paper provided for the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to provide independent, relevant and timely strategic advice to the Minister

24 June 2002
Asmal declares his proposal for North West Province: merging the PU for CHE with the UNW and incorporating the staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University with the PU for CHE's Vaal Triangle Campus.

27 June 2002
The Council of the PU for CHE accepts a broad strategy to work on the proposed merger.



Former Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel told Education Minister Kader Asmal (pictured here): "You can't close Unitra." Asmal was proposing a temporary moratorium on the intake of new students, excluding those in the faculty of health sciences. This was while a decision on the University of Transkei's future was being made, based on what the National Working Group said.
Photo: Denvor de Wee

on matters concerning the condition, transformation of and planning for the sector.[10]

Furthermore the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) was set up as a permanent part of the CHE to focus on quality in the higher education sector. The founding document of the HEQC was published in 2000 and as such institutionalised a new national quality assurance regime for the education sector.[11]

Finally, the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997, came into effect.[12]

The so-called size and shape debate which would alter the histories of at least a dozen universities and technikons[13] did not enter the higher education transformation conversation until Asmal took office in 1999.[14]

As noted above, in the Mbeki era the authorities' view was that institutions had not done enough to come to grips with the spirit of the White Paper and the Higher Education Act. In short the accusations were that they had failed to transform adequately.

Yet there were rapid shifts in student enrolments that occurred in the new open access system. Black (African) and female student numbers were rising in historically advantaged institutions, while enrolments at most historically black or traditionally disadvantaged universities declined sharply, with negative implications.[15]

Despite the legislation on a new, single, co-ordinated system, institutional inequalities and disparities still occurred.

This prompted Asmal to act and in January 2000 he asked the advice of his advisory body the CHE on the optimisation of the preferred size and shape of the higher education system.[16]

The Minister asked the CHE to provide him with the following information: "A set of concrete proposals 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 that 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."[17]

The CHE established a Size and Shape Task Team to perform this task from February 2000 and recruited its members from labour, business, universities, and technikons, the Department of Education and the CHE itself.

On 18 July 2000 the task team handed over its Size and Shape report to Asmal. It was titled *Towards a new higher education landscape: meeting the equity, quality and social developments imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century*, and provided for a reconfigured sector in which the absolute number of institutions would be reduced through a variety of combinations.[18]

Asmal responded to the CHE's report by appointing the National Working Group (NWG) in April 2001. This became known as the Macozoma report as businessman Saki Macozoma was leading the investigation.[19]

The NWG had to look at the appropriate arrangements for the implementation of the restructuring and the provision of 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.[20]

The NWG's report was released in December 2001 and recommended the reduction of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 through the specific mechanism of mergers, listing the specific institutions in various provinces that were targeted for the proposed merger and incorporation process. At this point the NWU merger was already firmly on the table.[21]

The report caused a frenzy of behind-the-scenes activity.

Point of no return

By 30 May 2002, the higher education map in South Africa had begun changing dramatically. The final Size and Shape report showed that Asmal paid attention to some of those who had petitioned him (compare tables on page 25 and 29).

Asmal said in a press statement: "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 last decade."[22]

Cabinet's approval of the proposals was paving the way for the institutional mergers and incorporations that would happen in 2004 and 2005.

The Minister said that in the long term consideration had to be given to whether the merged institution should

12 and 13 July 2002
The Council of the UNW accepts the merger with the PU for CHE in principle.

2 August 2002
The first meeting is held between the Executive Committees of the PU for CHE and UNW Councils and the Vice-Chancellors at the offices of the Human Rights Commission in Johannesburg.

PROVINCE	UNIVERSITIES MERGED AND INCORPORATED
EASTERN CAPE	▶ Port Elizabeth Technikon + University of Port Elizabeth + Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista University ▶ Border Technikon + Eastern Cape Technikon ▶ University of Fort Hare + Rhodes University + University of Transkei medical school ▶ Academic programmes at the University of Transkei should be discontinued; infrastructure to go to new technikon
FREE STATE	▶ Technikon Free State retained + Welkom Campus of Vista University ▶ University of the Free State retained + Bloemfontein Campus of Vista University + QwaQwa Campus of the University of the North
GAUTENG	▶ RAU retained ▶ University of Pretoria retained + Mamelodi Campus of Vista University ▶ University of the Witwatersrand retained ▶ Technikon Witwatersrand retained ▶ Technikon Northern Gauteng + Technikon North-West + Technikon Pretoria ▶ Vaal Triangle Technikon retained ▶ East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University still to be allocated
KWAZULU-NATAL	▶ ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal + Mangosuthu Technikon ▶ University of Durban-Westville + University of Natal ▶ University of Zululand retained
NORTHERN PROVINCE	▶ University of the North + University of Venda + Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa)
NORTH WEST	▶ Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education + University of North-West + Sebokeng Campus of Vista University (students and staff)
WESTERN CAPE	▶ University of Cape Town retained ▶ University of Stellenbosch retained ▶ Cape Technikon retained ▶ University of the Western Cape + Peninsula Technikon
NATIONAL	▶ Unisa + Technikon South Africa + Vudec (the distance education branch of Vista)

▲ **TABLE 1**: The National Working Group (NWG) with businessman Saki Macozoma as its leader made a first round of merger recommendations to Asmal in a report in December 2001. The number of higher education institutions would be reduced from 36 to 21.

The lobbyists

On Christmas morning 2001, Asmal's phone rang.

It was Nelson Mandela.

"Kader," he said, "what are you doing with Unitra?"

The University of Transkei or Unitra in Mthatha[23] in the Eastern Cape was collapsing. In response to the Macozoma report Asmal was proposing that a provisional moratorium be placed on new enrolments, excluding students of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Former President Mandela, whose home was in Qunu, only a few kilometres from Unitra, was worried that Asmal would close down the university which is situated near the former President's birthplace and heartland - and now his grave. The phone call probably saved Unitra for the moment, though it remains in all kinds of trouble, even at the time of writing.[24]

Indeed, Asmal's announcement on how he would be reducing the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21 unleashed a flurry of responses: from flat-out refusal and the threat of legal action to reluctant acceptance and unconvincing promises of co-operation.

At least two institutions were publicly threatening court action. The council, senate and junior staff of RAU were not keen to merge with Technikon Witwatersrand (they accepted Vista University's campuses in Soweto and the East Rand)[25] . In addition Unisa took Asmal to court over aspects such as the merger process and its proposed name change to the Open Learning University of South Africa.[26]

Mandela was not the only VIP who got involved. Prof Jakes Gerwel, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and later head of Mandela's office, helped to keep the UWC intact. It was supposed to merge with neighbouring institution Peninsula Technikon.[27] Similarly President Thabo Mbeki lent an open ear to the lobby from the Council of the University of Venda (Univen) to prevent it from merging with the University of the North and Medunsa.[28]

In the corridors of the Department of Education, officials were acutely aware of the fierce political lobbying to unravel the recommendations made in the report.

Nasima Badsha, the deputy director-general heading the higher education branch in the Department of Education at the time, also recalls how, from all quarters, people rallied for and on behalf of the University of Fort Hare, which had to merge with Rhodes University. Rumour had it that Mandela was also part of this group.[28]

The bureaucrats in the department believed Potch (PU for CHE) was also pulling strings to get out of its merger with the University of North-West.

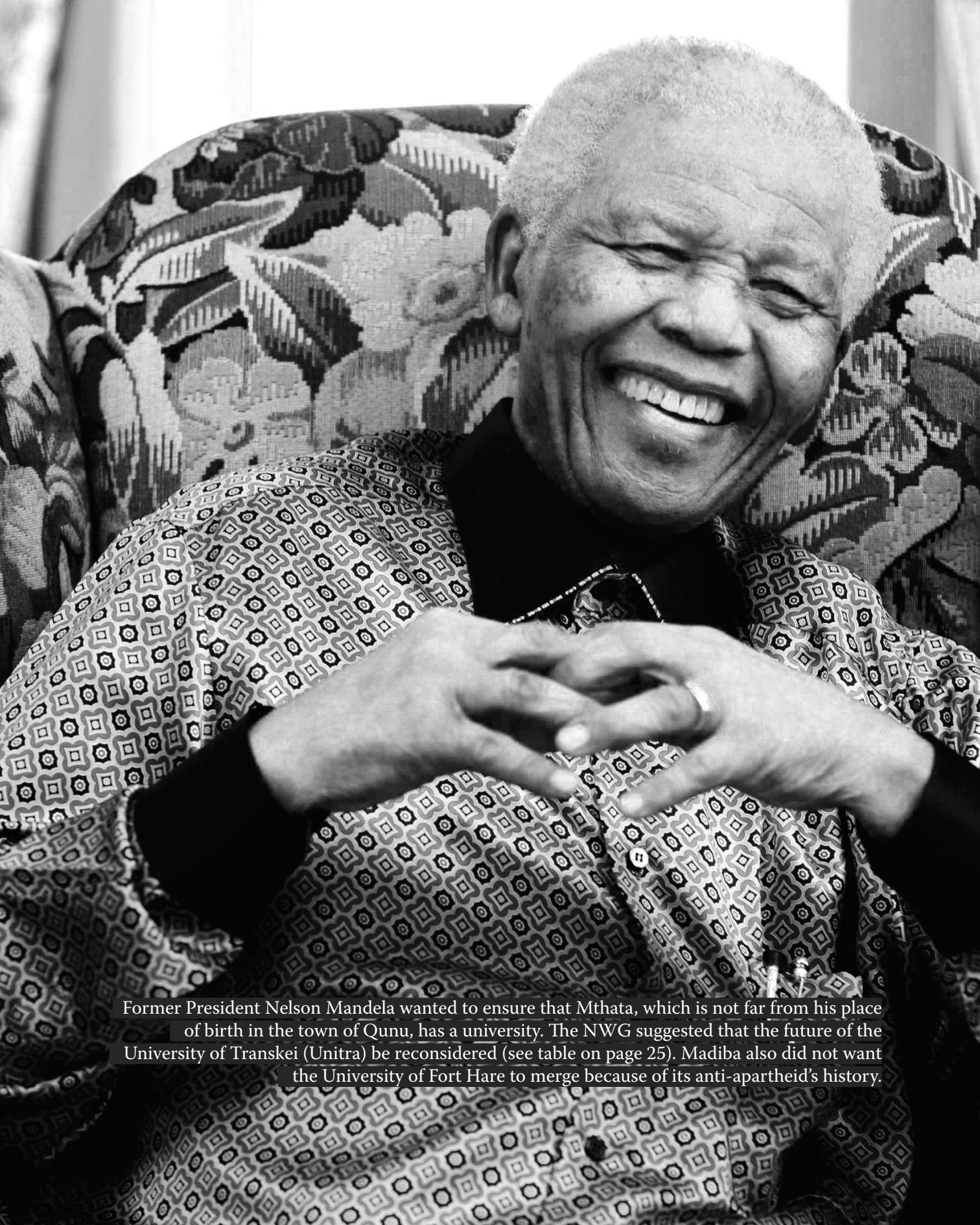
Ahmed Essop, at the time a senior official in the higher education branch of the department, said there was undoubtedly pressure on the Minister regarding this particular merger.

"Theuns (Eloff) certainly went to the Union Buildings. Essop Pahad [Minister in the Presidency 1999-2008] was on Kader's case [about the PU for CHE merger]. Mac Maharaj [former Minister of Transport and later spokesperson for President Jacob Zuma] at a cocktail party mentioned to me: Why is Kader being so difficult?" said Essop.[30]

Questions were certainly being asked about whether Eloff was tapping into his political network. After all he was a member of the 1987 Dakar safari when a group of 60 *verligte* South Africans met ANC leaders in Senegal. That is where Eloff met Asmal, Pahad and Maharaj for the first time.[31]

As one official stated aptly: "…let's be honest… nobody will ever say they are lobbying. [They will say] we were in discussions with Mac [Maharaj] and… we're sharing. In precisely the same way that the medical doctors at Medunsa [will say]: "No, no we don't lobby. We were sharing with the ANC the practical challenges of doing this decision [of merging Medunsa with the University of the North]… Theuns is politically connected and he must have spoken to a few people."[32]

But according to one observer Eloff was not the only one who "consulted". Both the PU for CHE and the UNW did and Pahad told them: "Guys, cool it." [33]



Former President Nelson Mandela wanted to ensure that Mthata, which is not far from his place of birth in the town of Qunu, has a university. The NWG suggested that the future of the University of Transkei (Unitra) be reconsidered (see table on page 25). Madiba also did not want the University of Fort Hare to merge because of its anti-apartheid's history.

continue to operate a campus in the Vaal Triangle.[34]

Earlier Asmal and Eloff had had a talk about the Vaal Triangle.

Eloff had been in his job less than six months when Asmal had tea with him in the Joon van Rooy Building on the Potchefstroom Campus. Asmal challenged him on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

"Give me one good reason why I should not give your Vaal Triangle Campus to the Vaal Technikon," Asmal said. "I remember my answer," says Eloff. "If you want a small but good campus to be swallowed by a technikon, if you want to compromise quality to create a comprehensive [university] you can do it."[35]

Asmal's blueprint was titled, *Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education.* On 21 and 24 June, in *Government Gazette* no 23549 and *Government Gazette* no 23550, the future of higher education in South Africa was outlined.[36]

But it was only on 9 December 2002, after a period of consultation, that the Cabinet approved the final plan.[37]

Asmal immediately wrote to the chairpersons of the Councils of the PU for CHE, UNW and Vista: "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 the 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."[38]

A decade later

Just over ten years after the higher education mutation of 2004 and 2005, from which 23 [39] institutions emerged, the University of Limpopo was the only institution that did not survive a merger.

The University of Limpopo, created through the combination of the University of the North or Turfloop and Medunsa, was unbundled in 2014. A new university, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, which incorporated Medunsa, was created.[40]

In addition two more universities were set up in the two provinces that were previously without higher education institutions. Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley in the Northern Cape was established in September 2013 and Mpumalanga University in October 2013.[41] [42]

Despite the high merger survival rate, each one's rite of passage had its own complications, in particular multi-campus mergers.

These complications included salary anomalies, differences in admission criteria and the consolidation of academic programmes and institutional character, and presented themselves through race, language and even management style.[43]

The creation of the NWU was no exception. But at least the leaders of the PU for CHE and the UNW, as well as the Vaal Triangle Campus and Vista's Sebokeng Campus, had previously explored various forms of co-operation.

■■■

▶ **TABLE 2:** The higher education landscape that was created from 2004 reduced the number of institutions from 36 to 23. Two additional universities were subsequently created: Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga University in Nelspruit opened during 2013. These were the only two provinces previously without universities.

UNIVERSITIES	MERGED AND INCORPORATED
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN	▶ University of Cape Town
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE	▶ University of Fort Hare + Rhodes University (East London)
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE	▶ University of the Free State + Vista University (Bloemfontein) + University of the North (QwaQwa)
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL	▶ University of Durban-Westville + University of Natal
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO	▶ University of the North + Medical University of SA
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY	▶ Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education + University of North-West + Vista University (Sebokeng)
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA	▶ University of Pretoria + Vista University (Mamelodi)
RHODES UNIVERSITY	▶ Rhodes University
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY	▶ Stellenbosch University
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE	▶ University of Western Cape + Stellenbosch University Dental School
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND	▶ University of the Witwatersrand
UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG	▶ Rand Afrikaans University + Technikon Witwatersrand + Vista University (East Rand and Soweto)
NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY	▶ University of Port Elizabeth + Port Elizabeth Technikon + Vista University (Port Elizabeth)
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA	▶ University of South Africa + Technikon SA + Vista University Distance Education Centre (Vudec)
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA	▶ University of Venda
WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY	▶ University of Transkei + Border Technikon + Eastern Cape Technikon
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND	▶ University of Zululand
CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY	▶ Cape Technicon + Peninsula Technikon
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE	▶ Technikon Free State + Vista University (Welkom)
DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY	▶ ML Sultan Technikon + Technikon Natal
TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY	▶ Technikon Pretoria + Technikon Northern Gauteng + Technikon North-West
VAAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY	▶ Vaal Triangle Technikon + Vista University (infrastructure and facilities of Sebokeng)
MANGOSUTHU TECHNIKON	▶ Mangosuthu Technikon

‘Quite right, Mr President’

Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, describes how the Cabinet accepted the restructuring of South Africa’s higher education system.

“I tabled my proposals for the first time in a memorandum to Cabinet in June 2002. The proposals were not initially accepted by the Cabinet, ostensibly on the ground that the rationalisation of institutional structures was focused on the ’hardware’ of restructuring, but the ‘software of transformation’ was missing. I decided not to point out that the software was covered in the National Plan for Higher Education, which had been discussed and approved by the Cabinet. I have always known that policy and law cannot be made by reference to other documents, and after a lengthy discussion in which the President expressed his unhappiness with the lack of transformation at the University of the Witwatersrand, he indicated that the proposals should be resubmitted, with the software issues integrated. I said, ‘Quite right, Mr President’ and left to inform my officials, who were waiting in the ante-room….

In August 2003 I placed the amended Cabinet memorandum back on the agenda of the next Cabinet meeting along with a document that set out in some detail the rationale for each of the proposed mergers and incorporations. This time, however, President Mbeki was out of the country and I was asked to chair Cabinet. I obviously could not table the proposals, possibly the most dramatic reform of a higher education system anywhere in the world, without the President being present. So the memorandum was withdrawn and immediately placed on the agenda for the meeting two weeks later.

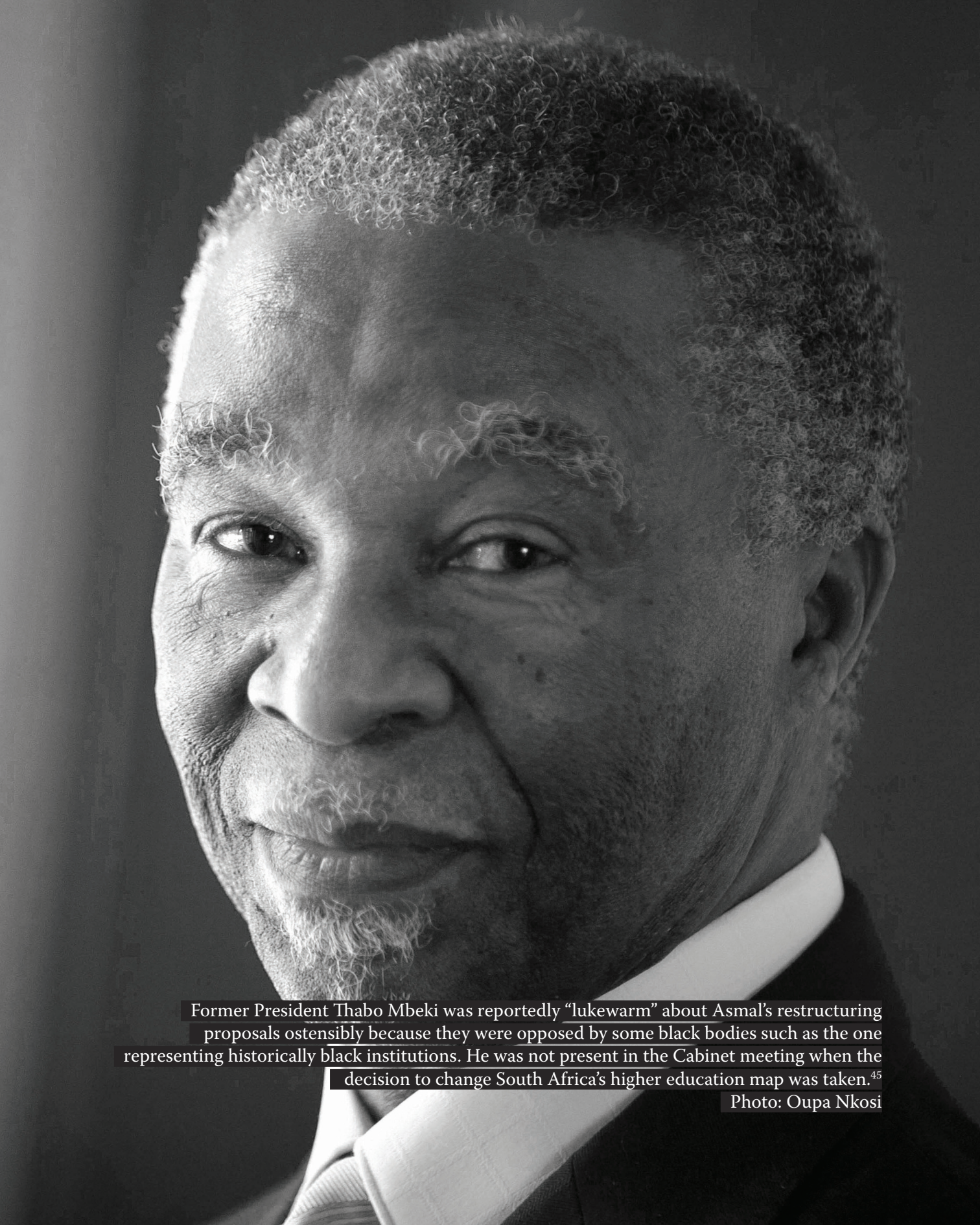
This next gathering was barely quorate as most of the ministers were meeting a foreign visitor, together with the President. Once again, I couldn’t table such an important and controversial policy document when so many ministers were absent. The document was again withdrawn.

I was now beginning to wonder whether Cabinet would ever discuss the plan, let alone actually approve it. It felt as if the lobbyists were getting their way. With the general elections of 2004 not many months away, it seemed as if the whole three-year rationalisation episode might be shelved.

Finally, in October 2003 the rationalisation proposal was listed on the agenda of the following Cabinet meeting, and a full Cabinet, including President Mbeki, was expected to be present. Here, at last, was my chance. But at the very moment when I was about to present my policy, President Mbeki stood up and left the room. He apparently had an urgent phone call to take from another head of state.

On his departure Deputy President Jacob Zuma moved into the chair and, almost immediately, Trevor Manuel – with a twinkle in his eye – said to Zuma, ‘Excuse me, chair, but I think we’ve all heard Minister Asmal speak on these proposals at length. I suggest we accept them.’ Zuma agreed. There were mutters of agreement all round the table and the most far-reaching educational policy ever adopted in South Africa was through. There had not even been a vote. ‘Can I dismiss my officials?’ I asked Zuma, as various members of my staff on hand in the annexe to answer any queries that Cabinet might raise. Zuma nodded and Cabinet prepared to go on to the next item. I got up and left the room, light-headed with what had happened.

As I walked down the corridor towards my staff, I saw the President, who had just finished his important telephone call. ‘Kader, what are you doing here?’ ‘We’ve finished,’ I said. ‘Oh, have they? Good,’ he replied. Then off he went.” [44] (Kader Asmal, *Politics in my blood,* p 281- 282)



Former President Thabo Mbeki was reportedly "lukewarm" about Asmal's restructuring proposals ostensibly because they were opposed by some black bodies such as the one representing historically black institutions. He was not present in the Cabinet meeting when the decision to change South Africa's higher education map was taken.[45]
Photo: Oupa Nkosi

CHAPTER 2
TEA AND BISCUITS

"The objectives of the workshop should be…having enough trust built amongst us to carry us through the difficult process ahead; this includes having broken through the 'politeness barrier' and really being honest with each other, without having this honesty break the (fragile) trust." – Anonymous, at a workshop on creating institutional options for the proposed merger of the universities of North-West and Potchefstroom, 7 and 8 August 2002.[1]

The PU for CHE and the UNW were familiar strangers by the time Education Minister Prof Kader Asmal announced his grand plan for South African higher education. Some professors had tea together occasionally.[2] These were cordial and friendly get-togethers.[3] Be that as it may, the kilometres between the universities – and perhaps also their ideological roots – prevented regular institution-wide interaction and, tacitly, this might be what both actually preferred.[4]

"Let me put it this way," said one of the tea drinkers. "While Carools[5] was still Rector [of the PU for CHE], there were half-baked attempts in our region… to enter into talks with Mafikeng. And we went to visit…We would sit with our peers for an hour or so and discuss research collaboration. [Some of the visitors from Potch] would walk into it with an attitude of 'now listen boys, listen to what the Baas says and then you do what the Baas says'. It was doomed and I don't know what they wanted to achieve. But we visited that campus and they came to this one. We saw what it was like. It was miserable. The buildings were crumbling. The bathrooms dirty. The students untidy – and they were marching every now and again." [6]

The two institutions had signed an agreement in the early 1990s, but no significant collaboration had evolved from that.[7] There were only isolated efforts to pull together in the same direction.[8] It was much later, towards the end of the decade in fact, when cooperation between institutions in the North West province eventually became more structured and focused. This stemmed from a higher education policy environment in the 1990s during which the Ministry of Education declared it a "strategic objective" for institutions to work more closely together on a regional basis.[9]

Although representatives of higher education institutions in the Vaal Triangle, including the PU for CHE's Vaal Triangle Campus and Vista University's Sebokeng Campus, had set up a forum in 1995 for inter-institutional cooperation in the region,[10] things in the North West Province moved more slowly. The PU for CHE and UNW only considered entering a formal agreement of cooperation on 2 February 1998 to act as one institution on matters that "could be done better jointly".[11] The tea-and-biscuit conversations would soon make way for technical task teams and committees.[12] There would be about 20 of them. They would meet at least once a month and unwittingly begin to pave the way for the merger.

From tea to task teams

In February 2001, Asmal's National Plan for Higher Education, which outlined steps on how to put the White Paper into action, would force the PU for CHE and the UNW to take their existing relationship to another level.[13]

They jointly interpreted their responsibilities under the National Plan for Higher Education as follows: "Regional collaboration should now enter a next phase which would be broader, more formal and addressing vital issues."[14]

At a meeting on 23 July 2001, the PU for CHE and the UNW, together with Technikon North-West (TNW), the only other higher education institution in the province, agreed that discussions to enhance collaboration in the North West region should be formalised.[15]

6 September 2002
The UNW University Assembly adopts a resolution to accept the merger and negotiating process.

21 September 2002
The Councils of the PU for CHE and UNW meet at Magalies Park in the Hartebeespoort Dam area and reach a historic consensus on the founding principles of the new institution.

Saki Macozoma, chairperson of the National Working Group, believed that a single university for the North West Province was unavoidable.
Photo: Nardus Engelbrecht

▲ Prof John Melamu (left front) from UNW, and Prof Carools Reinecke, his counterpart Rector of the PU for CHE, sign an agreement. The PU for CHE and UNW worked together in an education consortium known as Nowets. The institutions hoped this type of collaboration would be acceptable to Asmal rather than a merger. Photo: NWU Archive and Museum

◄ ▲These undated pictures reflect the financial difficulties that influenced the maintenance of infrastructure on the Mafikeng Campus of the former University of North-West.

Photos: NWU Archive and Museum

“Carools [Reinecke] and John Melamu understood each other well. They had worked together for years in particular because of Nowets, which at one stage had 22 to 24 working groups. So we said: “Let us speak to the Minister so that instead of a forced merger we rather enter into a tripartite agreement, including the two universities and the him. We could then organically grow closer and after ten years we would work together. We expected that he had learnt something from social engineering, but we were naive.”[16]

What's more, R500 000 was injected into the process thanks to the intervention of Dr Harry Brinkman of the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

At this point in time, the discourse in higher education in South Africa was dominated by two words: "size" and "shape".[17] For many universities and technikons, these were swear words. They meant governmental meddling. They meant unwanted change.

Representatives of the institutions in North West Province had a meeting with the National Working Group chaired by Saki Macozoma and rejected a merger. This is explained in a document on collaboration, dated 31 July 2001: "The geographical distribution of the three, the differentiation in their education profiles, which would dramatically increase the problem of managing them as a unit, added to the exceptional complexities involved in any merger, even under optimal conditions".[18]

What they preferred was a model of compulsory association – flexible yet binding. There would be no merger, but their joint initiatives in areas such as programme and qualification mixes, administrative and managerial functions and infrastructure would be regulated contractually. The most important aspect of this model was that each institution would remain autonomous.

Eventually a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the PU for CHE, the UNW and Technikon North-West on 21 January 2002. The consortium called itself the North West Education and Training system – in short: Nowets.

While the parties were undoubtedly sincere about working together, the stilted tone and language of the Memorandum was revealing:

"The PARTIES hereby agree to enter into the ASSOCIATION, with a view to contribute by their PLANNED CONTRIBUTION as higher education institutions, to social, educational, economic, cultural and political processes existing or initiated in the REGION, more specifically to:

- Overcome the fragmentation of the higher education system left behind by the colonial and apartheid eras;
- Ensure the effective and efficient distribution of relevant higher education academic programmes, research and community service by making available the best expertise existing in the REGION at the lowest cost for the students, other stakeholders and clients, making use of methods and technologies that will optimise the reach of the parties acting jointly, thereby also increasing the impact of the PARTIES' joint and individual offerings."[19]

… and so on and so on. The language of the draft contract merely echoed higher education policy jargon. The institutions might have wanted to show their willingness to do what the Ministry of Education wanted, but the idea of becoming one institution was too daunting to contemplate.

Events take a new turn

The Technikon North-West pulled out of the regional process early in April 2002.[20] It had probably heard through the grapevine that Asmal's National Working Group envisaged its future in Gauteng. In fact, the Ministry had prepared a "Memorandum of clarification on transformation and mergers in higher education", which said that TNW was closer to two other technikons in the Pretoria area.

"Its association with the North West is largely as a result of a quirk of apartheid geography. Logic dictates that TNW should in fact be considered as part of the Gauteng region and this approach has been adopted by the Ministry." The positioning of the TNW in Gauteng with other technikons was a relief for the PU for CHE and the UNW. A merger between universities and a technikon would have brought another layer of difficulties to the merger. The TNW went on to merge with the Technikon Northern Gauteng and Technikon Pretoria, which later became the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).[21]

At roughly the same time, the Council and the Senate of the PU for CHE accepted the draft contract to enter into a memorandum of agreement for the consortium[22]. At a Council meeting on 18 April 2002, members also heard that talks were under way with Macozoma, chair of the National Working Group, and that Asmal preferred a merger to a consortium between the PU for CHE and the UNW.

The PU for CHE and the UNW were comfortable with the consortium model, however.[23] It would secure each institution's autonomy and institutional identity, which each prized too much just to let go. For the PU for CHE, a consortium as opposed to a merger was certainly perceived to be the safest route to protect its Afrikaans culture and Christian

28 September 2002
The Premier of the North West Province, Popo Molefe, notifies the two Vice-Chancellors he endorses the consensus they have reached about the merger.

1 October 2002
A joint submission by the PU for CHE and UNW is made to the Ministry.

education, its foundational pillars, which were increasingly at odds with the secular state – and which were viewed as problematic by the education authorities.[24] The state could not be seen to fund a university serving a specific constituency.

By forming Nowets, the PU for CHE and the UNW were pre-empting Asmal's final announcement on the reconfiguration of higher education in South Africa. The universities hoped that their model of collaboration would be acceptable to Asmal and stop him from merging them.

This was not to be.

From the vantage point of the Minister and his officials, the two institutions were not able to respond successfully to the region's access, equity and developmental needs. They were reluctant to voluntarily merge and needed some help – help that the Ministry was about to provide by compelling the two universities to merge.[25]

One of the tea drinkers from Potchefstroom recalled how people reacted when the Size and Shape Report's plan for the PU for CHE became known: "We were struck with total horror".[26]

Not only had staff from the PU for CHE just gone through the trauma of a restructuring involving retrenchments, they viewed UNW as a threat to their institutional ethos. In fact, the idea of privatising the PU for CHE even came up – and not for the first time.[27]

Many Mafikeng staffers were also shocked to hear about a merger with the Puk. They wanted their institution to be left alone. Afrikaans, the "Boer culture" and the strong Calvinist traditions on the Potchefstroom Campus were alien to them.

In the words of a senior professor: "Everyone was against it [the merger]. The whole campus had said: 'No worries, it can't work, we're not interested.' But the Minister forced it."[28]

Nowets could not prevent the PU for CHE and the UNW from merging, but after two years it did have benefits. At least when managers from both institutions had to start sitting across from each other in boardrooms to negotiate, some of them were not complete strangers. The talks gave the NWU, still in the making, enough of a head start to be ahead of other mergers. It helped.[29]

Even so, in both instances the histories of the institutions weighed heavily upon the merger pioneers who had to navigate unfamiliar and unfriendly territories.

The story of the NWU cannot therefore be detached from the past of its three legacy institutions, which provided its foundation.

Both the PU for CHE and the UNW, and their two respective satellite campuses, the Vaal Triangle and Mankwe, had histories, which complicated their responses to the merger.

There were certainly moments they wanted to forget, but the stronger reaction was to hold on to what they had. In the existential crisis they were experiencing, the past and what it represented was the only certainty they had.

Although cursory, the backstories on each of the universities and their campuses aim to explain their reactions and perhaps more importantly, the opposition to the merger.

CHAPTER 3
POTCHEFSTROOM UNIVERSITY FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

"The Puk has always been slightly different and will remain different.
Therefore they will always mess with us...we have to make sure they can't afford to mess with us."
— Dr Theuns Eloff in his first speech as Rector of the PU for CHE, 2002[1]

The purpose of this chapter is not to write the history of the PU for CHE again, but to try and explain its peculiar response to the merger.

Unlike the history of the UNW, which had not been captured in book format, two voluminous works, *Wonderdaad...!* and *In U Lig* recorded the past of the PU for CHE. What unfolded from one chapter to the next, across more than a thousand pages, was the story of an institution that literally struggled to survive from one year to the next. The PU for CHE was built on hardship, sacrifices and an unshakeable belief in the founding fathers' objectives and aspirations. Hence, when Asmal announced the end of the PU for CHE, it was not taken lightly.

The brief historical overview that follows seeks to highlight the emotional and political dimensions (rather than the organisational) of the former PU for CHE's past. Anyone who is unfamiliar with the Puk's history should gain some insight into the institution's anguished soul.

Beginnings

Twentieth century Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, especially after the Anglo Boer War (1899 -1902), developed a particular sense of belonging and coherence that went well beyond the traditional political "nationalist" framework. They would form organisations and movements and get fellow Afrikaners in the rural and urban areas of South Africa to support them en masse.

During the Great Depression (1929 -1933), a professor in his black car arrived at the gates of homes in the Free State and old Western Transvaal. He said he was looking for students and money to save his university. It was a Christian institution. People hardly had pennies in their pockets but they dug deep. They wanted to save the Puk – in particular when there were rumours that the Minister of Education Dr DF Malan wanted to close it down. In hindsight, every coin probably helped.

The professor was Ferdinand Postma, Rector of the PU for CHE from 1921-1950. For the sake of his beloved university he would return again and again to plead for the means to sustain it.[2]

Indeed, the PU for CHE had a history of struggle.

Year after year it had to beg and borrow to survive financially. It had to lobby to keep its Christian name. It had to fight to stay open amid fierce criticism.

From its establishment as a theological seminary in November 1869 in Burgersdorp in the Eastern Cape, until it became the fully independent PU for CHE in 1951, the institution's oxygen was Afrikaner nationalism. Even 63 years later, in 2014, the Potchefstroom Campus was considered a hotbed of Afrikaner zeal.

Where loyalties lay

At the helm of the institution was a coterie of Afrikaans cultural, educational and religious leaders, the latter from the Gereformeerde kerkgenootskap (Reformed Church), the more conservative of the three Afrikaner churches in South Africa. Some of these leaders were in the leadership of organisations such as the Afrikaner Broederbond

December 2002
Cabinet approves the final merger proposal.

December 2002
The PU for CHE and UNW receive notification from Asmal about their merger.

The main building of the Potchefstroom Campus was opened on 4 April 1931. At present the Faculty of Law uses the building, which is perhaps the campus's most recognisable architectural feature. It was initially surrounded by corrugated iron buildings which were used as lecture halls and laboratories.
Photo: Elrie Visser

(currently Afrikanerbond) the Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuurorganisasies (FAK) and the Ossewabrandwag (OB). A number of its academics were also present at the birth of the National Party in 1914. Much later, Potchefstroom alumni became National Party cabinet ministers and involved their alma mater in government commissions, investigations and government-related research projects.

The new institution was fiercely anti-British and later anti-English.[3] In fact, "Doppers", a name, which has been used to describe members of the Reformed Church, can be traced back to the 19th century when it was used to describe conservative, puritanical Dutch, French and German families who rejected the British culture and worldview. Later it was also used to describe farmers in the Burgersdorp area. So great was their opposition to creeping Anglicisation in the political and social spheres of their lives that the Doppers of the Cape departed on a trek even before the famous Great Trek.[4]

From the outset, Afrikaans as the medium of instruction had been infused into the Christian nationalist Puk package. The first leaders also preferred an Afrikaans institution to a Dutch one.[5] In time the Puk would provide tertiary education to Afrikaans students and anchor Afrikaans in the language of science, but as a nationalist university it was expected to fulfil an ideological purpose: protect the Afrikaner and Afrikanerdom's cultural assets. This is why the institution was prominent in efforts to formally secure the recognition of Afrikaans as an official language, and why its academics were at the forefront of the drive to translate the Bible into Afrikaans. Against this backdrop, it is easy to comprehend why and how Afrikaans formed part of the genetic make-up of the Puk and became a much-cherished principle.

Understandably then, from the early days right up to the present, there would be differences of opinion about Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. In today's multiracial democracy, where the use of Afrikaans in the tertiary education sector remains hotly contested, there is strong demand for access to universities amongst students who prefer English as the medium of instruction.

Ultimately, to contextualise its ideology, the PU for CHE's historical timeline should be compared with that of South Africa. The Anglo Boer War, Unification, the two World Wars, punctuated by tensions amongst Afrikaners, the parliamentary election victory of the National Party in 1948, the birth of a Republic in 1961, apartheid in its many ugly guises (especially from the 1950s) and the arrival and unfolding of multiracial democracy … all of these had a significant impact on the university. Hence by the early 1990s, the PU for CHE embodied a comprehensive set of Christian, Afrikaans and nationalist values. The influence emanating from the institution was labelled "the voice of Potchefstroom".[6]

But sometimes the voice of Potchefstroom was false, according to the ruling National Party.[7]

In fact the Puk yielded dissenting voices who criticised the political order, and stridently. The journalist and author Max du Preez says the "fundamental transformational thinking" which propelled South Africa into becoming a democracy started on the campus of the PU for CHE and not at Stellenbosch University as "they would like to believe". Moreover, the names of FW de Klerk and Theuns Eloff are part of the golden thread that runs through South Africa's history of democratisation.[8]

Given the contradictions of the times, it is also understandable that Potch alumni led the conservative backlash to the transformation steps by the former Nationalist government in the 1980s, starting with the PW Botha administration and then extended by FW de Klerk's government.

Deep religious roots

The PU for CHE grew from "De Theologiese School van de Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid-Afrika", which opened in the town of Burgersdorp in the north-eastern Cape on 29 November 1869. This followed a decision in May by the church to set up a Theological School for the training of ministers. At that stage the church did not envisage its eventual development into a university.

The church was established only a few years earlier in 1859 after a split with the Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk). This break would in the years to come influence the theological school and later the university.

The school opened its doors with five students and two lecturers. In 1897, the church added a literary department, enabling the institution to train teachers as well and provide training for other professions.[9] This was the seed from which the PU for CHE would eventually grow into a major university that – just before the 2004 merger – had 25 606 students and 1 451 permanent staff members.[10]

Although the first teachers, the Revs Dirk Postma and Jan

31 December 2002
Templates for the compatibility study are completed, dates finalised for joint meetings, recommendations made on the establishment of the Interim Council and requirements identified for funding and external facilitation.

January 2003
A number of task groups are established to make sure the NWU will be up and running in 2004. They benefit from the gains made by the former North West Education and Training System (Nowets).

Lion Cachet, were considered Dutchmen, they wanted to provide neither Dutch nor English training. They wanted the education of the college to be in the Afrikaans vernacular.

When the Anglo Boer War started in 1899, education at the Theological School came to a standstill. Students of the two Boer Republics, the ZAR and the Free State, joined the commandoes and moved to the battlefronts.

In April 1900, with the war still raging across the Cape border, the college decided to reopen. Financially, it was hardly breathing. It could not rely on financial support from the Boer republics, fighting a war against the world's foremost imperial power. Coming to the rescue, patriotic lecturers donated half their salaries to keep the college open. In 1901, it had 18 students, but the British commanding officer in town told those who were not from the Cape to go home. Five students remained.

In March 1900, Lion Cachet, the college Rector, was arrested on a charge of high treason. After six weeks in jail he was released from prison for lack of evidence. Some of the English residents, all British supporters, petitioned on his behalf. But it was a close call. He could have been banished to Port Elizabeth or East London. The British authorities were unable to prove that he supported Boer invasion of the Cape or favoured the idea of Cape Afrikaners joining the burgher commandoes of the Boer Republics.

Shortly afterwards, Lion Cachet was one of the religious leaders who came out in support of a local rebel, Pieter Willem Klopper. Klopper was subsequently hanged by the British for supporting the Boers. After Klopper's execution, the Rector's son, Calman, died in the war. He was one of two alumni and three students who died in the war. The anguish emanating from these deaths reinforced the anti-British sentiments of the college.[11]

Escaping the 'English spirit'

As early as 1891, Rector Lion Cachet mooted the idea of a move out of Burgersdorp.

For one, the "English spirit" was too dominant in the Cape's educational system. On a more practical level, the college lacked boarding and recreational facilities for its students.

During discussions amongst the church leaders, the towns of Middelburg (Cape), Bloemfontein and Pretoria were suggested as possible potential locations for the college. Much later Steynsburg in the Free State entered the race. But without much warning and thanks to Rev JD du Toit[12] , the Potchefstroom church Council offered to accommodate the college. Not only did five congregations put forward a generous amount of money, there were also three offers of land from which the college could choose. The decision went in the favour of Potchefstroom – the old Transvaal republican capital in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek – a city steeped in mainstream Afrikaner nationalism. This was where some of the first trekkers of the Great Trek (1838 to 1852) wanted to reside after they had fled British rule in the Cape Colony.[13]

In February 1905, the Theological School and its literary department opened with 18 students in Potchefstroom. Not much notice was taken of the small institution, which trained ministers for a smallish church denomination.[14]

Five years later, in 1910, the fledgling institution declined to participate in the festivities over the unification of South Africa. For an institution committed to sustaining and strengthening Afrikaner nationalism, the bigger union posed a threat: the loss of Afrikaner identity. The infighting in the Afrikaner community, following unification, over support for the British would continue for decades to come. On the one hand were the generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, who had commanded the republican forces during the Boer war, but who were now known for their slogan of "forgive and forget" and for whom the college had no affinity; on the other side was General JBM Hertzog, who wanted to prevent the Afrikaner from being engulfed in a bigger South African union.[15]

A few years later, in 1914, staff members from the theological school travelled to Bloemfontein to be present at the birth of the National Party.[16] Political voices of Potchefstroom academics aligned the party's principles with that of Calvinism, and the college continued to ally itself with the nationalists until the demise of the National Party in the 1990s.

The struggle of the college to survive financially was acute after 1910. Within a year it only had 27 students. At first it turned to the curators for help. A deacon then proposed that members of the church should donate cows or heifers for breeding purposes. Any income generated in this way could be used for bursaries. Professors and ministers of the church were also asked to recruit students. In fact, the personal efforts of individual professors and ministers of the

31 January 2003
Eloff meets with students' parents at the Vaal Triangle Campus to explain the merger.

5 February 2003
Vista University and the Management Committee of VaalPukke hold their first formal introductory meeting to discuss the terms of incorporation.

church over many years probably contributed to the survival of the college.

In 1914 the Union government of Prime Minister Louis Botha decided to yield to a request from the British government to occupy the German colony of South West Africa .[17] The Anglo Boer War was still a vivid memory in the minds of many Afrikaners. Many also had German ancestors. For them the idea of supporting a British war was unthinkable. The declaration of war triggered an armed rebellion amongst some nationalists. Jopie Fourie was the only rebel to be sentenced to death and his execution shocked Afrikaners. At the same time two Boer generals, Christiaan Beyers and JH de la Rey, both died of unnatural causes. Both were friends of Rev Japie du Toit (Totius), the Potchefstroom Rector at the time. Once again deep-seated emotions of Afrikaner nationalism, set off by anti-British feelings, were stirred by these events.[18]

The college was further directly affected by the outbreak of war when three of its students were called up for military service in South West Africa. They refused to report for duty and were summarily arrested. These "Shirkers" as they were called were sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Upington in the Northern Cape. The college's presence in Potchefstroom also had a marked effect on the town's exposure to war-time activities. At the time troops from other parts of the British Empire were stationed in Potchefstroom. On at least two occasions these soldiers reportedly planned to attack and destroy the college's buildings, but were stopped at the last minute.

One of the "attacks" followed a political meeting in the southern part of town. The students had not heeded advice to use a detour but instead provoked British soldiers who were out for the night by walking along the main street and singing nationalist Afrikaans songs.[19]

Financial predicament forces change

Amidst the political drama, the financial state of the college remained desperate. The church could no longer sustain the literary department of the college. One way to relieve the pressure was to become part of the public higher education system and qualify for a government subsidy. This route, however, had consequences that could gravely affect the college's religious character.

The establishment of the University of South Africa (Unisa) in 1916 was an incentive for the theological college to explore the public system option. The new university already incorporated several other institutions, including the Huguenot, Grey, Natal, Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria, Johannesburg Mining School and Rhodes colleges. However, if the college in Potchefstroom wanted to be part of this group, the Theological School and its literary department had to split. In addition, both would have to become religiously neutral.[20]

In 1918, as the college tried to survive, another organisation with which it would have close links was established. The Afrikaner Broederbond aimed at the ideological "Afrikanerisation" of South Africa by expanding Christian principles, Afrikaans and Afrikaner history and traditions. The interests and goals of the Afrikaner Broederbond would also be the interests and goals of the Puk.

In July 1919, half a century after the establishment of the Theological School, its literary department/college became the Potchefstroomse Universiteitskollege voor Kristelik Hoger Onderwijs or Puk voor CHO, with 50 students and 10 academic staff members. Next, in 1929, the synod of the Reformed Church voted for the incorporation of the college into the University of South Africa on condition it retained its Christian name and principles and its original character.

But this would not be possible.

When the matter of the Potchefstroom incorporation into the University of South Africa via its private act came up in Parliament, a delegation from Potchefstroom was called to Cape Town. The delegation had to defend its request before a Select Committee.

There was also resistance from the Transvaal University College (TUK)[21] against the incorporation of the Puk into the University of South Africa. It was said that Potchefstroom did not have enough students and that state money would be wasted as there were already enough universities. The Council of the University of South Africa also complained it was not consulted about the incorporation. However, in the end the act was pushed through.[22]

On 15 July 1921, the Puk was officially informed of its new status. It was now part of the University of South Africa, minus the Christian part of its name. It did not insist on retaining its name because it had an undertaking from the government that it could uphold its Christian character. It began to receive a subsidy from the government, which helped but was not enough to keep the institution afloat. In

7 March 2003
The second joint meeting of the Councils of the UNW and PU for CHE is held.

28 March 2003
The Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) holds its first meeting to discuss the merger process.

fact, based on the government's funding formula, it received less than it should have.

At the time Dr DF Malan was the editor of the Cape-based Afrikaans newspaper *Die Burger*, which praised the establishment of an independent university up-country that was Afrikaans in spirit and direction.

The Puk was still constantly fundraising and asking the Department of Education for money. In fact, its persistence, which appeared to have irritated officials, probably helped save the institution from financial ruin.

By the mid-1920s the Puk realised it could not rely on money from the government. The Council set up a building fund and members of the Council, alumni and staff were requested to each collect £10. Students were requested to collect £5 each.

The Rector at the time, Postma, travelled the Western Transvaal (which became North West Province) to explain the university's need, but also to inform people about the institution. Over the next decades, he would continue to travel extensively on behalf of the Puk. Churches also set up funds and money was collected through fundraisers such as concerts.[23]

Apart from its financial struggles, which did not cease until long after its independence in 1951, a government investigation in the late 1920s nearly meant the Puk's end.

Fate hangs in the balance

In April 1927 the government announced a commission, chaired by JGP van der Horst, to investigate higher education, including the desirability of greater co-ordination between institutions. This was for the sake of greater efficiency and to prevent duplication, limit certain subjects and courses to certain universities, and review government support to universities and technical colleges with the aim of cost cutting and taking care of other needs on the education front.

Even before the official release of the commission's report, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that the Puk would close. Indeed, the newspaper article was the precursor to a report with far-reaching recommendations.

The Van der Horst report found that the Puk, in essence, was an institution for a religious minority. Moreover it did not have adequate laboratory facilities; its library was inadequate and its buildings were of corrugated iron. Furthermore, its limited student numbers and the lack of variety in its purpose denied students one of the most significant advantages of a university life: "intellectual friction".

▲ Prof Joon van Rooy was Rector from 1951 to 1953. Sketches: PJay Motubatsi

In 1928 the Van der Horst report asked the Minister of Education, DF Malan, to decide whether the institution could continue to receive a subsidy.

For many in Potchefstroom the harsh report (together with the lack of subsidy) was a stick that those who were still disgruntled about the split in the church in 1959 used to punish the institution for its roots. Political and church power often went hand in hand.

From the Puk's side, a comprehensive counter-attack followed. A document responding to every point of criticism was sent to all members of the Cabinet, the most important newspapers, the local Council and the local business Council. The university showed how it was proportionally underfunded and that the finding on its buildings (which were all it could afford) was unfair.

The Puk believed that if it had received its rightful subsidy, the situation might have been different.

Ironically two years after the Van der Horst commission recommended the closure of the Puk, it was suddenly

21 to 23 April 2003
The Joint Operational Team holds a bosberaad at Hunter's Rest close to Rustenburg and develops a joint proposal that will eventually form the basis of the final agreement.

23 to 24 May 2003
A meeting is held at Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg to discuss "obstacles" to the merger.

▲ Prof Johannes Christiaan (J Chr) Coetzee was Rector from 1953 to 1963.

moving forward. Nowhere was this more visible than in the buildings on campus. It was receiving money from the government to expand.

Once the Puk appeared to be safe, at least for the time being, Postma said that the report had been the best way to introduce the Puk to a much broader community and save it from a critical situation. From August 1928 he became the university's travelling ambassador. His task was not only to raise funds, but also to defend the college against the allegations in the report.

At a conference in January 1929 to discuss the commission, the following was said: "Smaller institutions should not be barred from work which they can adequately undertake".

Van der Horst thus inadvertently placed the public spotlight on how the Puk was literally caught up in a life-or-death struggle and created sympathy amongst the broader community and policy makers. Furthermore, the commission inspired supporters to continue with the fight, which was far from over.

The Puk conceded that its humble buildings and inadequate science laboratories were unprepossessing. The national fundraising effort that followed would start to address these shortcomings, but only over an extended period of time.[24]

A milestone was therefore the stone-laying of the imposing main building of the Puk, which became its most recognisable landmark, on 4 August 1930 by DF Malan.[25]

Because there was never money, new buildings on the campus were strictly functional. Each building embodied the ethos of effort, perseverance and enthusiasm behind the existence of the Puk. Because of its financial difficulties, it attracted national attention after a fire destroyed the library that was housed in the main building. Even the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), a progressive student organisation with which students from the Puk often crossed swords, extended a helping hand.[26]

But the Puk was caught up in more than a perpetual financial battle. It still wanted to regain the right to be called a "Christian" university – even though existing legislation prevented this. Education Minister Malan let it be known he would only consider an amendment to the private act of the institution. However the department warned such a change to its private act would mean a reduction in its subsidy.

Postma believed the government's attitude was anti-religion, specifically against the Reformed Church. Why else, he asked, were there no restrictions on the University of Fort Hare,[27] which demanded that staff should be "professed Christians and of missionary sympathies"?

However, in February 1932, the Potchefstroom Universiteitskollege submitted a draft act to change its name. The University of Cape Town said it could not support any act which conflicted with existing legislation that prevented religious tests for students or lecturers. There was also opposition from the Jewish community, which believed it was a ploy to keep Jews out.

After a prolonged fight and an amendment stating the change in its name would not mean discrimination and religious testing, the act was passed.

On 8 March 1933, the Puk regained its Christian name, lost in 1921 when it became part of the University of South Africa.[28]

20 June 2003
At a gruelling meeting between the Councils of the PU for CHE and the UNW, crucial issues such as the name, management seat and language policy of the university are discussed.

8 July 2003
More than 7 000 alumni of the PU for CHE visit a website created to oppose the merger and 75% of the online visitors vote to retain the Christian character of the campus.

Embroiled in Afrikaner politics

This controversial history led to the inevitable. The Puk, given its Afrikaner nationalist roots, would be pulled into the divisive Afrikaner politics of the 1930s and 1940s.[29]

Generals JBM Hertzog and Jan Smuts had merged their two parties, the National Party and the South African Party respectively, into the United Party (Verenigde Party). Obviously some nationalists remained steadfast and, under DF Malan, they became the Purified (Gesuiwerde) Nationalist Party.

The one historic moment that united the fragmented Afrikaner nation was the centenary celebrations of the Great Trek. On this occasion Puk leaders were prominent. Some of them were on the committee which helped to bring together 70 000 Afrikaners on 9 September 1938. Prof Joon van Rooy, leader of the Afrikaner Broederbrond at the time and the first Rector of the PU for CHE after its independence, was one of the speakers on the day. It was apt that he spoke on a day when Afrikaners put their differences aside. A year after the celebration, however, South Africa's declaration of war ripped the unity apart.[30]

World War II from 1939 to 1945 revealed the overwhelmingly anti-British stance of many of the Puk's staff members. Lecturers and students openly opposed the war effort and some were interned for doing so.

In fact, support for the pro-Nazi right-wing Ossewabrandwag (OB) was widespread on the campus. Some of its members, including Puk academics, were arrested for their involvement in the organisation and also sent off to internment camps. Some Puk professors and students had an affinity for the OB, according to the *Wonderdaad...!* publication, because it was initially seen as the standard-bearer of Afrikaner nationalism and republican aspirations. Afrikaners could identify with the reconstruction of Germany and protest against the treatment of Hertzog by the Nationalists. The manner in which the university, or sections of it at least, went along with the philosophy of the OB, which was disbanded in 1952, harmed its public image.

Since it was hard for outsiders to distinguish who was for and against the Nazis, its association with perceived

▲ Prof Hennie Bingle was Rector from 1963 to 1977. He was referred to as 'Klipoog' (Stony Stare).

Nazi sympathisers cost the university some of its friends, in particular those in the Netherlands.

The loyalties of many at the Puk, which had been referred to as a "nest of rebels", were publicly known – including to the British soldiers stationed nearby.

On 7 August 1940, as the students were absorbed in singsongs in their corrugated iron hall in preparation for an upcoming intervarsity meeting, a group of soldiers attacked them with sticks and iron bars. Within a few dramatic moments, there was fierce fighting from both sides.

A subsequent government probe commissioned by the Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, showed that about 30 people were injured – 14 to 20 students sustained head wounds and 14 soldiers were wounded, one losing an eye. The government paid out the university's damages claim but the attack hurt the university. In the aftermath some students left the institution, while others left the residences on campus.

Once the war was over and the Nats, as they were known, won the election in 1948, the Puk could express its ideals through the government of the day. The university supported

21 July 2003
The Councils of the PU for CHE and the UNW state that the name of the new institution will be North-West University and it will have four campuses: Mafikeng, Mankwe, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle.

22 July 2003
At a meeting with the Minister, problem areas such as the composition of the Council, the Chairperson of the Interim Council and the cost of the merger are discussed.

▲ Prof Tjaart van der Walt was Rector from 1977 to 1988. He was also the Chancellor of Unibo during its early years.

racial segregation, with some of its professors using religious justification for dividing the "European and the Bantu race".[31]

In those days, another government commission found that the PU for CHE, which was still part of the University of South Africa, could now function independently. The moment that the likes of Totius and Postma had hoped, prayed and fought for had finally arrived. Their determination had paid off.

Independence at last

In 1951 the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education came into being. Although its Christian character was maintained, it was not allowed to accept or reject staff or students based on their church denomination – in this case the Reformed Church.[32]

As an independent institution it was now, more than ever, growing into the institution that its founders had had in mind. It had a Christian foundation, it was Afrikaans, it was riding the wave of Afrikaner nationalism and it was committed to the upliftment of the white Afrikaner. It had 900 students, 28 professors and 34 lecturers. Prominent Nationalist politicians HF Verwoerd, CR Swart and DF Malan were present at its independence festivities.[33]

As early as 1951 a committee of the PU for CHE investigated the possibility of providing higher education to black students. However, this was not so much about education as it was about politics. Afrikaans universities did not want "liberal universities" – mainly institutions such as Wits and UCT – to influence the thinking of black students too much.[34] Eventually, it took the university until 1973 to start taking black postgraduates and until 1983 to change its admission policies. At the time, the Minister of Education could establish race quotas for the registration of black students at former white universities. At the Puk, black undergraduate and postgraduate students were only accepted unconditionally from 1987 and residences became multiracial in 1990.[35]

Black students who obtained "external" degrees, but had to receive them at the Puk, had to do so in absentia. The first black student to do so was Moëketse Daniël Mohapeloa (sic). His name was on the programme together with all the white students who were absent.[36] In 1944 an Indian student, TM Aboobaker, applied to study pharmacy, but because the Puk strictly applied segregation, he was turned away.[37] The first black student who appeared to have obtained an advanced degree was SMM Lekhela in 1949. He could, however, only graduate in absentia.[38]

Christian principles and apartheid

During the 1950s and 60s, the voice of Potchefstroom spoke through the monthly *Woord en Daad* (meaning Word and Deed). It was started in 1954 as a mouthpiece for the Afrikaans Calvinist movement to tackle political and social issues from a Christian perspective.[39] At a distressing time of racial classification, forced removals, job reservation and pass laws, the publication's editorial position was that apartheid was based on Christian principles. This was how many Puk academics thus justified apartheid to Afrikaners.[40]

There were dissidents too, though. They did not necessarily reject the political status quo, but they certainly engaged with it. In 1959 three academics, Professors Hennie Coetzee, LJ du Plessis and Daantjie Krüger, called for talks with the ANC. This became known as the "first

23 July 2003
The Freedom Front says the changing of the name of the PU for CHE would be "a tragic end to 150 years of proud history".

4 August 2003
The Department of Education's Merger Unit visits the PU for CHE and the UNW.

rebellion". The fact that their comments were published in an "antagonistic" English Sunday paper, *The Sunday Times*, made their "transgression" worse. At the time the PU for CHE was an institution aligned with the National Party. After an investigation the Council warned the three rebels to be more careful about what they said.[41]

Krüger, one of the rebels, said in 1953 that "within the next few years the biggest problem for whites in South Africa would be how to adapt in a society in which white and black enjoy equal political rights as it was becoming clear that such a time is imminent".[42] When Du Plessis, one of the other rebels and a longstanding government critic, retired in 1961, he was kicked out of the National Party.[43]

They were not the only ones. The historians responsible for writing the history of the PU for CHE list many examples of academics who spoke out against apartheid.

Prof Johan van der Vyver, a human rights expert, was one of them. Some of Van der Vyver's statements at a conference following the 1976 Soweto uprising might have contributed to Prime Minister John Vorster, on a visit to Potchefstroom shortly afterwards, referring to the "false clamour" rising up from the university.[44] Others would also contribute to the "false clamour" Vorster was hearing. As the president of the SRC from 1977 to 1979, Theuns Eloff called for racially open universities.[45] Eloff was also part of the "second rebellion" when a group of academics and senior students drafted the Koinonia declaration in 1977. The declaration criticised apartheid's statutory discrimination and condemned practices such as detention without trial, which led to the murder of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko.[46] Prof Pieter (Pottie) Potgieter, one of the signatories to the declaration, told a newspaper: "We are no longer prepared to place our nationalist feelings and ideals always ahead of our Christian convictions".[47]

The university Council rejected the declaration, a move that was sure to please the government. After the early years of acrimony, the university and the government had finally settled into a cosy relationship by the end of the 1970 - so much so that cabinet ministers served on the Council as members of the Convocation (alumni). The Council's rejection of Koinonia echoed the government's sentiments. However, this was the build-up towards the politically turbulent 1980s. In this highly charged atmosphere, the sentiments expressed in the second rebellion would not fade away but would in fact escalate.[48]

▲ Prof Carools Reinecke was the Rector from 1989 to 2001. "Carools said so" or "Carools quality" were descriptions used for Reinecke.

Turbulent times ahead

Ironically the same publication that helped to uphold apartheid, *Woord en Daad*, was now beginning to dismantle it. In 1986, Prof Lourens du Plessis, the editor, declared that the time had come to negotiate with the ANC. Du Plessis was one of the Afrikaner intellectuals who subsequently participated in the Dakar safari a few years later to speak to the ANC leadership.[49] In 1988, when Prof Jacques van der Elst was the editor, *Woord en Daad* continued to stir by calling for the release of former President Nelson Mandela from prison. Consequently the Prime Minister at the time, FW de Klerk, met twice with the editorial staff about setting Mandela free. The progressive stance of Van der Elst about matters such as the opening up of public facilities in Potchefstroom was too much for some of the Puk students, who were responsible for daubing graffiti - "kaffir boetie" and

28 August 2003
The Councils of the PU for CHE and the UNW select nine names from the 18 external members and submit them to the Minister for appointment as members of the Interim Council.

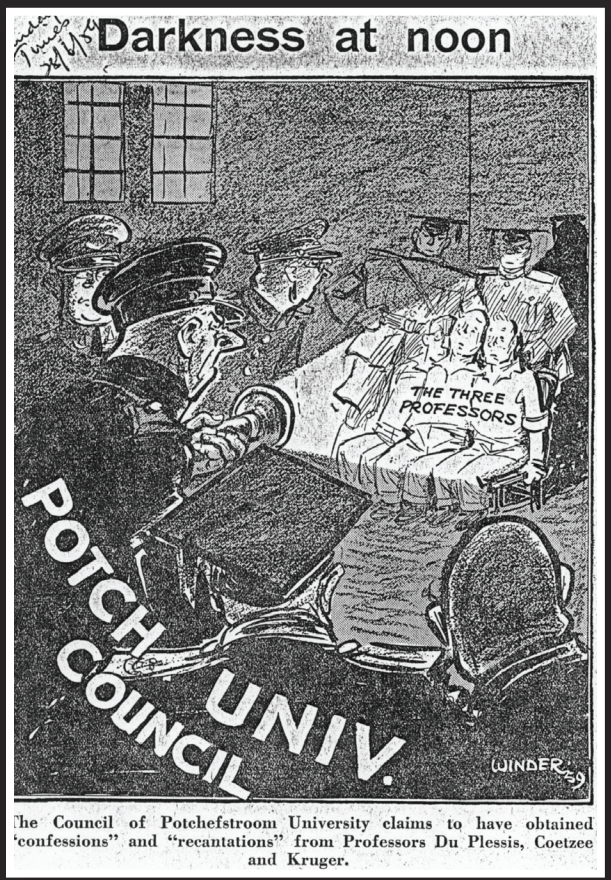
3 September 2003
The joint Student Life Task Team and representatives from the SRCs of both universities meet to discuss the composition of the new SRC.

▲ Prof Hennie Coetzee, a sociologist, called for contact with the ANC.

▲ Prof Wikus du Plessis was an expert in constitutional law.

▲ Prof Daantjie Kruger was a historian. Photos: NWU Archive and Museum (Piet Fotokuns collection)

▲ Cartoons in *the Sunday Times* portrayed the 1959 "rebellion" at the PU for CHE. NWU Archive and Museum (DW Kruger collection)



▲ The Council of the PU for CHE was upset that the statements were published in an English newspaper.
NWU Archive and Museum (DW Kruger collection)

▲ Students wrote these words on the garden wall of the house of Prof Jacques van der Elst. Van der Elst was seen as too progressive. As the editor of the magazine *Woord and Daad* he called in 1988 for the release of former President Nelson Mandela. NWU Archive and Museum (Published in the *Potchefstroom Herald* on 23 March 1990)

"pienk prof" in black capital letters - on his garden wall.[50]

Many staff members also did not share the thinking of Du Plessis, Van der Elst and even the Rector at the time, Prof Tjaart van der Walt. On campus the divisions in the 1980s were similar to the tensions in the 1940s when World War II had triggered sharply opposing views amongst staff. However, this time it was between the "verligtes" (liberals), who supported reform efforts by the National Party, and the "verkramptes" (conservatives) who opposed the changes and rather joined the Conservative Party, formed in 1982.[51]

The terms "verlig" and "verkramp" were coined by Prof Wimpie de Klerk, the brother of FW de Klerk, who as a newspaper editor identified the split in Afrikanerdom. The De Klerks were not only alumni of the university. They also taught and served in different capacities at the university.[52]

Although the country was in a perpetual state of emergency, opposition to apartheid from within the white community was fuelled by the democratisation of Eastern Europe and the collapse of communism in 1989. These changes rubbed off on the social dimensions of society, including student life at the Puk, which was still defined by the university's forceful Christian Calvinist roots.

In the mid-1980s, Wimpie de Klerk tackled the Puk SRC for its conservatism. He lambasted them for a ban on dancing, a ban on swimming, a ban on beauty pageants, and an opportunistic refusal to do things because it would offend the Dopper church. He said the Puk pretended to be a place where Christian science was taught but showed little evidence of this.[53] The ban on dancing was lifted in 1986/87 following an investigation and questionnaire revealing that 76% of students in residences, 81% of those living in town and 63% of day students indicated they danced. The Council decided the ban on dancing was not enforceable.[54]

Transition to democracy

In 1988 Prof Carools Reinecke succeeded Prof Tjaart van der Walt. In some respects Reinecke's work followed on foundations laid by Van der Walt, a socio-political and managerial innovator. He brought a businesslike way of doing things through the gates of the PU for CHE.

"Managerialism" based on measurables, outputs and

10 September 2003
A joint four-page letter is sent to all staff members from the two Vice-Chancellors explaining in detail the progress and implementation strategies for the merger.

21 September 2003
Eloff announces that of the four new universities that will start operations on 1 January 2004, the NWU has made the best progress with its merger and incorporation.

The PU for CHE has been described as one of the "intellectual fortresses of Afrikanerdom". The De Klerk family has contributed to this description. Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President FW de Klerk was an alumnus, and Chancellor of the PU for CHE. His late brother Willem (Wimpie), a newspaper editor and political commentator, studied and taught at the university and was later a member of the Council. Their father, Jan, was an alumnus and their grandfather, the Reverend WJ de Klerk, was the first registrar of the PU for CHE. Here the brothers visited the campus in January 2009 when the FW de Klerk exhibition opened in the Ferdinand Postma Library on the Potchefstroom Campus. Photo: Maclez Studio

performance management, became a swear word, in particular in the Senate, but Reinecke and later Eloff would stick to it. When the merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW happened, "managerialism" would be an instument to drive the new institution forward. Reinecke became the first natural scientist to be appointed Rector of the PU for CHE. At the time he was at the helm, South Africa's dramatic transition to democracy and the changes in the country's higher education system was unfolding.

Universities' subsidies had shrunk, their legislative world was changing, and they had to comply with a mountain of new developments that affected everything from the curriculum to the research they were doing.

In this hostile environment, Reinecke set out to cut away fat and to redefine and reorganise strengths in pursuit of his goal: to establish the PU for CHE as one of the top 10 universities in South Africa. Hence his term was described as either "Carools says so" or "Carools quality" and was characterised by restructuring, rationalisation and increased use of technology. The university's work to improve its quality, including an international audit, contributed to its post-1994 positioning.[55]

On the ground, however, these changes were difficult. In an effort to save money and reduce duplication, the academic departments on the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses of the PU for CHE were reduced from 96 to 67. The Faculty of Arts was the hardest hit as undergraduate courses were cut by 24% and the postgraduate courses by 63%.[56]

As part of the work on quality improvement Reinecke also focused on research. The PU for CHE created 13 research focus areas as part of an initiative to improve quality. In 1995 he established the institution's telematic system, a technologically driven distance learning system.[57]

Prof Johan Rost, former Executive Director: Finance and Facilities, should take the credit for placing the university's finances, which were reportedly on the verge of bankruptcy, on a sound footing. A campaign, Aksie Puk Miljoen (Action Puk Million), was launched to raise money.

Thanks to strict financial management discipline at the hands of Rost, each year of the Reinecke rectorship ended with a surplus. The accumulated capital fund of the Puk increased from R80 million in 1988 to R306 million while liquidity improved from an overdrawn bank account of R10 million in 1988 to cash investments of R164 million in 2000 and an operational surplus of R5,2 million by 2001. In this year the university generated 54% of its own operational income.[58]

But the Puk could not ignore the transformation demands of the day. A new statute had to be written and approved by the Minister of Education. The university Council, for the first time, nominated non-Christian members. In this context the mayor of Potchefstroom, Dr Ebrahim Sooliman, comes to mind. Residences were opened to all races and Prof Madoda Zibi became the first black deputy Vice-Chancellor of the PU for CHE in 1997.[60]

By 1995 the students also asked that the university be repositioned. A new image, other than that of a "conservative high school", was necessary.[61]

Reinecke did much to build the credibility of the PU for CHE's core business, but it was still politically marginalised. Democracy had crushed its Afrikaner hegemonic backbone. It was searching for a way forward.

A new direction

It was at this point that Eloff returned to become Rector.

An employee questionnaire commissioned in 2002 by Eloff revealed a myriad of negative perceptions about the Puk on the inside and outside. Some of these included a reputation as a place for "verkrampte" boere and as a backward, apartheid-riddled, religiously exclusive rural university. The Puk's expertise was unknown.[62]

The university needed more than a dramatic repositioning. It needed a 180-degree turnaround.

Eloff immediately began to rewire the institution, but the merger removed him to the institutional office and he was too far away from the Puk Campus to complete the process.

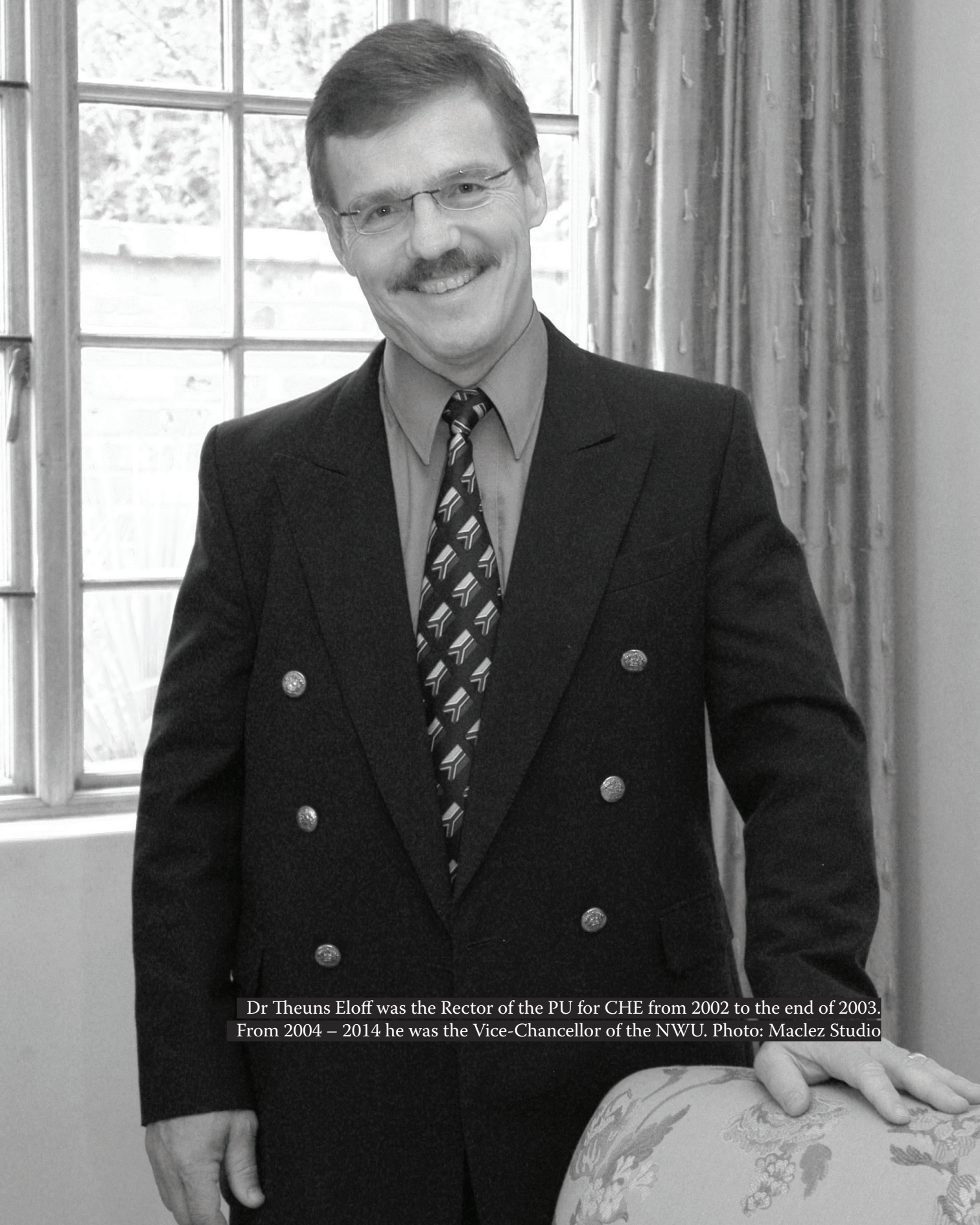
But the merger did create an opportunity. It allowed the campus to confront its past and build on its best features – the ones that had ensured the PU for CHE's survival when all odds were against it.

In effect the PU for CHE was simply reinvented as the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU. The responses to the post-merger campus structure varied. There were those who accepted the change because it would create new opportunities on their way forward; others pretended that nothing had happened; then there were the die-hards who would, if they had the chance, reverse the merger and continue as the PU for CHE.

Thus, in essence, its DNA had remained intact: overwhelmingly pro-Afrikaans and pro-Afrikaner and based on a Christian value system. That was the fall-back position whenever there was a crisis. Criticism became an attack on its character. Moreover it continued to be supported by organisations that promoted the interests of Afrikaners.

By 2014 the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU had still not been able to escape the worst of its genetic programming.

But there was a mutation. The Vaal Triangle Campus of the NWU, established as a satellite campus of the PU for CHE during the 1960s, displayed some variation from the mother campus and was quicker to respond to the political background noises surrounding it.



Dr Theuns Eloff was the Rector of the PU for CHE from 2002 to the end of 2003. From 2004 – 2014 he was the Vice-Chancellor of the NWU. Photo: Maclez Studio

CHAPTER 4
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS: SHEDS 'STEPSISTER' STATUS

"Wonderful human material is being produced here." — Prof Johann Tempelhoff, Vaal Triangle Campus[1]

One morning during June 1997, Pauline Kühne called Prof Piet Prinsloo, one of the vice-rectors of the PU for CHE and head of the Vaal Triangle Campus. He had unexpected visitors, she explained.

Jesus of the Vaal was waiting in the boardroom.

Prof Aubrey Mokadi, aka Jesus of the Vaal,[2] and his delegation told Prinsloo theirs was not a casual visit. He had come to take over the campus – a satellite of the PU for CHE. If Prinsloo refused, he warned, the campus would burn the next day.

The campus burnt.[3]

At the time Mokadi was not only the Vice-Chancellor of the erstwhile Vaal Triangle Technikon, he was also the chairperson of the Vaal Higher and Further Education Consortium (VHFEC), which was set up in 1995. The consortium stemmed from the policy direction of the education authorities and was pushing for closer regional co-operation. In the Vaal, the institutions were talking about setting up a single university.[4] Perhaps Mokadi's visit that day was driven by his determination to make the project happen – sooner rather than later.[5]

It was also an opportunistic move at a time when the turbulence on the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE was part of much broader turmoil at South African universities. Since the mid-1990s, barely a week had passed without demonstrations by students. Virtually no campus was unaffected. Prospective students were demanding admission to higher education institutions by insisting on lower fees and more flexible entry requirements. Existing students were insisting on staying enrolled despite unpaid fees and demanding transformation - be that a change in the skin colour of lecturers or a redrafting of the curricula.[6]

On the Vaal Campus, during the height of the wave of protests that swept the country in 2002, students were specifically concerned about the institution's language policy, racial discrimination, student debt policy, entry requirements and even bread-and-butter issues: the price of food in the cafeteria.[7] Such was the anger of students that on one occasion about 60 glass doors were smashed to smithereens. Those who resorted to violence faced disciplinary action and in time, calm returned to the campus.[8]

Delicate balancing act

Prinsloo's challenge was to steer the campus clear of destructive radicalism on both sides of the political spectrum. On the one side were the conservatives who would phone to tell him if he wanted help removing blacks from the campus, they would do so. On the other side were the left-wing radicals who would plunder his office. In time the two sides moved closer, bringing about a more moderate, stable political climate.[9]

While Prinsloo was cleaning up his pillaged office and finding a balance between extreme political views, the mother campus of the PU for CHE in Potchefstroom remained tranquil, virtually untouched by the often violent student politics of the day.

In the mid-1990s the racial profile on the Potchefstroom and Vaal campuses was strikingly different. This dissimilarity, which had developed over time, was at the heart of the contrast between the Potchefstroom Campus and the Vaal Triangle Campus when the NWU was established.

A yearning for education

The need for training in the Vaal Triangle stemmed from industrial development in the area after World War II. As far back as 1958, business leaders and representatives from the PU for CHE had discussed the possibility of a university campus for the Vaal Triangle.[10]

17 October 2003
The first meeting of the Interim Council Elect is held to work on the preparations to establish the new university.

21 October 2003
The Department of Education announces the new name of the merging institution, North-West University, and the Chairperson of the Interim Council, Robinson Ramaite.

The Vaal Triangle Campus of the NWU, previously the Vaal branch of the NWU, began modestly in 1963 when courses for cost accountants and teachers were offered at a local high school.
Photo: Tienie van der Walt

These talks were also part of the town Council's foray into the possible establishment of a local university campus.

A school inspector in the Vaal area, Dr JJ van Tonder, was said to have approached a history teacher and local town Councillor, Albertus 'Skippie' Botha, with the idea of starting a university. In 1963 the town Council, together with the white Afrikaans community and business leaders from the towns of Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg and Meyerton, rooted in a gritty steel and petrochemical industrial landscape, investigated further.

Botha was appointed as the head of the action committee pursuing the idea at a political level. However, the Minister of Education and Training, JP van der Spuy, declined the proposal, saying that no more universities were planned at the time, but that a college had been approved for the town.[11] Surprisingly then, another university, the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), was promulgated during 1967 as an institution for Afrikaans students and was set up a mere 80km from the Vaal Triangle Campus.[12]

Subsequently, the government carried out the recommendations of the Van Wyk de Vries report of 1974, which limited the establishment of more higher education institutions. If the Vaal Triangle Campus wanted to become a university it would be dependent on the expansion plans of the PU for CHE.[13]

"Botha felt their dream had been hijacked by the Broederbond because the vision to establish a new university was moved to RAU [Johannesburg]. All the work to establish a university on the South Rand – it became RAU." This, according to Prinsloo.[14]

Modest start

In 1963 Prof AJE Sorgdrager from the PU for CHE began offering refresher courses for cost accountants in the Vaal Triangle. Then, a year later, the PU for CHE started a teachers' certificate course in cost accounting and a postgraduate course in trade/business administration. A local high school, Hoër Handelskool Lettie Fouché in Vanderbijlpark, was used as a lecturing venue.[15] By 1965 the university Council in Potchefstroom had decided to formally establish a Vaal River branch. The grand ideal was that this branch would eventually grow into a fully-fledged sister university, but the plan was later scrapped.

The establishment of the Vaal branch could be attributed to the Rector of the PU for CHE at the time, Prof Hennie Bingle, whose management style had been described as "bordering on the autocratic".[16] Prinsloo recalls: "Prof Bingle decided sort of on his own to start this campus as a distance campus for after-hours lectures. And he decided it had to become a full-time campus and he handpicked the first seven people who had to come and set up something here when the feeling was against it."[17]

It was a campus for white Afrikaans residential students and research showed they came mainly from the industrial middle class and working class.[18]

Although the Vaal branch was about 110km from Potchefstroom, the PU for CHE's conservative Christian national approach to higher education still applied. When students named a new residence Timbuktu in the late 1980s, the Puk's committee for honorary degrees objected because of the Islamic connotation. The name was changed to De Wilgers. Timbuctu, of course, is a historical city in Mali, West Africa, best known for housing 200 000 to 300 000 ancient manuscripts, documenting science, literature and religion as far back as the 13th century.[19]

In 1969 the first students obtained BCom degrees; the next year BA degrees were awarded and by 1976, BSc subjects were taught after hours. Similarly, after-hours BEd and HED classes commenced in 1979.[20]

In 1982 a faculty of engineering was established and by 1987 the PU for CHE's whole engineering faculty was moved to the Vaal Triangle Campus. But the decision was rescinded three years later and the departments of mechanical, metallurgical, chemical and electrical engineering all moved back to Potchefstroom in 1991– an outcome which today, more than 20 years later, is still spoken of with bitterness on the Vaal Triangle Campus.[21]

For staff members, this was a confirmation of the power Potchefstroom had. In fact, some believed that the Vaal Triangle Campus could be shut down. Still, it carried on as a delivery site: the stepsister who had little bargaining power in the bigger PU for CHE outfit.

Ironically, this came at a time – in 1983 – when the campus was renamed the Vaal Triangle Campus with a vice-rector as administrative head and the construction of its river campus under way. In 1984 the activities of the campus were transferred from the Goodyear Street building, which it had occupied since 1977, to 117 hectares of land with 2km of river frontage. There were now 1 140 students.[22]

12 November 2003
A draft General Admission Policy is approved by the Joint Senate Committee.

13 November 2003
The two Vice-Chancellors sign a letter in which they include the final incorporation report and a request for assistance to conclude the incorporation process.

▲ Prof Piet Prinsloo cleans up his office after a student protest. The campus experienced much turmoil during the mid-1990s. Photo: NWU Archive and Museum

▲ Prof Aubrey Mokadi, also known as Jesus of the Vaal, was the Vice-Chancellor of the Vaal Triangle Technikon (later the Vaal University of Technology). Photo: Simphiwe Nkwali

Two far-reaching decisions were taken 20 years into the existence of the Vaal branch, which opened the door to a completely changed student profile. The decisions were sweeping in the sense that they were out of kilter with the political restrictions at the time.

Opening the doors to English students

In 1985, with apartheid still in full force and maintained by the security forces, the VaalPuk opened its doors to black undergraduate students. This followed the Minister of Education's approval of a quota system so that historically white institutions could register an approved number of black students.[23]

This helped the campus to counter the possible threat to its recruitment posed by the establishment of Vista University's Sebokeng Campus in 1984.

Initially, because Afrikaans was the medium of instruction, the numbers remained low. In 1986, from a total of 1 700 students, there were only four black undergraduate and 16 postgraduate students. This grew to 60 black students out of 2 000 in 1988.[24]

Then, in 1992, the Puk Council introduced English as a medium of instruction. At the time student numbers had declined to 1 587. Since the Vaal Triangle as a region recruited large numbers of immigrants from mainly Western Europe, it could draw white English students from these Portuguese, Polish, Czech, German and Italian households. The turbulent politics in the Vaal Triangle during the 1980s also paved the way for a move away from exclusive rights for whites. The change in the medium of instruction would obviously be attractive to black students in search of educational opportunities.[25] [26]

Still the campus's future was uncertain. There was pressure at many levels of the PU for CHE to turn it into an after-hours campus. But the staff on the Vaal Triangle Campus, including heads of department, resisted. They believed the future of the campus was multicultural and bilingual.[27]

14 November 2003
Asmal proclaims the proposal for the new university in two Government Notices, one for the merger and one for the incorporation.

15 November 2003
The UNW campus is closed due to student protests against the merger, claiming they had been excluded from the consultation process.

By 2003, as the merger was in its final planning phases, 46% of the 1 500 undergraduate and postgraduate students were black.[28] In 2013, a decade later, the number was up to 70%.

The NWU Council wants the campus to maintain this ratio.[29]

Its managers are watching the situation closely. Council does not want the number of white students to drop below a tipping point that may change it into a black-only institution.

These efforts to prescribe the racial ratio have been criticised.[30] [31] Students told the Phaahla commission they were concerned that the management was unofficially setting quotas for the admission of black students in order to keep a certain racial and cultural profile on campus. Consequently academically deserving but financially disadvantaged black students were not given adequate assistance when they came to the campus and in the end, did not register.

The management is unapologetic about pursuing a quota that would ensure that about a third of its students remain white.

Prof Thanyani Mariba, the campus Rector from 2010 to 2015, said it meant the Vaal Triangle Campus was the most representative culture [of all three NWU campuses]. "I have spoken to the marketing division and told them: 'Let us not lose white students beyond a critical point because they make a great input in terms of student life - in terms of enrichment in my students' lives.' They enrich the black students and the black students enrich them."[32]

And when you ask people to describe the campus, the first thing they mention is the multicultural character of its students.

A former lecturer, now a manager, says when black students arrived in greater numbers in the early 1990s they were mainly school principals who signed up for a qualification in education management.[33]

Tinie Theron, who is now the dean of the faculty of humanities, was at the coalface and had to manage the change in his lecture hall. He decided to use both English and Afrikaans in one class.

"I realised it was not going to work," he says. "Half the time you exclude half the class. I was the first one on this campus to implement parallel medium. It means you have to duplicate everything. But if you act in the best interest of the student then that is the only option. From there we just carried on." [34]

Broken English and magic

Prinsloo agreed. "The guys bought in, but began teaching in English, no matter how broken. A chap like Gert Kruger who was a Dopper minister and taught Bible Studies, said to me: 'Pieta, I am like a first-year preacher again. I write everything out word for word on a page and put it on a transparency, because now I teach in English and I can't speak English.'"

The racial integration of 18 to 24 year-olds, the age of the majority of the undergraduates, was far from seamless. It remains an ongoing project for the Vaal Triangle Campus. Just when one cohort of students has moved through the system – and as they do some blacks learn to *sokkie* (two-step) and some whites to *bash* – another group which is racially estranged begins its tertiary education.

The window of opportunity is fleeting, yet sometimes the advantage is taken.

One professor tells of how two worlds become one in a classroom – although students initially sit in two groups: one white; one black.

"I have seen magic," he says.[35]

The staff of the campus was predominantly white and Afrikaans. In fact, at the time of the merger between the PU for CHE and the University of North-West, the staff on the Vaal Triangle Campus was like a close-knit family.

A long-serving staff member described the relationship: "When we were few, everyone knew everyone and everyone knew everything about everyone: How many children you had, how old they were and where you lived."[36]

This was about to change in no small measure due to the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.

It was to challenge the Vaal Triangle Campus on many fronts: cultural, organisational and financial.

At the time of the merger the Sebokeng Campus had a deficit of R2,5 million. Its staff moved over to the Vaal Triangle Campus, which had 629 students. The campus now virtually had to pull itself out of bankruptcy.[37]

It also entered a period in which the relations between a more diverse staff were sometimes fraught and had to settle down. At the same time, the Vaal Triangle Campus had advantages that would secure its longevity. The Vaal Triangle has more high schools than the whole of the North West Province, giving it access to a large student market. In addition difficult economic times meant that students – even those from middle-class Afrikaans homes – opted for the

17 November 2003
Two students at Mafikeng Campus are slightly injured when police fired rubber bullets at students.

19 November 2003
Agreements are reached at UNW about the exams and student debt.

place of learning closest to them. This has secured a diverse racial mix on the campus and enabled its student body to grow from 3 008 in 2004 to 6 511 in 2014.[38]

There is no doubt that the merger had advantages for the Vaal Triangle Campus. One was the independence from Potchefstroom that it would gain. The merger would also inject new energy into its institutional veins and bring about benefits such as infrastructural expansion and an increase in research output, notably in newly identified niche areas. This extensive research focus has continued to distinguish the NWU's Vaal as a university campus from the nearby Vaal University of Technology.

Although the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus challenged the Vaal Triangle Campus, the merger, in general, was the best possible thing that could have happened.[39] It was now on an equal footing with the Potchefstroom Campus, the Mafikeng Campus and the Mankwe Campus. But its greatest struggle would be to elevate its brand to the level of its former mother campus. It was no longer VaalPukke. It was the Vaal Triangle Campus of the NWU.

CHAPTER 5
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH-WEST: BUILT WITH PEOPLE'S CENTS

"Underlying the whole setting up of Unibo was the implicit expectation that another typical black university was being established. I recall a senior government minister from RSA visiting us and referring to 'the Tswana university'. I wanted to scream at him, 'No, no, no – you've got it all wrong'. We were building something different from the 'bush colleges' of the recent past." — Bob Smith, Professor of Education, Unibo, 1980-1986[1]

In the 1960s and 1970s, children from villages and towns across the North Western pocket of South Africa would arrive at school with two cents clutched in their little hands.

They would bring money as often as they could.

They would hear their parents talk about how much they had contributed. They would know their parents were even selling their cows to be able to give more.

"The same thing happened all over… The people in Mafikeng will tell you the same story." One of the children who contributed at the time was Prof Dan Kgwadi, the second Vice-Chancellor of the NWU and previously Rector of the university's Mafikeng Campus. "We were told there was going to be a university… We did not even know what this thing was: a university," he says.[2]

Nevertheless, this was a spontaneous movement and it raised more than R100 000 from the Batswana people for the establishment of a university.[3]

It happened at the time when the apartheid government's policy of separate development was compartmentalising South Africa into patches of land that would become self-governing, "independent" homelands for African people.

When the Bophuthatswana Homeland Authority accepted "independence" with Kgosi Lucas Mangope as the president, the University of Bophuthatswana (Unibo) would become a reality.

For many of those who acted as midwives during Unibo's birth, the choice to work in Bophuthatswana did not mean they supported separate development. Quite the opposite. Founding Vice-Chancellor of Unibo Prof Jacques Kriel says to them "independence" meant that the country had turned its back "irrevocably on the apartheid system and committed itself to the challenging priority of building a model of non-discrimination".

A new society could be created thanks to a new Constitution with a Bill of Rights.[4]

One of the first academics to join Unibo expressed this sentiment: "We [came to Unibo because we] believed that we were busy building a new South Africa with a democratic constitution and freedom – and no racial discrimination."

A new vision

Mangope asked Prof Marinus Wiechers[5] to help draft Bophuthatswana's constitution. The outcome was a document that would stand for non-discrimination, non-racialism and human rights and radiate hope for change in South Africa.

With his enlightened constitution in hand, Mangope announced at Bophuthatswana's "independence" in 1978: "This is the first step towards a South African democracy."

According to Wiechers, Mangope's words did not go down well amongst all the dignitaries.

The political direction that Mangope was taking was beneficial for his country. It made him the blue-eyed boy of ambassadors. Diplomats queued to visit him. Captains of industry travelled to meet him. Generally the South African

5 December 2003
The fourth meeting of the Interim Council Elect finalises the appointment of the Interim Management and composition of the NWU Council.

1 January 2004
The North-West University is born.

The leopard in front of the Great Hall on the Mafikeng Campus connects the campus with its past. It was the symbol for Bophuthatswana and the head of a leopard was even part of the national flag. There have been calls in the past for the leopard to be taken down because it is seen as an apartheid symbol.
Photo: Maclez Studio

"Mangope was a very interesting figure. His basic problem was the transition from a traditional tribal chief to the leader of a democratically elected government in an artificially created state. As a chief his word was law. His office waiting room was like a medieval court with supplicants and salesmen milling around waiting for a word with the great man. He operated at this level like a chief whose people had the right to approach him directly over the most minor issues. For example, a mother came to him claiming that her daughter had not been dealt with fairly by the examination system. As chairman of the examination board I had to investigate this after an unpleasant interview with the President. In fact we found there was no case to answer and Mangope was satisfied we had behaved properly. In the meantime an Israeli salesman was hovering nearby hoping to sell the President an executive jet plane…

Overall he was a paternalist at heart and frequently referred to the student body at Unibo as 'My children'. Of course such children could not question the authority of their father so he never understood the students' desire to confront political issues in the RSA which they regarded as their own issues too. Mangope frequently reminded them that they were in Bophuthatswana, that his government was educating them at great cost (only 4% of Unibo's budget came from student fees) and that they should be grateful and docile.

On a personal note I liked and admired Mangope. I was disappointed that his original position, described in his book 'A place for all', which proposed that homeland status was only a step on the way towards the democratisation of RSA, changed dramatically once the ANC was unbanned. Like many others he found it hard to let go of power, however unreasonable his ambitions were. One-to-one he could be philosophical, wise and perceptive. He was appreciative of jokes and liked to discuss English football." - Prof Bob Smith, education advisor to Mangope

government had to be kept in the dark about these visits. Money flowed into Bophuthatswana from abroad and from the business community, including big corporate players such as Anglo American.[6] [7]

The political context was the lifeblood on which the idea for a University of Bophuthatswana could feed. The university had the funds and would in time also enjoy the goodwill and help of a liberal institution such as the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), and expertise from a cross-section of society.

What's more, the homeland's "independence" allowed for educational innovation in terms of the curriculum. A unique university could be set up that could prioritise its immediate constituency and be relevant to its developmental problems and opportunities.[8]

Mangope could also finally build on the goodwill generated when the Batswana had given so generously a few years earlier.

Whereas homeland universities also served the South African government's ideals of diverting blacks, Tswanas in this instance, away from its "white" institutions, research[9] suggests that Bophuthatswana was the product of a long-standing desire by a disenfranchised Tswana majority to attain a national identity, denied by a British colonial administration some 80 years earlier. The new university, alongside the building of a capital city, was an expression of national identity, dreams and wishes. The university in particular became the Batswana's symbol of intellectual awakening.

The history of Unibo, which became the UNW and is today the Mafikeng Campus of the NWU, helps to explain why the merger elicited a deep emotional response from many at the institution.

A university that was built with the cents of the people of Bophuthatswana and cemented with their passion was being taken away. In this respect there are similarities between the nationalistic histories of the UNW and the PU for CHE, which, in turn, was built by Afrikaner nationalists.

But unlike the PU for CHE, Unibo was created and seen as a place from where apartheid could be dismantled.

This first chapter of Unibo's history was downplayed during the merger. By presenting the university as just another of the many tertiary apartheid Bantustan creations, it was much easier for the government of the day to justify the merger with the PU for CHE.

Not a bush college

In 1978 Mangope appointed a National Education Commission, chaired by Prof EP Lekhela. Chapter 23 of the commission's report dealt with the university. In October 1978 the government accepted the outline of what the institution should look like.[10]

Mangope expected Unibo to be more than a replica of the Western-type universities in South Africa. He wanted a model appropriate to the needs of Bophuthatswana.[11]

This was in line with what the Lekhela report had recommended, including that Unibo should not be a classical Western university, but should be part of the community and serve its needs and, on top of teaching and research, should contribute to the development of Bophuthatswana and its people.

"University graduates should not consider themselves merely as academics, but as men and women who can dedicate their minds, hearts and hands to the development of the country," Kriel stated in a document he had compiled about the university.

Prof Bob Smith, the Professor of Education who joined Unibo in September 1980, said the Lekhela report emphasised that Unibo "would not be on high-flown, high prestige academic studies to which only a privileged few could gain access. Managers and administrators, teachers, agriculturalists and practitioners of law would be our 'products'. They would be able to serve and transform the society to which they belonged. The applied nature of our studies was to be emphasised".

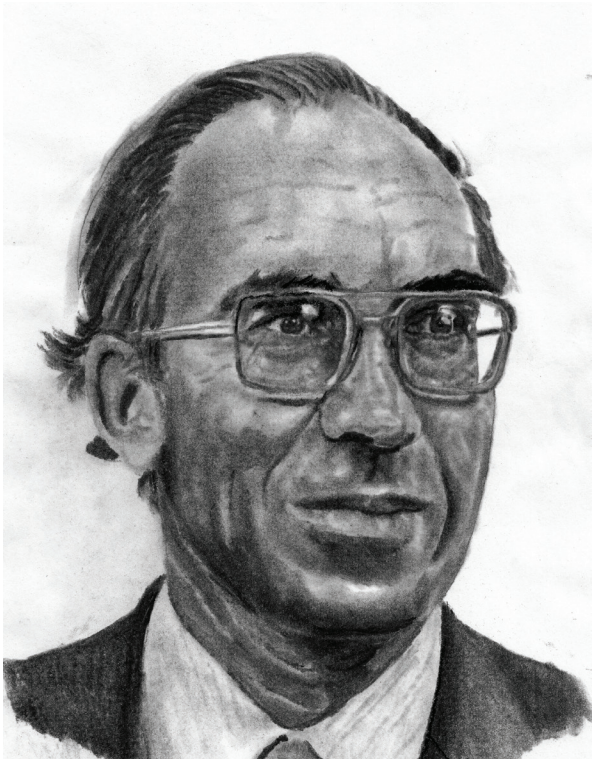
Prof Lesole Gadinabokao, who, together with Smith was one of the very first lecturers at Unibo, said he understood the approach to mean, "Here we teach professionals", and that it would specifically address the homeland's need for trained teachers and civil servants.

The university would thus primarily be an undergraduate institution with a strong emphasis on professional and vocational education and training. Four-year degrees would be offered. After two years a student could obtain a diploma and only selected students could carry on with their studies. The fourth year would be one year of professional education. All students were compelled to do communication and study skills, development studies and quantitative methods to develop the skills necessary for university study.

There were three semesters. During the first two, students

2 January 2004
The incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus into the Vaal Triangle Campus is published in the *Government Gazette*.

9 January 2004
The Interim Council holds its last formal meeting and approves the name of the North-West University (with hyphen) and the logo.



▲ Prof Jacques Kriel was the founding Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Unibo (1979-1982). Sketches: Pjay Motubatsi

did their theoretical work and during the last semester they would have to go out into the labour market.

These ideas remain relevant in South African as a developmental state in which the education system continues to struggle with the mismatch between knowledge and know-how, between university training and workplace competency.

Development studies compulsory

All students, whether they were working towards qualifications in education or agriculture, did development studies during their second year.

Smith, who came from the Institute of Education of the University of London, believed this was a "hugely important" aspect of the education offered by Unibo.

He explains: "Its aim was to challenge students to decide how they could best use their talents and opportunities for more than personal development. Given the dominance of a capitalist mode of economics in RSA it was thought important to link traditional values with the challenges of modern life… and those teaching the subject were outstanding individuals with considerable intellectual and moral strength… they were true believers in the importance of opening the minds of students to alternative world-views."

However, colleagues in the management sciences soon branded lecturers of development studies as communists and a conflict developed, news of which reached Mangope.

Mangope invited the academics to dinner.

This is how Johann Graaff, a development studies lecturer, recalls the evening: "He said 'state your cases' across the dinner table. An hour later he said: 'I understand the debate and what is going on, but it's not the place of the government [in terms of its constitutional principles] to interfere in academic institutions. You have to sort it out yourselves."

Unibo's Council was appointed following the passing of the University of Bophuthatswana Act (No 10 of 1978). The Council held its first meeting on 28 September 1978. Dr Ken Hartshorne, a liberal educationist, was the chairperson, with a group of council members drawn from academic, educational, church and business sectors. They were experts who could influence the direction that the new institution was taking.

Nine months after the council's first meeting on 23 June 1979, the first Vice-Chancellor Dr Jacques Kriel was appointed. Kriel, who was Minister of Health in Bophuthatswana and Mangope's health advisor, had already attracted unwanted attention from Pretoria – the National Party government – by scrapping apartheid in hospitals in the homeland. With his charisma and academic network, Kriel managed to attract academics from across the world – Canada, Britain, Botswana and South Africa – to the institution.

The academics would eventually work in a university that would comprise a federation of colleges offering degree, diploma and certificate courses. The central college with programmes in teacher training, law, commerce and administration would have its headquarters in Mmabatho. A college for agriculture, which already existed, would be in Taung (about 200km away) and a college of technology would be in Ga-Rankuwa (it later became Technikon Northwest).

Kriel would have liked more time to fine-tune the Lekhela report and recommendations for Unibo with input from the Council. The plans for the institution were innovative,

12 February 2004
Business leader Litha Nyhonyha becomes the first chair of the NWU Council.

12 February 2004
The historic first gathering of the NWU's permanent Council is held and 18 new Council members are welcomed.

COUNCIL MEMBER	POSITION
DR KEN HARTSHORNE	▶ Education Consultant to the Minister of Education, Bophuthatswana
DR AP HUNTER	▶ Wits, Faculty of Education
CN LEKALAKE	▶ Assistant Secretary for Education, Bophuthatswana
PROF EP LEKHELA	▶ Chairman, National Education Commission
DR KP MOKHOBO	▶ Principal physician and Superintendent Bophelong Hospital, later Minister of Health and Welfare, Bophuthatswana
MICHAEL O'DOWD	▶ Anglo American Chairman's Fund
SYDNEY PRESS	▶ Chairman, Edgars
PROF WILLIE RAUTENBACH	▶ University of Stellenbosch
DR HJJ REYNDERS	▶ Director SA Federated Chamber of Industries, later chairman of the RSA Manpower Board
JS SETILOANE	▶ Head, In-Service training, Department of Education, Bophuthatswana
REV JOHN TAU	▶ SA Council of Churches
PROF GERRIT VILJOEN	▶ Former Rector RAU
PROF MARINUS WIECHERS	▶ Unisa[12]

▲ **TABLE 3:** Senior education experts, academics, business and church leaders as well as politicians served on the first Council of Unibo. The list is included in an undated document by Jacques Kriel on the University of Bophuthatswana titled, *Its aims, goals and structure.*

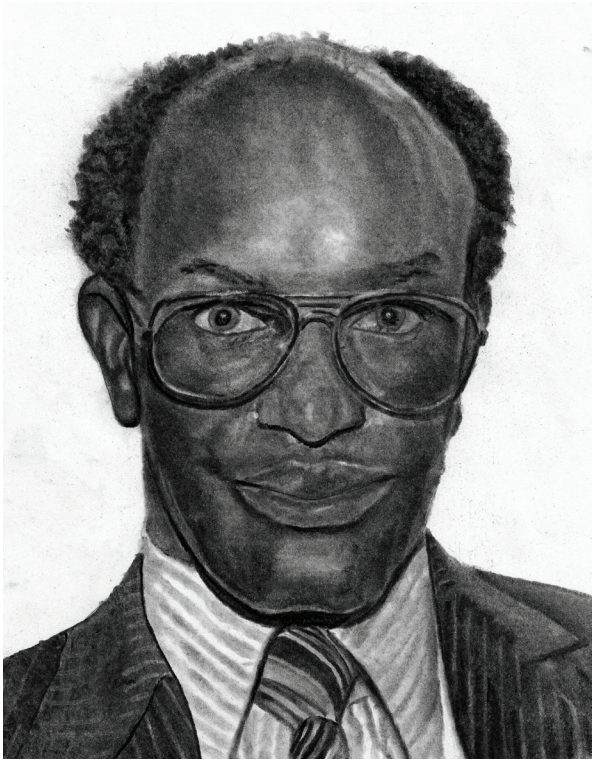
forward thinking and brave. They showed how Unibo's founders grappled with problems which persist in the education system, such as finding ways to ensure sufficient numbers of learners with maths and science competencies came through the schooling system and ensuring that every subject provided opportunities for community engagement.

But in the world of higher education, converting plans and concepts to curricula and qualifications can often take longer than expected.

Kriel believes processes that should have taken 30 months were dramatically shortened. The construction work on the Base Building – the first structure to represent Unibo physically – had already started and Mangope wanted the institution to open in January 1980. His concern was growing over Batswana children having to go to South Africa to study amid growing political volatility.

13 February 2004
A meeting is held with the Minister to discuss the incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus and the progress made with the merger and incorporation.

12 March 2004
Council adopts the process for appointing a Vice-Chancellor. Council identifies six priority areas, namely transformation, excellence, language, a common understanding of unity and diversity, access and quality-driven growth.



▲ Prof John Makhene, Vice-Chancellor from 1982-1986, was described as President Lucas Mangope's blue-eye-boy.

A university in one room

Unibo started out in a small office on top of a hardware store in Mafikeng. It did not have a shred of paper or a single pen - or any students.

When Graaff, the first academic staff member, arrived in January 1980 he found the whole university crammed into one room.

"…Dr Kriel was there as well as the registrar Walter Mosethli, the university driver, the lady who made tea and a secretary. That was the whole university."

A few kilometres away, Unibo's first building was taking shape on a dry, drab building site. New staff members from many corners of the world continued to trickle to a work-place without phones and with constantly interrupted water and power supplies. A "make do" mentality' characterised the early days.

Education lecturer Prof Smith, who was the first academic appointee, arriving a few months after Graaff, describes the first few months and years as "unpredictable, even chaotic".

"…we wrestled with such problems as how to obtain text books (raids on the big bookshops in Johannesburg and Pretoria were conducted by staff who returned with their car boots full of books – invoices to follow). The librarian, Peter Lor, was often in despair as dozens of books would be dumped at his door for his new staff to access and register overnight."

"There was a plethora of meetings, usually of a 'fire brigade' emergency nature; great comradeship, good humour (largely) and a willingness to do whatever was necessary to get the university up and running." Later on, Smith says, academics would have "comparatively close relations with the students as we were all in the pioneering boat together".

The first students

On 9 April 1980 the first students were admitted to Unibo.[13]

The plan was for students, in particular senior students, to stay with residents of Mmabatho, the new capital. In this way they could sidestep the distinction between town and gown.[14] In addition, the cost of building residences could be avoided.

It did not work. The community was not used to accommodating students. They were therefore housed in temporary accommodation and portable buildings were erected.[15] In time residences had to be built.

Lecture halls and offices for staff were the next challenge. The houses that that were built for staff were used as classrooms until the university building was completed.

Smith recalls how the double garage of the house that would later become his family home was initially a 60-seat classroom; one of the bedrooms was a seminar room and the rest of the rooms staff offices.

"Three months after my arrival [November 1980] the house reverted to staff occupation as the long-awaited 'Base Building' was opened. This was a curiously shaped pyramid or ziggurat which provided lecture rooms and staff offices. Heavy rain soon revealed gaps in the roof and much time and money was spent on repairs, chasing the contractors and even suing the architect if I remember correctly. However, despite all these problems teaching continued…"

Prof Sipho Seepe, political analyst, ministerial advisor and a former acting Vice-Chancellor, was one of the first students

March 2004
The Institutional Office investigates the feasibility of introducing simultaneous interpreting services.

19 April 2004
Students at the Potchefstroom Campus are able to receive some lectures in English through the interpreting service.

at Unibo. He attended his lectures in the back rooms and garages of his lecturers' homes.

In fact, he travelled from a politically turbulent Soweto to Unibo where he managed to find a place - and where the fees were low enough for him to pursue the dream of education. It was an immense relief to get in.

"I was so desperate for a university education …and it presented me with an opportunity," Seepe said.[16]

Indeed, lecturers confirmed that many of those amongst Unibo's first intake of 200 students were young people who could not get into higher education institutions elsewhere in South Africa. Later on there were two groups: first-time Tswana students and a few white students, and a second group of older working students and government officials who attended lectures in the evening.[17]

As an educational home for the Batswana people, Unibo attracted students from outside the borders of the Bantustan.[18]

Vice-Chancellor Kgwadi experienced this first hand as a student from 1986. According to him "…Batswanas from Soweto, from the so-called central part of the country, would come".

"Whenever there were disruptions parents would always say: 'Let us send kids to [Pres Lucas] Mangope because there is no room for nonsense. There is discipline.' So somehow Bophuthatswana was known as a 'disciplined place' from a parent's point of view."

For Kgwadi and his friends – who grew up in Bophuthatswana – the homeland geography shaped their thinking as they were leaving school and considering higher education institutions. Afrikaans universities were out. Wits was too unstable. Ikeys and Turfloop were too far away.

"You would think Pietersburg is for the Pedi-speaking. You know that was due to homeland divisions. Fort Hare you would think: 'Oh, it is for the Xhosas.' Being a Batswana you would think: 'Hai, I don't know the Xhosas.' So you always think either UCT or Medunsa. Medunsa was easy to think of although it was highly specialised. But it was easy in our vocabulary because it was more in a Tswana territory. You would think if you go there you are within your background…I must say if it was not for Unibo, I would have had no option for a university. I would have had very limited options."[19]

▲ After a period during which there were various acting Vice-Chancellors, Prof Recias Melato Malope was appointed in 1988. He left in 1994.

What staff saw in Unibo

Vice-Chancellor Kriel first moved to Bophuthatswana in the 1970s because of Mangope's anti-apartheid stance. A medical doctor, Kriel specialised as a physician before he joined the homeland government. Although many of those who joined him at Unibo embraced the same political principles, there was no denying that Kriel's charisma was also what attracted people.

Education professor Bob Smith, who left a post at London University, describes his reasons for joining a start-up institution in the middle of nowhere. "[Kriel will admit to being less than a great administrator but he was a magnificent leader and inspirer of other people]...He personified the mission of the university - to present a model of tertiary education which was inclusive. It was designed to facilitate bright young people who had suffered under Bantu education but who did not lack intellectual ability."

Seepe, as one of the first students, echoes Smith's words.

April to May 2004
Student protests disrupt the Mafikeng Campus and the academic staff go on strike during May, calling for the immediate suspension of management.

4 May 2004
Almost 5 000 students on the Potchefstroom Campus participate in a values-walk to demonstrate their view of the campus as a values-driven place.

Mangope returns

When the former president of the Bophuthatswana homeland was invited back to the Mafikeng Campus of the NWU in 2010, the decision infuriated his former political enemies.

Kgosi Mangope, 87 at the time, was invited to deliver a public lecture on the campus, formerly the University of Bophuthatswana, an institution which he helped to establish in the late 1970s.

Students also wanted to rename the Lost City residence after Mangope, who had ruled with an iron fist, and unveil a donated bust of him on campus.

This proved to be too much for the North West ANC.

According to a newspaper report in *City Press* on 30 September 2010 Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande called on the NWU to stop the unveiling of the "Bantustan tyrant".

An extraordinary NWU Council meeting was called on Thursday, 7 October, to deal with the crisis.

The Council, which was clearly not pleased, scolded the management of the Mafikeng Campus for its intention to honour the embodiment of apartheid, thereby putting the "reputation and good name of the university at risk".

According to the minutes of the meeting, management had underestimated the political ramifications locally and nationally.

Ironically, according to management's report to the Council, a member of the Sasco-led SRC had suggested the residence be named after Mangope. The proposal for the erection of a bust of Mangope was made during a meeting of the 30th Anniversary Organising Committee, again by a member of the Sasco SRC. Sasco is a student organisation aligned to the ANC.

According to the the Council minutes, the outcome was arrived at after lengthy deliberations: "Unanimously, that the naming of a student residence after Kgosi LM Mangope and the erection of a bust in his image be suspended until Council has approved policy, processes and procedures for the naming of university assets."

Mangope proceeded to deliver the public lecture on 8 October 2010. In effect he spoke only briefly, thanking those who had helped him to create the former Unibo, reminiscing about the past of the Mafikeng Campus, and wishing the NWU well in the future.

"Many people were committed to create something new. There were (lecturers) from the UK, Germany, Canada and the US. The university had a strong sense of universality… I (was a Sowetan who) came from Bantu education, but there was an infectious culture of excellence. I saw the possibilities of escaping from broken Bantu education. This is why many people went to study in the US (after their undergraduate studies at Unibo)."[20] Prof Lesole Gadinabokao said: "…from day one we were against it [apartheid]. Everyone thought the [Bop] government ran us [Unibo], but the [Bop] government [in turn] thought we were ANC puppets."[21]

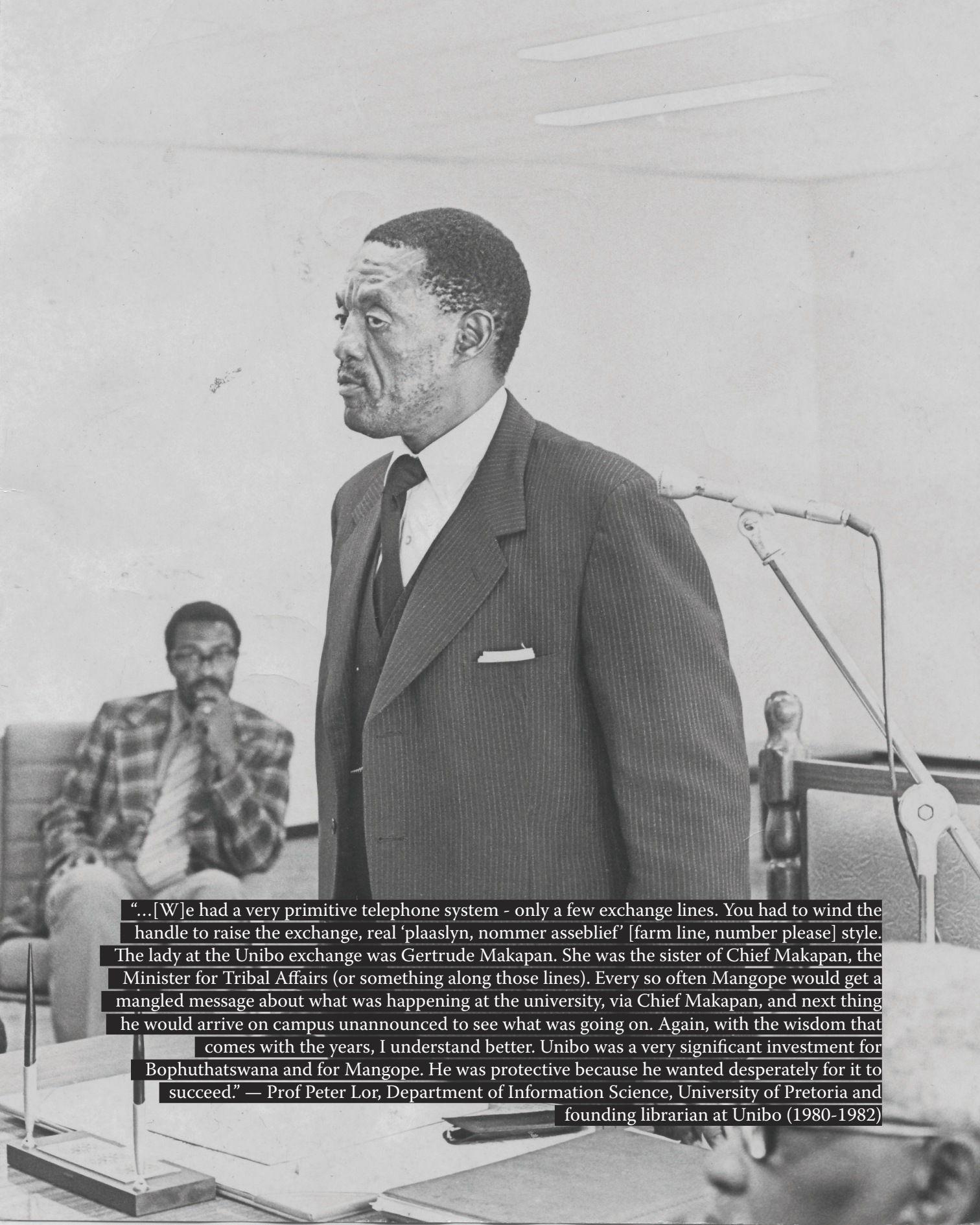
From the outset Unibo was therefore a space in which lecturers and students could debate freely. In fact, many of the students from the Witwatersrand were seeking – and expecting – Unibo to allow them the political activism denied in South Africa.

Naledi Pandor, former Minister of Education who taught English at Unibo between 1986 and 1989, believed Unibo's character was shaped by the assumption of the so-called independence of Bophuthatswana.[22]

"[A]nd so an attempt I think to establish a higher education institution that would have a much more cosmopolitan and integrated character than a South African higher education institution was made at the time. For example… the UNW was intriguing in that a large part of its academic staff were foreign… there was a boldness at the beginning to be different, and you had a very excited group of young people. They were keen to pursue higher education and quite

4 May 2004
The Staff Association on the Mafikeng Campus join the students in a protest march to the provincial department of education.

6 May 2004
Eloff and a team from the Ministry of Education visit the Mafikeng Campus. Management obtained an interdict to evict students from the campus.



"…[W]e had a very primitive telephone system - only a few exchange lines. You had to wind the handle to raise the exchange, real 'plaaslyn, nommer asseblief' [farm line, number please] style. The lady at the Unibo exchange was Gertrude Makapan. She was the sister of Chief Makapan, the Minister for Tribal Affairs (or something along those lines). Every so often Mangope would get a mangled message about what was happening at the university, via Chief Makapan, and next thing he would arrive on campus unannounced to see what was going on. Again, with the wisdom that comes with the years, I understand better. Unibo was a very significant investment for Bophuthatswana and for Mangope. He was protective because he wanted desperately for it to succeed." — Prof Peter Lor, Department of Information Science, University of Pretoria and founding librarian at Unibo (1980-1982)

▲ Prof John Melamu accepted the Vice-Chancellorship in 1996. He was in office until 1998.

a large number came from South Africa believing they were coming to a free, Bophuthatswana, where they would have a place at a university and get an education that would allow them to be whatever they wanted to be. Of course many of those young people had been activists at school… and initially were able to exercise it but once its reality began to hit, the state then decided it had to intervene. So there was an initial freedom, but the government became increasingly uncomfortable with it. And so began to interfere in what I think was developing into quite an interesting and exciting higher education institution."

Smith, who left Unibo in 1986, said during the first six years of Unibo's existence there was no direct interference in the university by Mangope or his government. No work permit was refused and nobody was deported for political reasons.

But Mangope did not always understand or tolerate student activism – in particular since his government was educating them at great cost. And he did on several occasions close the university.

Smith recalls one of these occasions: "In confronting him at a gathering of staff who were invited to his home to discuss a period of closure of the university, he made it clear that he did not regard a university education as the be-all and end-all for young people. One of our colleagues, Dr Zach Chuenyane, was brave enough to say that the outside world would interpret the closure of Unibo as a sign of his government's interference in academic freedom. Soon afterwards the university re-opened."

As Mangope tasted power and lost his taste for democracy, cosmopolitan Unibo would become a problem. It also attracted the unwelcome attention of the oppressive South African government. Politically it was the turbulent 1980s. South Africa was in a perpetual state of emergency as low-level warfare against apartheid raged in the townships. A clampdown on any form of resistance and freedom of speech, in particular on campuses, was inevitable.

Pandor witnessed the interference of the security state on the Unibo Campus. The late women's rights activist and ANC politician Ellen Kuzwayo was invited to give a lecture.

"[S]he concluded the lecture by asking that the audience sings the national anthem, which she said she liked very much. That was the exact words, I recall. And I think she meant the national anthem of Bophuthatswana… and of course everybody stood up and immediately sang *Nkosi Sikilel' iAfrika*. And of course this got back to the government and the next day they began a process and tried to identify who was in that lecture, who led the singing, who joined the singing."[23]

Over time, political protest on the campus intensified. Students were targeting apartheid by defying Mangope. Many of them began viewing him as an apartheid lackey.

But their attempts to dismantle the bigger political system were always disguised as local issues: overcrowding in residences, shortages of cutlery and crockery, the shortage of lockers in student houses, the new caterer at the cafeteria. These would give them the opportunity to mobilise.

Kgwadi described the relationship with the President: "…Mangope was dethroned at some point [March 1988] – there was a coup in the homeland. During the homeland coup I was still a student here. We ran around everywhere. The cafeteria storage was looted. There was lawlessness for some time. And to us it was a celebration: 'Apartheid was gone. Going down!' All these university vehicles – I don't know who got hold of the keys – people were driving them

7 May 2004
Council approves the purchase of The Cottages, Erf 1423 and Mafikeng Township as additional student residences for R4,3 million.

7 May 2004
Eloff is appointed as the first Vice-Chancellor of the NWU. The NWU was the first of the merging institutions to announce its permanent Vice-Chancellor.

around… that very evening he was reinstated [by the apartheid state]. Bad news for us. Here he was addressing us. And nobody even told us to run away from campus. We knew the university would be the first target. The police would come. We all disappeared. Our day of celebration was short lived. But the only way to contest the system was to always hit on the local government; the homeland government. We would always deny things … Mangope would have to come and do a speech at a graduation …and we say: 'No, he is not going to do that. And we will arrange protest. There was a building I remember… [he would open the building]. We said we were not going to allow him to speak. He cannot open the building. That was the politics then. We said he must step down."

Mangope had an iron grip on the university towards the late 1980s, however. He knew the name of every SRC member.[24] Together with the disenchantment between university and state, exacerbated by its close proximity to the government headquarters, Unibo's virtual total reliance on state funds wrecked any form of autonomy.[25]

Despite the difficulties the university had, it had lived up to many of the ideals set out at its inception. Graduates and diplomates were produced to meet the considerable human resource needs of the "country", particularly in the spheres of education, management and administration, law, agriculture and health.

The achievements were dramatic. Gadinabokao said when he started out there were only two graduates in the district.[26]

Some of the prominent alumni from Unibo include top legal minds (Justice Yvonne Mokgoro, Justice Bess Nkabine, Justice Bailey Mmono, Adv Lesego Mmusi, Adv Sedirwa Osupile and prosecutor Sejako Senatleo), ministerial advisors (Kennedy Memani, Seepe), business leaders such as Gaba Tabane, journalists such as Tshepo Ikaneng and academics such as Prof Thulani Makhalanyane, Dr Bismark Tyobeka.

According to Seepe the 10 years of Unibo were indeed its most rigorous. He called it "a university committed to excellence" - until Mangope started to interfere.

Democracy brings dramatic change

Unibo had about 4 000 students by the time Bophuthatswana was reincorporated into South Africa in 1994. Although there was a coup in March, finally ending Mangope's rule, the dawn of democracy erased the homeland system on paper. As a result the institution was renamed the "University of North-West" in 1996.

▲ Prof Takatso Mofokeng was UNW Vice-Chancellor for five months in 1999. Prof Tom Gouws acted thereafter until 2001.

Becoming part of the cash-strapped South African higher education system would have a dramatic effect on a university that relied heavily on state funds.

From 1994 to 2003 there were six Vice-Chancellors, some of them acting. A staff association, which had become the escape valve for political aspirations, had stepped into the void even before the transition in 1994. It had become an all-powerful group, which could dictate to management how to go about its business. It wanted to give input on everything from appointments to budgets. Over time the staff association was transformed into the de facto management of Unibo. When democracy arrived and it no longer had a political enemy in the form of the homeland, the staff association sought new ways of stamping its authority on the campus. Sadly, foreigners, who had been part of the institution since its formation, became a target.

A former staff member, a foreigner, said: "They actively

11 May 2004
Staff return to work and the Mafikeng Campus reopens on 14 May.

19 May 2004
Eloff sends the first of his regular communiques to staff and students.

instigated xenophobia on campus. There were times when lots of our international professors and lecturers left."

Prof Melvin Mbao, Dean of the faculty of law on the Mafikeng Campus, was one of five foreigners who took the matter to court when the staff association demanded that expats vacate their positions and that a moratorium be placed on their promotion. The group acted on behalf of a much larger group of expatriates who all contributed towards the cost of the court case.

"[F]ive of us decided to go to the High Court. The university and others (others were the staff association) were the defendants. We applied as a matter of urgency because of the threat of Home Affairs to deport us. We thought our lives were in danger. The situation was very unpleasant and very uncertain," Mbao says.

The Supreme Court, Bophuthatswana Provincial Division, Case No M3198/95. found in favour of *Baloro and others vs Unibo* and *Others vs Bophuthatswana and Others*, and called the actions of the staff association "naked discrimination". A provisional order was granted on 30 March 1995 and was made final on 24 April 1995. The staff association was permanently interdicted to prevent them from putting pressure on the university to act against foreigners.

When Asmal began his grand higher education experiment in 2000 the UNW was faltering. The leadership instability in the preceding years, coupled with the ongoing assault by the staff association and students, turned the university into a shadow of its former self. At the time Prof Akbar Bootha, a staff member on the Mafikeng Campus since 1983 and later the director of the School of Accounting, was appointed in a new post, Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for Administration, and Finance. The university was in the red and had for three years in a row received a "Disclaimer of Opinion" from the auditors. Every organisation dreads such a finding. Things are so bad and the information given so inadequate that the auditors are unable to express an opinion on the financial statements.[27]

"This was the most challenging job of my career which, on many occasions, I regretted accepting," writes Bootha in a booklet commemorating the campus's 30th birthday. "The achievement which I am most proud of is that we managed to get a clean audit report within two years. When we merged with Potchefstroom University in 2004, we were in a very healthy financial position."

The UNW's stronger financial position was not going to help it escape a merger. In fact, as the merger happened a R50 million refundable injection from the PU for CHE's reserve fund was made available to tackle neglect ranging from a lack of working toilets to lecture halls that locked up and nailed closed.

Finances aside.

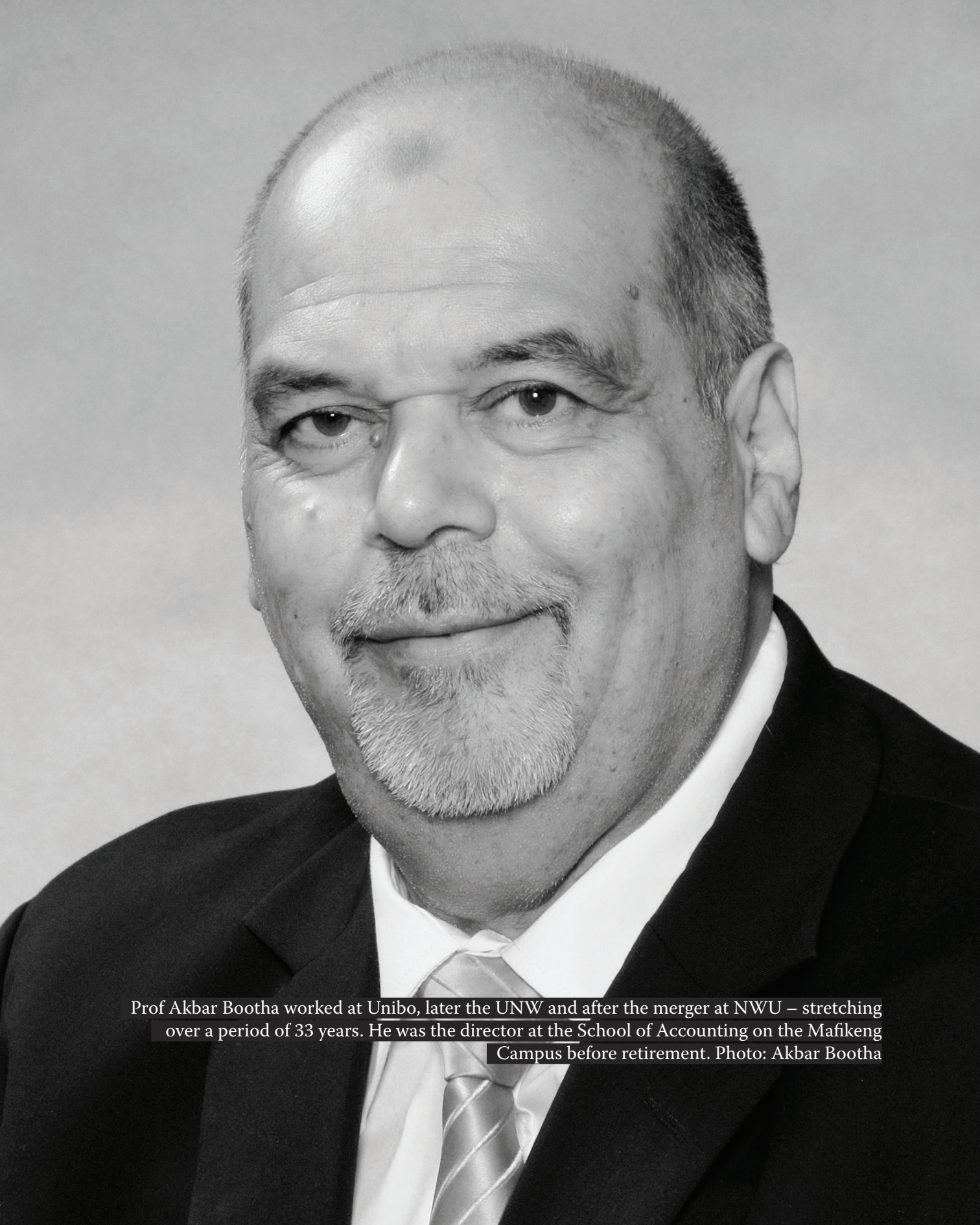
The national and provincial government underplayed, perhaps even completely ignored, the university's history. It was perceived as part of a previous regime and ideology, requiring an overhaul.[28]

It might have started out as a university for the Batswana, but it developed into an institution that was defying apartheid on many fronts with its mix of black and sprinkling of white students, and its blend of black and white staff. While it was soon lured back to the traditional way of providing higher education, it continued to attempt to be innovative on many fronts. And it did succeed before being pulled down by financial and managerial difficulties.

As Graaff pointed out: "It was truly a quality institution. It was not a little rural non-entity."

However, as the wave of mergers hit home, this was exactly how the UNW was presented.

It angered and embittered many who believe that Unibo was being "punished" for its history – which was selectively remembered and understood.



Prof Akbar Bootha worked at Unibo, later the UNW and after the merger at NWU – stretching over a period of 33 years. He was the director at the School of Accounting on the Mafikeng Campus before retirement. Photo: Akbar Bootha

CHAPTER 6
MANKWE, RUSTENBURG, SEBOKENG: PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

"The negotiations about the future of the Mankwe Campus provoked emotions because of its educational role in a close-knit rural community…" — Citizen, 29 October 2004[1]

The Mankwe Christian Teacher Training College was opened in 1992[2] as a pre-service teacher institution[3] by the former homeland government of Bophuthatswana on a piece of land adjacent to the Pilanesberg Nature Reserve, a mere 10 minutes' drive from the leisure complex Sun City.

Dr Lucas Mangope, the president of Bophuthatswana, asked the Catholic Church to help with its establishment as he believed the church had a proven track record in the field of education.[4]

The college focused exclusively on the three-year diploma in secondary education and specifically on the training of mathematics and physical science teachers, subject areas in which there was, and still is, a pronounced shortage of educators. It also offered a foundation programme for students who wanted to improve their matric maths and science marks to meet the entry requirements of the diploma course.

According to staff members, in its heyday the teaching college would receive up to 2 000 applications for only 180 places.[5]

However, from the mid-1990s, teacher training colleges were facing an uncertain future following a damning audit about aspects such as the high cost and poor quality of training provided by some of the 150 colleges.[6]

A decision by the government of former President Mandela paved the way for the colleges to be reduced from 150 to 50 and later to 27. These institutions had to be incorporated into the education faculties of universities. In terms of the 1996 Constitution and the 1997 Higher Education Act, the colleges would no longer be administered by provincial departments of education and would become part of the national Department of Education's responsibilities.[7] [8] At this time some staffers at the Mankwe Christian Teacher Training College were hoping the PU for CHE would incorporate it. Lecturers from the Faculty of Education had been working with their peers in Mankwe. But this union never materialised. Instead the Potchefstroom Teaching College, across the road from the PU for CHE, was incorporated.

The next few years, as a consequence of the consolidated teacher training context, took their toll on the Mankwe College. Staff started to leave because they believed their positions were in danger. The rationalisation and redeployment of staff[9] by the North-West Department of Education meant the loss of another layer of qualified staff.

Mankwe had to find another solution.

The college approached the University of North-West (UNW) for incorporation in 2002, but it was a shadow of its former self.[10]

In terms of the agreement with the government, the latter would pay for the upgrading of the campus and would fund the salaries of staff for three years.[11]

Initially the university only wanted to absorb the students and return the campus facilities to the provincial Department of Education.[12] However, in April 2000 the UNW Council, perhaps tempted by its favourable location in the burgeoning platinum production belt, approved the full incorporation of the Mankwe Christian Teacher Training College, together with buildings, people, equipment and all. It now had a satellite campus.

According to UNW Council minutes,[13] Mankwe would be able to enrol about 600 students in BA (Land reform), BSc and BEd programmes, the Science Foundation year and

26 May 2004
The National Tertiary Education Staff Union declares a dispute against the appointment of Eloff as Vice-Chancellor.

27 May 2004
In a think piece very critical of Eloff's appointment as Vice-Chancellor in the *Mail & Guardian*, it is claimed he is "woefully wanting with regard to both scholarship and higher education experience".

The once-struggling Mankwe Campus of the former UNW became the Orbit TVET College in 2007 and today has 1 600 students. Millions of rands were pumped into the college to build training facilities including workshops, guest houses and a conference facility. The CEO Maryna Marais says the campus is flourishing.
Photo: Orbit TVET College

a Further Diploma in Education. Apparently the choice of programmes was not based on local needs or the viability of a specific course, but on what the remaining staff could teach.[14]

From the outset, some of UNW's managers had their doubts about the Mankwe Campus. Prof Akbar Bootha was one of them. He had just become Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Administration and Finance at the UNW and had been tasked with pulling the UNW's finances out of the red. "I tried to reverse the decision as soon as I took up office, but failed, and Mankwe became part of UNW. In the end Mankwe cost us more than we got from it."

Indeed, the incorporation of the college into the UNW appeared to be fraught with difficulties.[15]

The management of Mankwe Campus was divided. Some supported their new master, the UNW. Others stuck with the old one, the North-West Education Department. The Catholic Church requested continued involvement, but the UNW turned this down. There was programme overlap with the Mafikeng Campus and the types of programmes on offer were compromised. Perhaps most significantly numbers remained too low to ensure the financial viability of the campus.

Hardly a year after the incorporation in February 2002, the UNW Council approved the first investigation into the Mankwe Campus. Two more would follow later – one after the merger[16]. The findings of the first study that PriceWaterhouseCoopers conducted were presented to the Council on 19 September 2003 and stated that the campus was not viable, but had potential. They recommended a turn-around strategy. This would involve a more detailed investigation into the campus's finances, an aggressive recruiting campaign and the introduction of new programmes in commerce and management. PriceWaterhouseCoopers estimated it would cost R7,7 million to close the campus.[17]

One of the three investigations was a probe in 2003 into several allegations including corruption, nepotism and favouritism, as well as allegations of staff members conducting private business during working hours. It found that Mankwe as a satellite university campus had not been properly integrated, but remained physically and administratively isolated from the UNW main campus. Moreover, there were financial irregularities, including prima facie evidence of criminal conduct, and decaying human relations.[18]

On the issue of its institutional environment and culture the report stated: "There is a widespread sense of apathy, helplessness and therefore a build-up of tension amongst staff members. The student community is also demotivated by the neglect they suffer as a result of administrative irregularities, inconsistency and lack of commitment of lecturers to [do] their work as educators. Undoubtedly, academic standards become a casualty when the educators are not always available to conduct lectures."

When the merger negotiations swung into motion and Mankwe was mentioned, the negotiators from the PU for CHE were unaware of its existence. It came as a surprise. "We did not know about Mankwe's existence. It came up the moment we mentioned the Vaal Campus," says Maarten Venter, who worked as an advisor for the PU for CHE and would later be closely involved in discussions about Mankwe on behalf of the NWU.[19] "We said we are not going to make a noise about Mankwe because we have to get the momentum going for the negotiations."

Subsequently, Mankwe became part of the talks. Everything was handled symmetrically: there were the Potch Campus and the Mafikeng Campus; there were the two satellite campuses, the Vaal and Mankwe. The Mankwe Campus stayed open for another two years as it found itself in a scrimmage for strategic advantage between the PU for CHE and the UNW. In numbers the two satellites varied greatly: In 2003 Mankwe had about 400 students and 16 staffers[20] whereas the Vaal had 2 123 students and 75 staff members.[21]

However, when the two sides decided to adopt the three-campus divisional structure instead of the satellite model as a management tool, it meant that Mankwe would have its own Rector. At that point there was an upturn in Potchefstroom's interest in Mankwe: What was happening there? What did it look like?[22]

At that time a debilitated Mankwe Campus was immersed in uncertainty. UNW had already done the number crunching. It was clear: if it attracted fewer than 652 students – and it had only 395 – it was not financially viable.

However, in November 2003 the UNW Council decided that the Mankwe Campus could operate into 2004, but that there would be a review after the January 2004 intake.[23]

That meant the new NWU would have to tackle the Mankwe dilemma.

June 2004
A process is started to find a university anthem. Concept compositions are played to a panel in November 2004.

18 June 2004
Dr Popo Molefe, former premier of the North West Province, is appointed as the Chancellor of the NWU.

Rustenburg/Phokeng

The NWU Vice-Chancellor Dr Theuns Eloff commissioned a study shortly after the merger into the possibility of an NWU campus in or around Rustenburg. But the idea was first mooted much earlier, in one of the first merger proposals thrashed out by the joint management task team of the PU for CHE and the UNW. There was agreement in September 2002 that the new institution would have three campuses (Potchefstroom, Mafikeng/Mmabatha and Vanderbijlpark) and that Mankwe would be a technikon-type campus.[24] Furthermore, the idea was that a Rustenburg/Phokeng technikon campus could be added later. This could be with the support of the Bafokeng nation.

At the time Rustenburg/Phokeng, located in the platinum-rich belt of the North West province, was thriving. It was considered one of the fastest-growing cities in South Africa, if not Africa. However, a five-month strike by mineworkers during 2014 plunged the city into a state of economic crisis. It was also close to Marikana, where a strike in the platinum mining sector in August 2012 reverberated across the world after police opened fire and killed 44 protesting miners supportive of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU).

The study into Rustenburg as an NWU campus coincided with the last days of Mankwe as the university's satellite. There was a viewpoint that Eloff's agenda might have been to close down Mankwe and rather open a campus in Rustenburg.

But Mankwe was considered and rejected as the "Rustenburg Campus". Its location 60km from the city would require people to be bussed from Mankwe. The flow of students from Rustenburg city would therefore not be enough to sustain the campus. In addition staffing would remain a challenge. If the Mafikeng Campus battled to attract people, Mankwe would battle even more.

Meanwhile a partnership with the powerful and wealthy Bafokeng tribe was hinted at as another possibility in taking the idea forward. The Queen Mother in particular had expressed a yearning for an institution.

A facilitator during the merger relayed the following: "I spoke to the Mother there – the Queen Mother – and some of the people. They wanted to see the university there… [Because] not to give them a university you are depriving the city of its rightful, full status.[25]

"They wanted a campus. They were saying: 'This is the fastest-growing city in Africa, why don't we have a campus? Not the Mankwe Campus, but a serious university."

However, the NWU also did not explore this further, ostensibly because the Bafokeng wanted facilities but would prefer them for the exclusive use of Bafokeng students.

Eventually, following an investigation by Venter, the advice to Eloff was that the NWU's mission and vision did not provide for another campus. In fact, the university was still getting to grips with its three current campuses. It was already struggling with capacity on the existing campuses and a fourth campus would require appointing "strangers" who did not understand its aims. The message was: "We could not even manage three campuses and now we have to integrate a fourth. It would create an 'integration burden' which we cannot cope with."

Furthermore there were at least four universities already operating in the area: Tshwane University of Technology and the universities of Pretoria, Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand. In addition Orbit FET College had a campus in Rustenburg.

In a memo on April 10 2007 Eloff was advised that the NWU "should do nothing in Rustenburg".[26]

Sebokeng

Vista University was established on 1 January 1982 in terms of Act 106 of 1981. It had seven contact campuses across the country and one which provided distance education. It was created to keep black students in pursuit of higher education from relocating to urban areas.

Its Sebokeng Campus, which opened in 1984, was located in close proximity to where some of South Africa's darkest political moments played out. In Sharpeville police killed 69 people who protested against the pass laws on 21 March 1960. In Boipatong on 17 June 1992, on the eve of the transition to a negotiated multiracial democracy, hundreds of IFP members believed to be from the KwaMadala hostel attacked residents. At least 45 were massacred. If many of the staff members and students from Vista's Sebokeng Campus had a sharp political awareness their geographical location, in all likelihood, contributed.

The Vista family had the same sense of closeness as those who worked at the Vaal Triangle Campus. What differentiated them was that theirs was not an overwhelmingly white

27 August 2004
Council approves the appointment of senior management, including campus rectors. Prof Annette Combrink and Prof Piet Prinsloo becomes rectors on the Potch and the Vaal campuses respectively.

August 2004
A bosberaad is held at Santawani Indaba and plans are made to relocate staff and students from the Vista Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus by January 2005.

family but a "black, white and Indian family"[27].

Vaal and Vista Sebokeng – about 20km removed from each other – were like acquaintances who frequently spoke of becoming friends but never did.

Vista Sebokeng was one of the three higher education institutions that were part of the Vaal Higher and Further Education Consortium, where staff also had the opportunity to get to know each other and talk about the possibility of creating one university for the region. This would have pleased the education authorities, which wanted to see institutions work together, cut down on duplication and save money.

In the meantime staff members from the Sebokeng Campus and the Vaal Triangle Campus frequently swopped lecture halls, worked together on research and shared facilities to offer the same BSc degree.[28]

But in 2000 the Council on Higher Education's Size and Shape Task Team suggested that the Minister of Education investigate Vista University's unbundling. It stated that the small campuses, which generally offered humanities and education, could become part of the universities and technikons closest to them. [29]

In March 2001 Asmal duly announced Vista's unbundling. A few months later, in August, Vista University's Vice-Chancellor Prof C Tsehloane Keto made a presentation to the Ministerial NWG, stating that if Vista campuses were to become part of other institutions the campus principals could state their preferences. In terms of the Sebokeng Campus the suggestion was: "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."[30]

On 24 June 2002 a *Government Gazette* was published to say the PU for CHE would merge with the University of North-West and the Vista Sebokeng Campus would be incorporated into the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE.[31]

Although this was the preferred option, the news appeared to have introduced adversity into the relationship, with colleagues-to-be speaking of "war" and students objecting having to merge with the "racists" on the Vaal Triangle Campus. In turn, some on the Vaal Campus viewed Sebokeng as a political threat.[32]

The incorporation period would be tough. Academics, general staff, students, computer hardware and software, moveable desks, chairs and equipment in offices and lecture halls, as well the books of the library, had to move over to the Vaal Triangle Campus. Lock, stock and barrel. Only the buildings would go to the Vaal Triangle Technikon, later to be renamed the Vaal University of Technology.

There was no way out. Vista University was one of the many institutions that fell victim to the recreation of a new South African higher education landscape.

Vista's Sebokeng Campus staff had mixed feelings about their new workplace: resistance on the one hand, acceptance on the other.

One academic remembers that things at Vista were bad before the incorporation – so bad that he considered leaving academia. But the move to the Vaal Triangle Campus was a door that opened. "There was light," he recalls.

As for the people of the Vista Sebokeng Campus they, like those on all the other campuses touched by the creation of the NWU, were not united in their support for the far-reaching change that was afoot.

The students and staff of Sebokeng Campus of the former Vista University were incorporated into the Vaal Triangle Campus of the PU for CHE. The facilities and infrastructure on the campus, valued at about R42 million, were transferred to the Vaal University of Technology (VUT). This is one of the Science Park's buildings on the campus. Photo: VUT

CHAPTER 7
DENIAL, ANGER, BARGAINING, DEPRESSION AND ACCEPTANCE

"I don't want to close down Potch University", he answered. "I want Potch to help me transform those guys in Mafikeng…He had said exactly the same to Mafikeng: "I don't want to close down Unibo. I just want Unibo to help me transform those Afrikaans Boere in Potch." — Kader Asmal, Minister of Education[1]

April 2002 marked the dawn of a traumatic stretch in the historical discourses on the PU for CHE and the UNW. The managements of both universities were beginning to realise that Education Minister Prof Kader Asmal was absolutely set on merging them. The consortium model, which they had come up with and presented to him under the North-West Education and Training System (Nowets) banner, did not appear to interest him in the least.[2]

Still, pending a final announcement, hope remained alive that the status quo would be unchanged and that Asmal would realise that his actions could be seen as nothing less than social engineering.

The sword falls

On 30 May 2002 the final announcement came from Pretoria.[3] For Dr Ngoato Takalo the news came at the worst possible time.[4]

"To be honest, the first thing that came to my mind was: 'How are we going to get through this?'

Takalo had been the Vice-Chancellor at the UNW for only three years: "I was just finding my feet. We were just starting to implement a [new] strategic plan. We worked so hard to reposition ourselves and…and…and…and now the very people who were there when we were creating this new institution, now they get the news: 'Guys, what we were doing. Forget it."

The PU for CHE immediately began contemplating escape routes, believing that the consortium model and its draft-contract with the UNW (and the Minister as the third party), could serve as the basis for further discussions with Asmal. Thus in a confidential document dated June 2002, two days after Asmal's announcement, various options for the future were drafted. Titled, *Process document: PUCHE and UNW Co-operation/Merger*, it stated: "Non-acceptance of the merger and following the legal route: each institution follow its own agenda, thus they reject the merger and prepare for conflict; try to convince the Minister to accept a consortium as an alternative structure. Lastly the institutions jointly present the consortium model and accept the inevitability of one decision-making body."[5]

On 10 June, the executive management committee of the PU for CHE discussed Asmal's announcement. Eloff explained that as a consequence of the Cabinet decision, the merger decision would be gazetted shortly. The university Council was scheduled to discuss the matter on 27 June.[6]

Asmal wrote to the chairs of the PU for CHE and the UNW Councils, and then came the announcement on 21 June in *Government Gazette* No 23549. Three days later, on 24 June 2002, *Government Gazette* No 23550 addressed the PU and the UNW specifically. The reasons for the merger were comprehensively listed,[7] but the long and the short of it was this: the aim was to create a university whose staff and students, demographically, looked different from apartheid institutions; it had to open up more opportunities through a range of qualifications and improve its research output and be managed and governed better. If they accepted the plans, the two universities would have only four months – until 4 October – to respond.

26 November 2004
Council approves a Code of Conduct for Council members and decides to develop a full Code of Ethics.

2004
The NWU receives the award for the Most Progressive, Technologically Innovative University in the National Innovation Competition of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

"When I looked at it [the merger]…I felt for them. They lost twice. They lost the institution to the ANC in 1994 and now they lose the institution to Potch…to the Afrikaner. There were many instances where they felt either management or the Council is selling them out." – Dr Ngoato Takalo was the Vice-Chancellor of the UNW at the time of the merger and after the merger became the Vice-Principal of the NWU. Photo: Christiaan Kotze

On 27 June 2001 the Council of the PU for CHE faced the most difficult decision in the university's history. A "no" to Asmal would set the university on a path of conflict with the Minister that could be damaging, perhaps even self-destructive. A "yes" would mean its end – albeit a quicker, less destructive one.

Eloff recalls: "Obviously when I entered Council, I had to convince Council. They wanted to fight it [the merger] and I said it won't work. Let us not waste time and money. Let us make the best of this thing. We had a solid basis of co-operation with them (UNW], the nexus of contracts [with UNW) and CFC (van der Walt)[8] worked with those. In fact, he started with those before I arrived. I know we can do it." [9]

The Council of the PU for CHE made a radical move. It was a leap of faith. It accepted the inevitability of the merger but in a different form and with different modalities ". [10]

Dr Leon Wessels was the chair of the Council at the time. Like Eloff he was an alumnus of the PU for CHE. He was deeply aware of the magnitude of the Council decision.

"I think the Potchefstromers were focused on making this thing work because they understood the inevitability thereof…There was another element which was exciting especially after the decision was taken and that is: How many people, in their lifetime and in their careers, are involved in the establishment of a new university? It was an absolutely unique historic moment." [11]

On 12 and 13 July, the Council of the UNW followed suit.[12]

Adv Pansy Tlakula, the chair of the UNW Council, says her feelings about the merger were "irrelevant" because the instruction came from the top: "the Minister…he had already taken the decision. My view was that we had to implement the decision that was taken. That's how I felt."

So " ...the merger had to proceed. I did not think it was a matter where we had a choice," says Tlakula.

Remarkably, the councils of both universities capitulated to their own demise in less than a month. Unlike some other institutions, such as RAU, Unisa and perhaps even Medunsa, which were opposing the mergers, the people in the North-West were accepting the new institutions without a peep. Or so it seemed.[13] [14] [15]

Publicly, the institutions – in essence their councils – appeared to have done little to oppose their merger. Behind the scenes, though, the opposition at both was strong and emotional. In Potchefstroom and Mafikeng, Asmal's decree was viewed as an outright political decision to punish them for their respective histories[16]. Moreover they were located in North West, a province in which the ruling ANC, at the time, appeared to have little interest.

Ideological differences

On the UNW campus the Senate applied the brakes. A senior manager explained:

"When the merger proposal was announced I was a member of Senate…there were obvious fears about the future and the uncertainty of the whole process. Apart from the distance there was also the fear of our different backgrounds. We were generally an English-speaking university with no strong religious conditions where the Potch university was essentially an Afrikaans-speaking university with a strong Calvinistic approach. So some of our colleagues who were not at ease with that Christian background obviously raised some queries about us being swallowed into the Broederbond and all other religious issues concerning the Potchefstroom Campus. There were legitimate fears about job security…"[17]

The UNW Senate wanted the broader university community including staff, students, workers and alumni to say what it thought and present these views at a university assembly. Hence a resolution to accept the merger was only adopted on 6 September 2002 – eight weeks after the Council's initial decision.[18]

At the university assembly, the concerns of the UNW community – and the ideological differences between the universities – emerged. It wanted one unitary non-racial university, there had to be equal representation in management, and courses and fees should not disadvantage students, in particular poor students. The sticking point would clearly be language and religion and it was non-negotiable which, according to the UNW, would have the potential to block individuals' participation in education. It stated:

"In the case of the PU of CHE, it was known that language and the emphasis on Christian principles have been major obstacles to the mentioned access. Therefore, 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 be scrapped. The Alumni also submit that any emphasis on religion should be absolutely discouraged." [19]

2004
The NWU receives R13 million from the Department of Education to upgrade its IT, 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.

1 January 2005
The new NWU Vaal Triangle Campus is established and all staff and students from the Sebokeng Campus have been relocated.

De Klerk wrote: “I have vague memories of Dr Eloff asking me to discuss the then threatening merger between Potchefstroom University and the University of the North-West with the then Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal.
I recall speaking to him (Asmal) and that after this discussion I was convinced that the decision to forge such a merger was very firm and irreversible.

Obviously I conveyed the message to Dr Eloff and encouraged him to accept the inevitable and to work for a practicable merger, which would not in any way affect standards or reputation.

As an alumnus I was extremely concerned at the time when the merger was forced upon the Potchefstroom University. However, with the advantage of hindsight I am proud about the way in which the merger was negotiated and how it is being implemented.” [25]

CONCLUSIONS

38. We provide the following summary of the main conclusions in this opinion.

38.1. In terms of the Act, the Minister has the power to implement a merger between PUCHE and UNW.

38.2. Section 23 of the Act is probably not unconstitutional.

38.3. There is nothing in our instructions to indicate that the minister would act unlawfully if he were to implement the proposed merger between PUCHE and UNW after following the procedures laid down in s 23 of the Act.

WIM TRENGOVE SC

ALFRED COCKRELL

▲ The PU for CHE sought legal advice, hoping that there was an avenue to perhaps escape from its merger with the UNW. This is an extract from the legal advice obtained from Advocates Wim Trengrove (SC) and Alfred Cockrell.

The equality of the partners, language and religion would repeatedly emerge in talks with the PU for CHE and sparks would fly. Finally on 16 September the UNW Council, based on the outcome of the university assembly, agreed with the creation of a new institution. There were some preconditions. It accepted a unitary merger and rejected the creation of three independent campuses. In terms of language it accepted that the basis of the choice of language was whether it helped with access and equity and was in line with the profile of learners.

So although the merger nudged ahead, the UNW was worried about the shape the new institution might take.

Legal advice and lobbying

Back in Potchefstroom there were staff members who feared a "takeover" by UNW and the inevitable loss of its Christian character and "Puk" trademark. These were the hard-fought hallmarks of the PU for CHE. Afrikaans was another.

As in Mafikeng it was the PU for CHE Senate that pushed back. In fact, the PU for CHE Senate was enraged by the Council's "in principle acceptance of the inevitability of the merger, but in a different form and with different modalities".

According to the Senate the "in principle decision" was "premature" and it appointed a task team to investigate the proposed merger. The task team recommended a functional configuration as a model for the PU for CHE and the UNW to collaborate. Functional configuration would amount to a uniquely relevant combination of co-operation, merging and the creation of something new. One thing the Senate was very clear about: It did not support a unitary merger. It also wanted the Council to ask Asmal for a more relaxed timeframe.[20]

The Senate "insists on being kept informed continuously in the course of the further handling of this matter and in working out its practical implications. The Senate recommends to Management and Council in their further handling of this matter that they be guided by specialised legal advice from a top legal practitioner."[21]

In this time Eloff was also active behind the scenes.

He had also already told his management committee about the university's options: a legal (the Minister has no

1 January 2005
Prof Dan Kgwadi is appointed Mafikeng Campus Rector.

14 April 2005
Molefe and Eloff are inaugurated.

right to merge us) or a political remedy (the Minister has to be convinced not to merge).

"We obtained legal advice from a senior advocate who said there was no legal escape. I then decided to tell the Council: 'Let us turn our predicament into an opportunity, move as quickly as we can and retain the initiative – as the Puk, but also as the new university."[22]

Interestingly, the PU for CHE treated the legal opinion as an internal document. It was not shared with the UNW.[23]

Another possibility was a political route similar to former President Nelson Mandela's phone call to Asmal to save the University of Transkei. In this instance Eloff called former President FW de Klerk, an alumnus of the PU for CHE (see page 83).[24]

But there is evidence of wider lobbying by the management committee of the PU for CHE. The name of the Minister in the Presidency, Essop Pahad, comes up repeatedly, which explains his comment at the cocktail party when he confronted Asmal about the NWU merger (see Chapter 1). But Pahad, when contacted, could not recall any involvement in the lobbying.[26]

A document titled, *The report of the national working group on the restructuring of the higher education sector – feedback on the current state of affairs*, states that representatives of the university, who were not named, had discussions with "the following persons". They were Asmal, Pahad, Saki Macozoma, convenor of the National Working Group, Ngconde Balfour, Minister of Sport, as well as Sanette Boshoff and Eben Boshoff, respectively a director and a legal advisor in the Department of Education.

The outcome, according to the document, reads as follows: "With the possible exception of Minister Balfour, the others agreed that the Cabinet will accept the principle of restructuring and most parts of the report. The current efforts to lobby against the report are mainly on ANC provincial level and will generally not be successful."

Saki Macozoma's point of view regarding the position of the Puk is briefly that a single university for the North West Province is something that is unavoidable, but that it will have three campuses of equal status (Potchefstroom, Mmabatho and Vanderbijlpark), with eventually one central administration (probably in Potchefstroom). Such a system will ensure that each campus retains its own character with general fields (such as the Arts) on all three campuses, and with specific centres of excellence that will not be duplicated among the campuses. This is a federal model and is more strongly centralised than the current plan for structured co-operation with the UNW. The timeframe according to him might even have been as long as eight years, but with specific aims to be achieved during the period. The interim Council would for the first period (approximately 2-3 years) not replace the current councils but would guide the process in an over-arching fashion.

The report states that Asmal at the time was "fully open to a federal model, with the retention of the own identity of each campus but with a central administration and one principal. However, he also felt that there would have to be a 'sub-administration' on each campus."[27]

Evidently Eloff did not manage to undo the merger, but he did have the political clout to convince Asmal and his senior department officials to allow the PU for CHE and the UNW to shape their own merger.

Eloff's political profile, combined with his understanding of transition, was seen as instrumental in the crafting of the NWU's unusual management model.

In the end, there was no escape route. He had to lead the PU for CHE into the unknown, uncharted territory of a university merger.

A request from the church

Eloff did not only pursue legal and political avenues. He also spoke to church leaders.

Again, he had no success. He said: "From personal conversations with the leaders of the major churches it was clear that although there was sympathy for the PU for CHE nobody was willing to support us in a public fight to oppose the merger and retain the PU for CHE."[28]

But the original founders of the PU for CHE, in a submission to Asmal, asked that the merger decision be reconsidered.

The Curatorium of the Theological School of the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (GKSA), as the official representative of the original founders of the PU for CHE, made the following proposal: "We respectfully request the Minister not to implement his proposal of a unitary merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW. We should appreciate it if the two universities could be given the opportunity to continue with the negotiations and discussions among themselves and with the Ministry of

15 April 2005
The Council approves the draft NWU vision, values and mission.

May 2005
The NWU accepts a composition called "Bless O Lord Bless our Mother" by Awie van Wyk with lyrics in English, Afrikaans and Tswana as the university anthem.

"The history of the PU for CHE from 1869 to 2004 reveals the battle and the effort to be a Christian University. This is why the merger and the official closure of a Christian university was for many a traumatic experience and a decision based entirely on political considerations."
– Prof Dries du Plooy, School of Theology and a former member of the NWU Council
Photo: Nico Blignaut

Education so as to find solutions which would satisfy all the parties involved."[29]

The Minister did not reply.[30]

Based on documentation and interviews the PU for CHE, despite its public acquiescence to the merger, tried much harder than the UNW to escape it. Its efforts, however, were hush-hush – seemingly it did not want to alert the UNW about the opposition to the merger and derail the forward momentum to merge.

Still, many staff members harshly criticised the strategy of management. From their vantage points, the efforts to save the university and its Christian name were meek.

The basis on which the councils of both the PU for CHE and the UNW rather swiftly accepted the merger appears to be the false impression they had that the Minister could be swayed to accept their version of a consortium model. In other words, they hoped a cosmetic union would appease Asmal's appetite for sweeping transformation.

They were wrong.

Eventually, after the feedback from the structures on the PU for CHE campus, including the Institutional Forum, the Convocation and the Senate (and its investigation), they supported the Council decision with certain reservations, the most important being concern over the Christian ethos of the university.[31]

On 20 September, the Council took note that the university's management had now consulted all stakeholders, set up a joint restructuring team with the UNW and drafted a consensus document on the way forward. This was accepted as the basis for a meeting with the Council of the UNW on 21 September.[32]

The PU for CHE's conditions for merging were that the new institutions should be managed well, have high standards and be financially viable. It also wanted the new institution to continue to be an attractive place to study, which required, amongst others, that its current support base (and branding) be retained. The PU for CHE was cautious in formulating its expectations of the future institutional culture and ethos. It stated that there should be "a 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".[33]

On 1 October 2002 the UNW and the PU for CHE made a submission to the Ministry. Tlakula, chair of the UNW Council, and Wessels, her counterpart at PU for CHE, signed a joint proposal that a comprehensive multi-campus university would be established.[34]

To get the work done, the Council of the PU for CHE approved three committees at its meeting of 28 November: the Joint Senate Committee which would focus on academic matters of both institutions; the Joint Operational Team (JOT), which would deal with management issues, and the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC), which would represent both councils and which had to lead the way in communication with the government.[35]

A few days later, on 9 December, Asmal presented his next deadline to managers in Mafikeng and Potchefstroom who were still shell-shocked at the speed at which their worlds were being overturned.[36]

His pressure was brutal.

Before June 2003 – less than six months away – he wanted the merging institutions to present him with a new name for the merged institution, an address, a date of birth and the names of possible Council members.

Tough talks were ahead.

As far as I could establish the UNW did not lobby politically to stop the merger. What complicated the matter was that the idea came from the democratic government. Some staffers felt they would be disloyal to reject the merger outright. They said: "No, you cannot be against your government."

Takalo captures her feelings at the time: "Sometimes my heart was sore. I was not resisting the merger, but I also felt a sense of loss.[37]

She says she felt like she had been building a new institution.

But others were forthright. They condemned what they saw as a potential "takeover". Moreover they felt they were being sold out to the Boers in Potch.

A senior academic at Mafikeng remembers the suspicions: "White Afrikaners. Boere. It comes from the apartheid era. Only 10 years have passed [since democracy]".[38]

Another remembers the polarised positions: "There was resistance to the merger, that is what I know. Then there was always the unions and they were driving their people and they were saying no to the merger."[39]

In time the defiance against the merger would become more public and more intense.

This merger had to be shaped and steered by a small but

8 August 2005
The NWU Statute is published in the *Government Gazette*.

21 and 26 October 2005
Kgwadi, Rector of Mafikeng Campus, meets with students of the Mankwe Campus to discuss the closure of the campus.

valiant band of people on both sides who committed vast amounts of physical and mental energy to create a new institution. They were to drive this project relentlessly. Simply put, the strategy was to keep ahead of the merger-makers in Pretoria, to keep the momentum, to limit uncertainty and to prevent interruptions in the day-to-day university business.

Eloff recorded the plan in unpublished notes dated November 2003. His strategy was based on input from his colleagues and would guide the talks as they continued to create a new institution.[40]

■■■

ELOFF'S UNEDITED STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CREATING THE NWU

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MERGER PROCESS BETWEEN PUCHE AND UNW — NOVEMBER 2003: UNPUBLISHED NOTES BY T ELOFF.

1. Background and introduction

1.1 The merger was not the first choice of either University, but after having realised that it was a legal and political fait accompli, both Councils decided to go ahead as soon as possible.

1.2 The main reasons for this decision were:

1.2.1 Nothing was to be gained by dragging feet.

1.2.2 Human beings prefer to accept things they are certain about (even if they don't like them) to being subject to prolonged uncertainty.

1.2.3 Both universities are vulnerable to uncertainty in terms of student enrolments and staff mobility.

1.2.4 Any benefits the merger might result in would be destroyed by a long transition period and prolonged uncertainty (this was confirmed in discussions with DIT (Durban Institute of Technology) on their experience in this regard).

1.2.5 The discussions and emerging co-operation around the concept of a memorandum of agreement on structured co-operation that preceded the merger announcement resulted in a measure of trust that did not exist between other merging partners. This could be utilized in the negotiations on the merger, but it was necessary to keep the momentum going in this regard.

1.3 In the merger negotiations, consensus was therefore reached on the desirability to limit the uncertainty as far as possible.

1.4 Consensus was also reached that certain issues should be resolved speedily, while others should be dealt with after the establishment of the new university and the appointment of its senior management.

1.5 The issues that should be resolved speedily were those issues on which buy-in was necessary from the present stakeholders, especially but not only, the two present councils. These included the four issues on which the Minister wanted a decision by 30 June 2003 (the name, address, starting date and interim council members), but also the following:

1.5.1 The management model for the new multi-campus university (given the geographical distance between the different campuses).

1.5.2 The composition of the first council, both in terms of categories and individuals.

1.5.3 The statute for the new university.

1.5.4 The language policy of the new university.

1.5.5 The value system of the new university.

1.5.6 The broad Programme and Qualification mix of the new university.

1.5.7 A compatibility study on the different systems, processes and policies of the two universities.

1.5.8 Business plans for 2004 to integrate these where applicable and/or to establish new policies and processes where applicable.

1.6 Obviously, it was understood right from the start that, although the present two councils could reach agreement on these issues, the new full council would have the right (and indeed responsibility) finally to decide on any of these issues (and others). But with the buy-in from the councils (and with that, other stakeholders) the merger would have a much better chance of being successful and sustainable.

1.7 The issues that should be left to the new council and the new management included the following:

1.7.1 A mission and vision for the new university, as well as a medium term strategic plan.

1.7.2 The exact management structures and philosophy.

1.7.3 The nature of academic governance and faculty structures.

1.7.4 The integration of systems and processes, as well as the agreement on uniform policies for the new university.

1.7.5 The academic rules in terms of which students would enrol in 2005 (for practical reasons, it was decided to keep the present academic rules for 2004 enrolment).

1.7.6 A medium term strategy to achieve the specific goals set for this merger, e.g. building of administrative, management and research capacity.

1.7.7 A marketing, communications and branding strategy for the new university, based upon the vision, mission and strategic plan.

1.8 It must be pointed out that the ministry itself has stated on several occasions that the merger process would take between 5 and 7 years to complete. The above issues would receive attention in a systematic and phased manner.

In his unpublished notes of November 2003, Eloff went on to consider the role that the Interim Council would play in setting the scene for the full Council.

2. The role of the Interim Council and its lifespan

As a consequence of the above, it was agreed to limit the lifetime of the Interim Council to the shortest possible time. The ministerial regulations stipulate the maximum term for the Interim Council (6 months, with the possibility to extend to 12 months), but no minimum term. The goal was therefore set to make the term of the Interim Council as brief as possible. This would result in limiting uncertainty, because while the Interim Council was in place, no permanent senior management could be appointed, no statute could be agreed – in brief, none of the issues mentioned in paragraph 1.7 above could be attended to.

If however, the preparatory work for the issues listed in paragraph 1.5 above could be done before the formal date of the merger, the Interim Council would complete its formal work (as stipulated by the ministerial regulations) in a very short time. The formal work of the Interim Council include ensuring a smooth transition, appointing an interim management, constituting the new council and preparing the draft statute for consideration by the new Council.

The two Universities therefore decided that the Interim Council would meet during 2003 a number of times as Interim Council elect (as allowed by the Merger Guidelines) to address the issues mentioned in paragraph 1.5, and at its first formal meeting on 5 January 2004, would ratify this work formally, and complete any other legal obligations it has. This would open the way for the new Council to be constituted on 16 January 2004 and at its first meeting do at the least the following:

- Accept the draft statute and submit it to the minister for his approval.
- Decide on a process and procedure to appoint senior management.
- Receive reports on various transitional issues from the Interim Management and take the necessary decisions. (It must also be pointed out that the two 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. This Joint Management Committee consists of the present two senior managements, and co-chaired by the two Vice-Chancellors) and would probably be appointed as the Interim Management by the Interim Council Elect on 5 December 2003.

The benefit of this process is that, by the time that the students (including first years) arrive, the new University would have been legally established, its Council constituted, a draft statute accepted and a process of appointing senior management agreed. This would be an invaluable and highly symbolic signal to the various stakeholders that both Council and management are serious to make the merger a success. The motivating force of such a process could also not be underestimated.

Next, Eloff pondered the processes and timeframes associated with setting up the new university's governance structures.

3. Legality of processes to establish the necessary structures of the New University (NU)

3.1 The question could then be asked: could all this be done in line with the legal framework for mergers? This question is especially relevant against the background of the fact that the Department of Education has made provision for a Standard Institutional Statute (SIS) to come into power on 1 January 2004 for all institutions merging on that date. The SIS would apply to all new institutions that have not yet made a statute. The SIS furthermore contains stipulations on how Councils, senates and other relevant bodies should be constituted and what their composition would be.

3.2 The "normal" procedure for a merger would therefore be to have the Interim Council come into being, constitute the senate and other bodies and out of these compose the permanent Council. This however, has the following implications:

3.2.1 The process to constitute the different stakeholder bodies would take considerable time and defeat the object of a short period of uncertainty mentioned above.

3.2.2 The senate would especially be problematic, as the SIS stipulates that all professors should be part of the senate. This (and the other members according to the SIS) would make the senate of the new university unwieldy (over 200 members), and to convene a meeting of such a senate over the distances between the different campuses would not only be time consuming, but also very costly.

3.2.3 The same applies to the convocation, out of which 3 members of the new council must be elected.

3.3 To take these issues into account and ensure a legally correct process, the following was agreed to by the Interim Council Elect:

3.3.1 The two managements put processes in motion through which the two designates in the respective council categories “Other academic” and “Non-academic staff” will be determined by 14 November 2003.[1] As this applies to all staff in those categories, the SIS does not present any problems.

3.3.2 The SRCs were requested to determine who the different appointees for that category would be, by end November 2003. As the SRCs would also be in place under the SIS, this also does not represent a problem.

3.3.3 All persons eligible to be members of the senate in terms of the SIS, were requested to nominate persons to be the senate appointees on the NU’s Council, and elections for those four members were held after nominations had been received, by each present senate. This process has already been completed. It should be noted that the SIS only allows 2 appointees from senate and this differs from the agreement reached by the two universities. To overcome this difficulty, only two members will be formally appointed in that category, and the other two will be made members of the new council (until the new statute is adopted by the full council and gazetted by the Minister) in the SIS category “co-opted members”.

3.3.4 The two managements put processes in motion to determine the appointees of the Convocation and Alumni (in line with the SIS and HEA provisions). This was done through newspaper advertisements and written communications to the present convocation members (as agreed by the Department). Each university would put forward its two names, but only three would become members in terms of the SIS, while the other would become a member of the new council in terms of the category “Co-opted members”. This process should be completed by end November 2003.

3.3.5 The two managements put processes in motion to determine the appointees in the agreed category “Community Leaders/Original Founders”, each according to its own criteria. This process should be completed by end November 2003.

3.3.6 The two managements would put potential names for council membership to the meeting of the Interim Council Elect to be held on 14 November 2003 in the following categories:

3.3.6.1 Private sector investors

3.3.6.2 Ministerial appointees

3.3.6.3 Special expertise

3.3.7 The IC Elect would then, according to the agreement reached between the two councils in June 2003, determine by consensus which names would be put to the Minister as ministerial appointees, and who the 5 (4+) private sector and special expertise appointees would be. The latter would become members of the new council in terms of the SIS category “co-opted members”. The IC Elect would also submit to the Minister the recommended names of the five ministerial appointees.

3.3.8 This means that by end November the names of the full council would have been determined (with the accompanying buy-in from the different stakeholders). This only excludes the names of two members of management on the Council (the Vice-Chancellor and vice-principal).

3.3.9 This means that, by end November, the following 28 (twenty eight) members of the new Council of the North-West University would have been agreed by the two Councils and the Interim Council Elect (obviously, the Interim Council would have to ratify this and other processes at its meeting of 5 January 2004):

3.3.9.1 Senate appointees (4, of which 2 would be "co-opted" in terms of the SIS)

3.3.9.2 Other academic (2)

3.3.9.3 Non-academic (2)

3.3.9.4 Students (2)

3.3.9.5 Convocation and alumni (4, of which one would be "co-opted" in terms of the SIS)

3.3.9.6 Community Leaders/Original Founders (4)

3.3.9.7 Ministerial appointees (5)

3.3.9.8 Private sector investors/donors (4, to be "co-opted" in terms of the SIS)

3.3.9.9 Special expertise (1, co-opted in terms of the SIS)

3.3.10 Finally, it should be pointed out that according to SIS 10(1) council members are elected in the manner determined by the Interim Council (IC). In practical terms this means that "draft"[2] rules for electing the NHEI council members should be made beforehand (by the Joint Management Committee, for approval by the Interim Council Elect and endorsement by the PUCHE and UNW councils), for ratification by the IC in its first meeting on 5 January 2004. The election of provisional members should take place in terms of the "draft" rules, for ratification by the IC at its first meeting. The "draft" rules for electing/appointing Councillors in the various categories should be submitted to the IC Elect on 5 December 2003. The election/appointment of provisional North-West University Councillors in terms of those rules should therefore be completed by 5 December 2003."

Since the statute of the new university would be the cornerstone of its existence, Eloff dwelt at length on the making of the draft statute.

4. The making of the Draft Statute for the NU

4.1 Principles underlying the draft statute

4.1.1 Agreement was reached between the two Councils on the principles underlying the draft statute. The following principles were accepted:

4.1.1.1 The draft statute should be premised on the King II principle of governance by council (as opposed to management). This means that Council, after having agreed to the statute and the structures and procedures therein, should not unduly interfere with the management of the University, but govern through specific mechanisms, such as plans and budgets.

4.1.1.2 The draft statute should, in describing management structures and processes also follow a modern, managerial approach and not an outdated and inflexible approach (e.g. of management by committee or a very large senate).

4.1.1.3 The draft statute should follow what can be called a "minimalist approach", i.e. it should not prescribe in a legalistic manner every detail of university life. Rather, it should give broad (but clear) guidelines. For example, the draft statute should follow the principle that no one should be able to appoint anyone reporting directly to him/her, but that that decision should rest (with a recommendation by or in or after consultation with the supervisor) with

the supervisor's direct line manager. This means that council should appoint the VC and those reporting directly to him/her, but that the VC and other relevant levels of management should appoint persons below the position of Rector of a campus. This principle also applies to accountability: although the VC is ultimately the "chief accountable officer", every employee should be accountable to his/her line manager.

4.1.1.4 With relation to academic structures, the draft statute should use a broader rather than narrower approach, giving the NU the flexibility to explore all possible and the most effective route to follow to evolve these structures.

4.1.2 Other principles contained in the statute include the following:

4.1.2.1 Unity in terms of policies, procedures and systems.

4.1.2.2 Campuses managed as business units.

4.1.2.3 Bodies and committees at institutional level are, where necessary, supported by sub-committees at campus level. For example, the one senate would be supported by campus senate (standing) committees.

4.2 Process and time frames for the making of the Draft Statute

The process and time frames by which the Draft Statute was agreed, were as follows:

4.2.1 The two managements accepted the principles underlying the statute.

4.2.2 The Joint Oversight Committee (a joint committee of the two Councils) agreed to these principles and appointed a small committee to produce the first draft of the statute for the meeting of the Interim Council Elect at the end of October 2003.

4.2.3 The different stakeholders (staff, convocation, SRCs, Institutional Forums and senates) were informed of this process and requested to give their inputs. This was done, and the respective senates (for instance) considered and accepted the draft statute before the middle of October 2003,

4.2.4 The Interim Council Elect considered this and tasked a subcommittee to finalise the draft statute and submit it to the Department of Education's legal section before 7 November 2003. This was done.

4.2.5 The draft statute, as amended, should then be accepted by the two councils before the end of November 2003 and forwarded to the meeting of the Interim Council of 5 January 2004. It could then be recommended by the IC to the first meeting of the full council.

4.2.6 The council will adopt the statute at its first meeting, and would immediately send it to the Minister, who can consider and (if successful), gazette it as soon as possible (probably within two weeks).

Finally, Eloff ended his notes with a brief assurance of the good spirit between the two merging universities and the expectation that the merger process would receive the blessing of the Ministry.

5. Conclusion

The two universities, merging in good faith and with enthusiasm, are therefore of the opinion that from both a governance and management point of view, the process as designed and accepted by both Councils and the Interim Council Elect is the best option for the new North-West University.

We hope that we can depend on the full and constructive co-operation of the Department of Education and the Ministry to bring this first phase of the merger to its successful completion.

CHAPTER 8
TALKS, TALKS, TALKS…

"We didn't make the tough decisions that we should've made…"
— Litha Nyhonyha, member of the UNW Council and later chairperson of the NWU Council.[1]

By 30 June 2003, Kader Asmal wanted a package of decisions from each of the universities and technikons he was merging: an address or institutional seat; a name; a chairperson and the members of the Interim Council, as well as the date on which the new higher education institution (NHEI) should be established.[2] If institutions failed to comply timeously Asmal would intervene. The threat of ministerial involvement intimidated the majority of the merging institutions into compliance.

Similarly the UNW and the PU for CHE had barely come to terms with their union when they had to agree on some fundamentals of their coming together. Although some of the envoys sent to the negotiating table knew each other, this did not mean they trusted each other. In fact, despite their best intentions the subtext of the merger meetings was: protect your own interests – a strategy bound to bring volatility into the boardroom. A wrong word on either side could literally set in motion the total disintegration of the unhappy merger. Given the challenge ahead, the PU for CHE and the UNW pushed their most experienced negotiators to the frontline.

The three committees set up to make the merger happen had to seek consensus on three levels: the political, the organisational and operational, and lastly the academic. While the Joint Oversight Committee and Joint Senate Committee played pivotal roles in the merger, it was probably the Joint Operational Team (JOT) which was at the vanguard of the talks. On the PU for CHE side were Eloff, Chris van der Walt, Maarten Venter, Wilma Viviers and Frans du Preez. UNW was represented by Takalo, Motsei Modise, Claudia Pietersen, Dan Setsetse, Debra Baletseng and Stephen Langtry.[3]

More meetings followed. Those who were present at some of these talks describe them as "difficult", "emotional", "turbulent".[4] [5] Still, these same negotiators became the power-brokers who were instrumental in helping the NHEI muscle its way through and around much of the political debris that could potentially derail its birth.

Pansy Tlakula and Leon Wessels, the leaders of the two Councils and co-chairs of the Joint Oversight Committee, were influential in this respect. The two advocates both had prior relationships with the universities they were representing. They understood what was at stake for the institutions. Wessels had studied at the PU for CHE whereas Tlakula had taught at the UNW from 1983 to 1995. Tlakula and Wessels trusted each other and could calmly disagree, thus lowering the temperature at many of the fiery meetings.

Tlakula did not know Wessels personally until they worked together at the Human Rights Commission in 2000 and 2001, and together criss-crossed the country to investigate issues of racism. Wessels believes that throughout the time they worked together there was never any crisis of confidence.

In terms of the merger, Wessels says he and Tlakula told each other in private: "It does not matter what we do; neither of us dare get involved in something which would not endure the test of constitutionality. So, we did not want to quickly put a deal together which would please everyone, but which we felt, would not be sustainable in terms of constitutional expectations and which one would like to subject to public scrutiny."[6]

Tlakula confirms the solid working relationship between her and Wessels. This is expressed in the names they have for each other: "Malome" and "Rakgadi" (see page 96).[7]

Tlakula was later tipped to become the chairperson of the Interim Council of the NHEI. She had a sharp focus on transformation and the integration of the campuses involved

1 November 2005
Eloff is met by angry students in Mankwe protesting about turning their campus into a Further Education and Training College (FET). FETs have been renamed Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

2005
The NWU Centre for Text Technology (CtexT) pulls together a team of 30 academics and developers from the University of Pretoria and Unisa to launch a spell checker for documents written in Tswana, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho and Afrikaans.

Adv Pansy Tlakula was the chairperson of the UNW Council as the merger unfolded. Her counterpart on the PU for CHE side was Adv Leon Wessels. Together they helped to lower the temperature at many fiery meetings. Photo: Christiaan Kotze

Malome and Rakgadi

Merger negotiators Pansy Tlakula and Leon Wessels, both advocates, became friends when they worked for the Human Rights Commission. Their friendship also found expression in the names they use for each other.

"He calls me 'Rakgadi' and I call him 'Malome'. You see in African tradition and culture my Mother's brother – my Uncle - is a very special person in the family. When I get married, I have to consult him. There may be a number of siblings my Mother may have but the oldest Malome is very special. We call all of them Malome. So that is why I call him Malome. He is like my Mother's brother. He is my Uncle. Then he calls me Rakgadi. That is the opposite. Like my Father's sister – my Aunt – is a very special person. I have one Aunt. We call her Rakgadi. Among all the Black cultures, whether it is Zulu or Xhosa, the man on the one side and the woman on the other side, are very special. So he calls me Rakgadi. It is like his Father's sister. And I call him Malome. It is like my Mother's brother. So that is what we call each other." – Pansy Tlakula

in the merger. But Asmal did not accept her nomination. He believed, given her responsibilities as Chief Electoral Officer at the IEC, which had to administer an election in 2004, she might not be able to focus her attention adequately.[8]

"After the Minister has discussed the matter with Advocate Tlakula, other possibilities will probably have to be investigated," the JOC minutes state.

In the Metalbox

The JOC meetings happened at unholy hours and in uninspiring venues.

"And then some of them dragged on for very long," recalls Stephen Langtry, who was office manager for the Vice-Chancellor at the UNW at the time. "And I remember Leon[9] once telling me – we had dinner after one of the meetings – and he said: "One day when you think about this I hope you will think about the good things and not just the bad view from the windows."[10]

Wessels was referring to the view from the 13th floor of the Metalbox Centre, a 24-storey concrete high-rise situated at 25 Owl Street in Johannesburg. The JOC used a boardroom of the National Business Initiative as a neutral space for its meetings.

"It [the boardroom] really had an awful view – the hotel[11] on the one side and a very shady part of Auckland Park on the other side," says Langtry.

The talks about Asmal's key points progressed at a sluggish pace. The partners agreed to take decisions based on consensus but this was tough. Proposals frequently had to be taken back to the campuses to obtain buy-in.[12]

After all, the issues under discussion touched the heart and the soul of each of the campuses – their names; their struggles to survive; their dreams for the future.

Asmal's deadline – 30 June – was approaching fast. At a JOT meeting on 7 April 2003, the lack of progress prompted the scheduling of a *bosberaad* for representatives from the two universities to attend to the critical issues on which progress had to be made.[13]

A breakthrough was urgently needed.

Hornets Nest

The walk-out by Eloff was unexpected. It caught even some members of the Potch delegation off guard. Prof Wilma Viviers had several piles of paper neatly lined up in front of her. This was a habit of hers. She had to have all her documents – her preparation for meetings – at hand. But when the PU for CHE's JOT team left the room it took so much time to gather her stuff together that Mafikeng probably thought she was siding with them.

"I did not know what the strategy was," she says.[14]

2005
The Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Centre at Mafikeng collaborates with the DST, the University of Limpopo, the University of Venda and the SA Qualification Authority to establish a Bachelor of Indigenous Systems degree.

2005
An agreement is reached with the provincial Department of Education on the future of the Mankwe Campus. The Department is to take over a sizeable portion of the campus for FET courses.

"And I remember Leon once telling me – we had dinner after one of the meetings – and he said: 'One day when you think about this I hope you will think about the good things and not just the bad view from the windows.' " – Stephen Langtry, UNW negotiator recalls gatherings in the so-called Metalbox Centre in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. Photo: Steven Bosch

She was representing the PU for CHE in the JOT, which had checked in at the Hunters Rest Mountain Resort just outside the city of Rustenburg from 21 to 23 April 2003. An agreement on an institutional seat, a name and Council members remained elusive.

The author (anonymous) of a draft document which served for discussion at the JOT meeting on 21 April stated: "The two universities are now at a crucial time in the negotiations process. We do not have the luxury of an indefinite time frame, and must make progress towards the establishment of the NHEI on 1 January 2004."

It then calls for agreement on the "big picture" and given this integrated approach, that the "serious obstacles" be taken into account. The "possible serious obstacles to a sustainable negotiated solution and related matters identified" were: the management seat and institutional head office, the nature and names of the different campuses, the categories and composition of the new Council, the institutional culture and ethos and the character of the different campuses, the language policy of the NHEI and the scope for language variety on the different campuses, the Chancellor and the chairperson of Council.[15]

At the gathering the negotiators from both universities were acutely aware of the pressure on them to find each other. Still, things went horribly wrong. Emotions boiled over. Conflict flared up and Hunters Rest was appropriately renamed Hornets Nest.

Frans du Preez, Eloff's right-hand man, was there as part of the secretariat. According to him the management of the PU for CHE arrived with a "clever plan" they had hatched during their own *bosberaad* at Inyala Game Lodge. The thing was this, he says: "…our core business had to remain strong; we could not compromise.

"Hence we worked out that model placing the head office in Mafikeng, the Vice-Chancellor in Mafikeng, but Theuns becomes the chief operating officer and he is in Potch. It was actually quite out of the box. Theuns would have looked after [the core] business and we offered them the seat and all in a symbolic gesture."

"And next thing our teams went to Hunters Rest and we put that thing on the table. There was a massive backlash."[16]

Langtry, on the Mafikeng side, remembers how at some point during the meeting, relations deteriorated to the extent where no-one was talking to anyone.

"I recall the facilitators – whose names I cannot remember – asking us to come outside, after one of the very strong sessions – and stand in a circle and hold hands. And everyone on the Potch side except CFC[17] refused to come out. CFC came out to join us. Theuns and everyone else did not want to talk to us. They did not want to touch our hands. That was probably the worst moment. It was odd that CFC came out. I guess he was just being Christian."[18]

Van der Walt recalls the acrimony. He says he simply fell back on the relationships emanating from Nowets. The circle was a moment to strengthen these - and it did.

The blow-up that prompted Eloff's walkout seemed to have followed another discussion about whether the coming together of the UNW and the PU for CHE was a "takeover" or a "merger". These debates, according to those who were part of the process, often regressed into a comparison of numbers and then, based on that, whether the institutions were really equals.

Eloff got annoyed and said, "You tell me we are equals. What nonsense!", before walking out. This was oil on the fire, but also part of Eloff's strategy to make a stand. He became the bad guy. Van der Walt the good guy.[19]

Following the volatile Hornets Nest *bosberaad*, the JOT reported that the discussions were "extremely difficult".

The PU for CHE wanted to "have an integrated solution for these complex issues". Concessions, therefore, were part of a bigger picture and if one of the issues was not addressed to the satisfaction of both parties, the whole proposal had to be revisited. In contrast, the view of the UNW was that the issues were not interrelated and should therefore be dealt with separately. In other words, talks on the name should not be part of talks on the institutional seat.[20]

But the deeper more fundamental difference between the two partners resurfaced: how the new university should be organised. Earlier the UNW university assembly called for a unitary institution. The PU for CHE opposed a unitary structure with a centralised management system. It would be unpractical, unaffordable, unsustainable.

In the submission Potch made at Hunters Rest, the structure that was coming to the fore had various campuses and an institutional head office – a precursor to the current three-campus model. In contrast, the UNW was concerned that the recommendation from the PU for CHE would mean that Potchefstroom would remain a "white campus" and Mafikeng a "black campus" – thus maintaining the status quo under a different guise. It wanted to obtain "substantive

2 March 2006
The Executive Committee of the Council requests mediator Eric Mafuna to assist them in resolving friction between Council and Senate.

March 2006
Chaos engulfs Mafikeng Campus when students of the South African Students Congress and the ANC Youth League burn tyres at the gate. Seven are arrested and 15 others are suspended.

transformation and integration" through the merger.

The UNW did not want to create two separate institutions within a single organisation and was in favour of a single administration with the seat at one of the two institutions or at a neutral venue. It wanted one headquarters where one CEO would be at the helm.

The PU for CHE response was: "If the approach were to be followed that there should be one headquarters for the NHEI, the obvious choice would be Potchefstroom." [21]

Following the bosberaad [22], deadlock loomed large.

Strangely enough, though, Hornets Nest appeared to be the turning point that was desperately needed.

Back-and-forth

On 22 October 2003 Asmal announced the names of some of the government creations that were due to be established the following year: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of Limpopo, Tshwane University of Technology.

In most instances these names were arrived at after much trepidation.

A combination of factors such as the loss of international brand recognition, deeply rooted emotional attachments to existing names and outright refusal to change a name preceded his declaration. For an institution such as Unisa, which claimed a global footprint, a court battle was preferable to being named the Open Learning University of South Africa by Asmal.[23]

Then there were the guidelines for picking a name. Asmal was not in favour of using the names of people but several institutions did just that.

The University of Transkei became the Walter Sisulu University of Science and Technology and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, in choosing a name, took advantage of the fact that the greater Port Elizabeth metropolitan area also carried Madiba's name. It argued therefore that it was naming the institution after the metropolitan area and not the person.

Asmal also announced a name for the new institution being created through the coming together of the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of North-West: "North-West University" – remarkably similar to the name "University of North-West".

This was no coincidence.

The decision about the new name for the NHEI became entwined with the choice of its institutional seat – in line with what the PU for CHE was asking for. It wanted decisions to be part of a "bigger picture", presumably to create more space for deal making.

The PU for CHE wanted the institutional seat to be in Potchefstroom, but UNW was not going to take this lying down.

There was a strong lobby that wanted the address of the NHEI to be in Mafikeng. Tlakula, one of the most forceful proponents for locating the new head office in Mafikeng, was motivated by the need for change: "[W]e could only achieve [change] if the headquarters of the university became Mafikeng. That was for me fundamental… Only by doing so, you would … achieve real integration and transformation and I put it on the table that failure to do so would result in two institutions running parallel: one for black people in Mafikeng; the other one for predominantly white Afrikaans people in Potchefstroom. I think that's what the merger did not achieve [transformation and integration] and what it was meant to achieve." [24]

The UNW argued further that if it could not have the seat it would rather opt for neutral ground. Locating the institutional seat somewhere between the two universities in a town such as Ventersdorp, Coligny or Lichtenburg was discussed as a way of advantaging neither the PU for CHE nor UNW. The possibility of a helicopter to fly staff both ways was also mentioned as a way to simplify travel between campuses.[25] However, such an arrangement would still have necessitated a choice between Potch and Mafikeng.

On Friday and Saturday, 23 and 24 May 2003 – a month after Hornets Nest - another meeting was held at the Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg about the "obstacles" in deciding matters such as the seat, the name and the members of the Council.

While the decision on the name was postponed to the next meeting, an unexpected breakthrough happened on another front. "We were in the meeting and we were talking and everybody was arguing and then it was the tea break. And then we come back from the tea break, out of the blue, the one group throws in the towel and says the institutional office should be in Potch."

This recollection by one of the Mafikeng delegates is confirmed by the minutes of the JOT meeting: "The proposal by the UNW delegation, which had been derived at after lengthy deliberations, that the seat and address of the new

26 March 2006
Council approves the draft Institutional Plan, 2006 – 2008.

5 May 2006
In a letter to all chairpersons and councils, Education Minister Naledi Pandor expresses her concern about the confusion over the respective roles and responsibilities of some councils and managements because it affects the efficient functioning of universities.

The NWU's Institutional Office – popularly known as "C1" or "Institutional" – is in Potchefstroom and a block away from the Potchefstroom Campus. During merger talks the towns of Coligny and Lichtenburg were named as possible seats for the Institutional Office.
Photo: Elrie Visser

institutions be located at the Potchefstroom Campus." This was followed by: "Appreciation expressed by the PU for CHE delegation, who viewed the proposal as real movement which would go a long way." [26]

The surprising concession suggested that there must have been some trade-off. Who the dealmakers were is not clear. But the name of Satish Roopa, who was on the PU for CHE Council, comes up.

Indeed the agreement is written up in the minutes of a special meeting of the UNW Council held on 20 June 2003: "That UNW had compromised and agreed that the management seat could be in Potchefstroom on condition that the name of the NHEI would be North-West University (with hyphen) with the identity of the province."[27]

Langtry explains: "It [the institutional address] would just be where the administration is seated. So we conceded on that one and we said: 'Okay fine, let Potchefstroom be the seat. And I think that is important to remember from the history of the merger that the people from Mafikeng settled. We were willing to give the seat as a gesture, to say: 'It is fine, it is important to you, but in return we felt the name had to reflect the province…not so much because the old university was the University of the North-West, but the province was called North West Province [and it] was more appropriate for the new university. I think we thought it would settle the thing. But then the whole issue about the hyphen started."

So after months Potchefstroom was chosen as the institutional seat – the address – of the NHEI. In time a building of the PU for CHE's Education Faculty became "Institutional" or "C1". The fact that the seat was physically removed from the Potchefstroom Campus brought distance between them. The thinking was: "much as it is in Potch, it should not be part of Potch". However, at the same time the geographical closeness meant that the Potchefstroom Campus could take advantage of the institution-wide services rendered from C1 such as finances, human resources and IT. This became part of one of the several expressions of the phenomenon described as "Potchefication".[28]

But the compromise made by the UNW negotiators was costly on the home front, where some staff members viewed the deal as part of management's inability to stand its ground against the Boers.

As one staff member recalls: "(W)e know it was the Mafikeng Campus which suggested to Potch that the seat of management should be in Potch." [29]

Although Tlakula does not recall that she was part of the UNW decision to hand the seat to Potch in return for choosing a name for the NHEI, the minutes of the meeting of 24 May 2003 show that she was present. Whereas she did not want to give the seat to Potch because it would hamper transformation and integration, others believed that to truly change the PU for CHE the head office had to be in the heart of it all. The PU for CHE did not mind. It had gotten what it had wanted.

Like Tlakula, former education minister Naledi Pandor also believes the location of the institutional seat of the NWU in Potch has undermined the success of the merger:

"I felt that he [Theuns Eloff] was all tuned towards making his staff at Potch comfortable and [was] saying to them: 'Don't worry it's not going to be too intrusive, we're gonna do what we can.' If he [Eloff] had decided to make Mafikeng his headquarters I would have given him a hundred out of a hundred [for the merger]."[30]

So, Potch got the seat and Mafikeng the name.

But in time there would be a backlash. The many do not always favour deals made by a few.

CHAPTER 9
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

" …the Interim Council held its first (and last) formal meeting on 9 January 2004. At this meeting, it approved…the name North-West University (with hyphen)…" — Minutes of Interim Council meeting[1]

With an agreement in place on the institutional seat of the new university, the talks on a name were expected to roll ahead. Politics have an uncanny way of slowing down decision-making, however. In the end, the naming of the new higher education institution (NHEI) was not that straightforward.

At a meeting on 24 May 2003, the two sides agreed that there should be one "supreme overarching name".

That was easier said than done. Whereas the PU for CHE delegation proposed keeping site names such as "Potchefstroom Campus" and "Mafikeng Campus" – as well as the historic name "Puk" – those from the UNW wanted old names to "be left behind"; to break with the past.[10]

A final decision on the naming issue was therefore postponed for another two weeks to 6 June – dangerously close to Asmal's deadline at the end of the month. The New Name Task Team met at the Metalbox Centre in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. After sifting through 276 proposals, some of which were duplications, the task team tabled six names that matched criteria agreed on earlier in the year.

According to the criteria, noted in the JOC decisions register, the name should reflect the aspirations of stakeholders and international best practice; give prominence to the region where the institution is based; avoid names of people; unify and affirm the new institution without undermining the identities of the two existing institutions, and be permanent and sustainable.

On the shortlist were: Kgalagadi[11] University; Kgalagadi-Highveld University, North West University, North Western University; Potchefstroom University and Platinum University.

There was no consensus on the names that should be tabled by the Name Task Team. Consequently both the UNW and the PU for CHE presented a few names for consideration. The three UNW names were Kgalagadi University, Northwestern University and Platinum University. There was some overlap with the PU for CHE names, which were Kgalagadi, Northwestern University, Potchefstroom University, and Platinum University.

The two delegations caucused separately three times. The final decision: Northwest University with four sites: the Potchefstroom Campus, Mafikeng Campus, Vaal Triangle Campus and Mankwe Campus.[12]

Prof Ngoato Takalo of the UNW remembers that despite the deal, the Potch team came up with the idea of NorthWest (instead of University of NorthWest).[13]

To reach the point of giving up the name "PU for CHE" and accepting a new name so similar to that of the merger partner was difficult. Some senior Potch people fiercely resisted the PU for CHE's association with a "Bantustan name", others the loss of the Puk legacy.[14]

Eloff had to persuade some of the members of the PU for CHE's Management Committee to accept that deals had to be made: "We had to take a decision about our proposal for a name…our negotiation team was meeting the next morning. We had to submit a name. I asked everyone and North-West University was there, but some of the guys did not want it. The name from the UNW side was Kgalagadi University, which had a nice ring to it, but internationally it would be really difficult. In the end the choice was between the [institutional] seat or the name. If we fought for a name we would probably have lost the seat to Mmabatho.

10 May 2006
The new NWU Senate is constituted in terms of the NWU Statute as gazetted on 8 August 2005.

June 2006
Council establishes the Transformation Oversight Committee and Human Resources and Employment Equity Committee.

"Christian" name disappears

The name "Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education" was precious to the founders of the institution and a significant section of its alumni and students.

When the possibility of a name change and the loss of the word "Christian" came up in 2001, the outcry was loud.[2]

This was not the first time a name change had been on the cards for the PU for CHE. With the incorporation of the Potchefstroom Universiteits Kollege vir Kristelik Hoger Onderwys into Unisa in 1921, it could not continue using "Christian" in its name. Undeterred, the leadership of the college fought for more than a decade and regained it in 1933.[3]

The difference this time was that the idea of dropping the "Christian" from the PU came from within. The new PU for CHE Vice-Chancellor Theuns Eloff did not endear himself by making the suggestion.

Eloff responded to the recommendations of a panel of experts from the European University Association, which did an external audit of the PU for CHE at its request. According to the panel the name should change but the Christian ethos could remain.[4]

Eloff's position was that the name carried "historical baggage" and that a loss of the name would not mean the loss of its value system. However, such was the uproar that after wide consultation and a student referendum the name was retained. About half of all the students voted and 90% of them voted for the religiously descriptive name.[5]

On 19 June 2002 the *Kerkblad* reported: "The official name remains. The Christian name and foundation of the Puk should not exclude people, but has to reach out and include."[6] This was only a temporary reprieve, however. The PU for CHE and the UNW had to merge and the chances of retaining the word "Christian" were zero.

Asmal had repeatedly expressed his impatience with the university's name.

In March 2001 he tackled the PU for CHE in front of the Parliamentary education portfolio committee and said if the university wanted government money it had to act in accordance with the Constitution. He questioned how a university could define itself as Christian if it meant that students and lecturers who were not Christian were disadvantaged. He believed it would be unconstitutional. A few months later, again in Parliament, he said the following: "Universities , as state organs, could not define themselves in terms of a specific religion as it would be undermining the Bill of Rights and the Constitution."[7]

In January 2003, exactly a year before the merger, Eloff warned the founders of the university that its Christian name was in jeopardy. This was at the national synod of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika).[8]

On the other hand, Eloff believed the Constitution provided adequate protection so that a Christian value system could remain intact.

He said: "The CHE has been taken from the name and from the gate, but placed in the hearts of those who work and study [at the university]."[9]

"We had a few interesting sub-committees. I was the member of a committee which had to align conditions of service. We fought spiritedly about everything except retirement age. At that stage our retirement age was 60 and theirs was 65. We immediately accepted 65."
Prof Annette Combrink, Potchefstroom Campus Rector (2004 -2009) and a PU for CHE merger negotiator. Photo: Maclez Studio

"I said: 'What is in a name?' I must admit if I designed a university I would not have named it after a wind direction. Many guys moaned about the name. We tried to write it North-West with a hyphen so that it does not follow on North West Province, but rather was like NorthWestern University in the US… I remember I asked that in a Management Committee meeting that we agree. And [one of them] said he needed time to think. I told him: 'You have one hour'. It was the name or the seat."[15]

Although the name "University of North-West" only dated from September 1994 when the University of Bophuthatswana or Unibo was renamed, these names were not without sentimental value for those who started the institution and worked hard to keep it afloat.

But the consensus on the name NorthWest University did not mean consensus on its spelling. Many hours of bickering on the necessity of a hyphen to join "North" and "West" were ahead.

Stephen Langtry of the UNW, referring to the hyphen in the name, says: "It was a big debate."[16]

Hyphenitis?

"I remember a meeting being called over the hyphen," says Ahmed Essop, a former chief director in the Department of Education in the merger era[17]. "We thought it was bizarre."

Like Essop, many of those close to the bargaining process remember the prominence of the hyphen – although they do not remember the specific meeting he refers to. Sometimes misused but perhaps more frequently forgotten, in this instance the hyphen was pushed to the fore over its absence in both the Afrikaans and English spelling of the new institution's name.

Soon after the name "Northwest University" was chosen on June 19 the hyphen came up. The UNW wanted "North-West". Potch wanted "Northwest".

Whatever their reasons for being in favour of or against the hyphen, the UNW and the PU for CHE were not the only players in the spelling game. [18]

Asmal, legal minded and obstinate as he was, insisted that the spelling of North West had to correlate with the spelling of North West province's spelling in the South African Constitution. Asmal was hands-on - even if it was about the humble horizontal strip connecting words.[19]

But by meddling Asmal did not endear himself to the merging institutions. The use of the hyphen therefore represented a tussle for power between Asmal and the institution he was creating. It was one of several skirmishes between the Minister and the NHEI.

In October 2003 Asmal announced the name of the university: "North West University." No hyphen. End of story.[20]

But Eloff disagreed. Linguistically, two words, he argued, would suggest it was a regional institution and it was not.[21]

Johan Blaauw, Head: Language Practice in the Institutional Office, explained: "We are the university for North West, we just happen to be located in the province" – and he pointed out that the spelling of North West in the Constitution, according to authoritative sources, was not hundred per cent correct."[22]

For Eloff it was important that the institution not be seen as a mere provincial university. However, for the UNW it was less about the region and more about the sentimentality of keeping "their" hyphen in the English spelling.

An email from Blaauw at the time confirms this. He wrote to Tom McLachlan, a member of the language commission of the South African Academy for Science and Arts about the spelling of the Afrikaans and English name: "Our merger partners feel strongly about the hyphen, therefore I did not want to fuss about it."[23]

For Mafikeng the hyphen in "North-West" evoked fond memories. "We liked our hyphen," says a retired staff member.[24]

The hyphen represented a clash of wills between the PU for CHE and the UNW. For many from Potch, already in despair about giving up its name, perhaps "Northwest", spelt differently, would have created some distance between the new North-West University and the old University of North-West. The old and the new name were just too similar.

In this instance the UNW got what it wanted.

Another hyphen needed

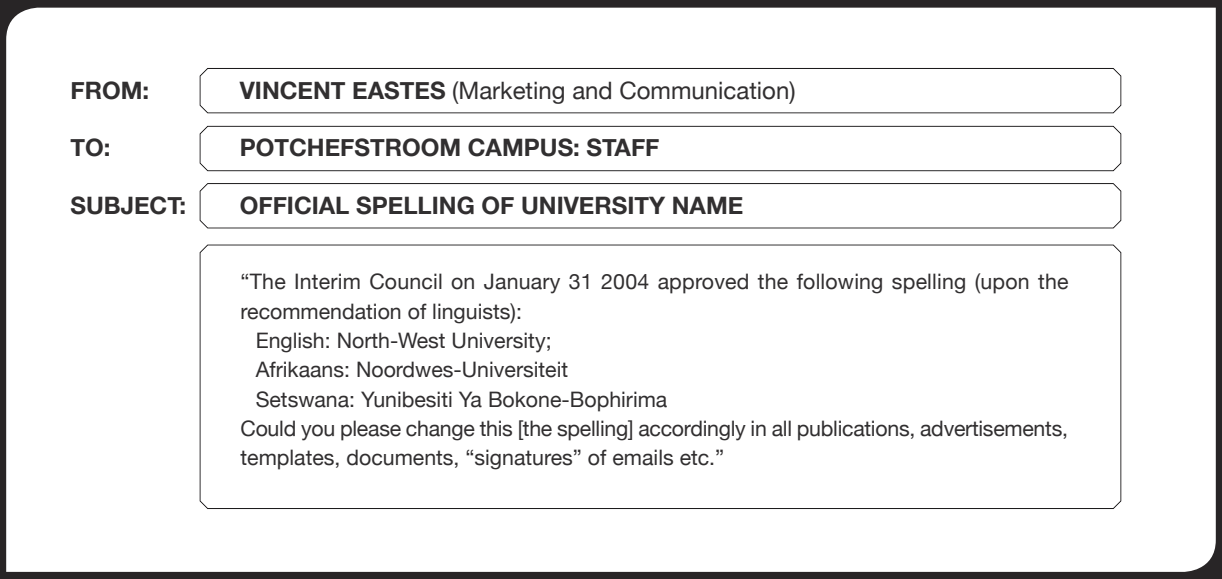
The Afrikaans spelling of Noordwes-Universiteit appears to have been an oversight rather than about power or sentimentality.

It was following an article in the Afrikaans daily *Beeld* that McLachlan became one of the first people to express his misgivings about the Afrikaans spelling of "Noordwes Universiteit". He wrote a letter to the interim registrar Prof Chris van der Walt.

"I am very disappointed that those responsible for it

July 2006
The NWU's Potchefstroom Campus management objects to the city council's decision to change the city's name to Tlokwe.

August 2006
The NWU makes the Minister of Education's deadline for implementing the new NWU Statute, including all unitary and integrated structures.



FROM: **VINCENT EASTES** (Marketing and Communication)

TO: **POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS: STAFF**

SUBJECT: **OFFICIAL SPELLING OF UNIVERSITY NAME**

"The Interim Council on January 31 2004 approved the following spelling (upon the recommendation of linguists):
English: North-West University;
Afrikaans: Noordwes-Universiteit
Setswana: Yunibesiti Ya Bokone-Bophirima
Could you please change this [the spelling] accordingly in all publications, advertisements, templates, documents, "signatures" of emails etc."

▲ This is an illustration of the email sent on 12 February 2004 by Vincent Eastes from the Marketing and Communication Department on the Potchefstroom Campus to confirm the approved spelling recommended by the interim management.[27]

apparently decided to choose an Afrikaans writing style which is actually in conflict with the traditional idiomatic writing of compounds in Afrikaans. According to the illustration in *Beeld* it was apparently decided to write Noordwes Universiteit, thus without a hyphen."

Following an explanation McLachlan suggested Noordwes-universiteit, but adds that most people would probably choose the capital U."

He expressed the hope that the Afrikaans spelling could still change and be reconsidered by the Council.[25]

In later correspondence he also suggested that North West required a hyphen.[26]Roughly at the same time a few of the language gurus on the Potchefstroom Campus – Blaauw and Prof Wannie Carstens, director of the School of Languages – wrote to the interim Vice-Chancellor Eloff to say the spelling of the name was problematic.

Eloff asked for a report. A language committee including Blaauw, Carstens, Combrink, Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, and journalism professor Johannes Froneman, quickly reached consensus.

On 31 January 2004 Eloff received a report with linguistic advice about the correct spelling of the name. The Interim Council approved the recommended spelling by the interim management. The hyphen was back: North-West University and Noordwes-Universiteit.

Ode to the hyphen

In the history of the NWU the hyphen deserves a special mention. It is a symbol of the many battles that were inevitably fought as part of the journey to create something new. Today quarrelling over a hyphen appears to be trivial. But back then – in the toing and froing – it was worth fighting for. The point the hyphen saga emphasises is this: the making of the NWU was laborious.

Still, students – and the public for that matter - repeatedly violate the university's name. If they had an inkling of the effort that was poured into the spelling, they would pay meticulous attention to how they write it.

■■■

veni
"I CAME"
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
vidi
"I SAW"
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
vici
"I CONQUERED"
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

CHAPTER 10
A NEW COUNCIL

"North-West University set the pace when its interim council elect (ICE) held its inaugural preparatory meeting in Johannesburg two months before its legal operational commencement date of January 1 2004."
— Sowetan, 3 November 2003[1]

The institutional seat was Potchefstroom. The name was North-West University. The third major decision Asmal awaited from the negotiators from the PU for CHE and the UNW related to the Council of the new institution.

Firstly, they had to decide on the composition of the Interim Council and secondly its chairperson. The PU for CHE and the UNW concurred that the lifespan of the Interim Council had to be short. In fact, the plan was that a permanent Council had to replace the interim one early in January 2004, literally a few days after the formal establishment of the NWU.[2]

The merger strategy of maintaining the momentum and limiting uncertainty was once again applied. In the meantime the Interim Council Elect, with members from both existing councils, went ahead with the plans and policies that the new institution would require.

So the deal makers buckled down to finalise their agreements – and of course there were bound to be some hitches.

For the sake of continuity they decided that the eight members and the chairperson of the Interim Council should be selected from the 18 external members of the permanent Council. The name of the chairperson, arrived at through consensus, would be forwarded to the Minister in time. In addition, the composition of the permanent Council was agreed upon.

In a letter to Asmal on 24 July 2003 the PU for CHE and the UNW gave him what he had asked for. The names of the members of the Interim Council sent to him were: Marlize Kruger, Nathan Molusi, Kgotso Rabanye, Satish Roopa, Litha Nyhonyha, Lydia Sebego, Neels Smit and Leon Wessels.[3]

Pansy Tlakula was named the chair of the Interim Council. However, in a letter to Asmal, dated 15 September, the PU for CHE and the UNW had to make some changes. Following the Minister's request that Tlakula not be considered for the position of chairperson because of her IEC responsibilities, three other names were presented: business leaders Ntendeni Ratshikhopha and Gloria Serobe, as well as Lydia Sebego, at the time deputy chair of the UNW Council. If Serobe, who was also on the list as an interim member, was not available, she had to be replaced by PC Moduko. Satish Roopa, who was no longer available to serve on the Interim Council, was replaced by Adv Solly Sithole.

The UNW Council was not pleased about the three names put forward to the Minister. When Tlakula reported these three names, there was a request that the names of Ratshikopa and Sebego be withdrawn. "Concern that the nomination of the UNW chairperson of Council had been a negotiated settlement and that, therefore the chairpersonship be retained by the UNW even if Adv Tlakula was not longer available. That, therefore, only the name of Ms LK Sebego should have been forwarded to the Minister," the minutes of a UNW Council meeting on 12 September 2003 stated.

In the end, Asmal appointed none of the people whose names were put forward. His choice for the head of the Interim Council was an outsider, Robinson Ramaite, a former director-general of public service and administration.[4]

With the Interim Council and chairperson decided, the UNW raced ahead to compile a list of names for the permanent Council and a transitional management. It was only four months before the NWU would be born.

Asmal was asked to put together four or five ministerial

August 2006
The Staff Association at the Mafikeng Campus embarks on unprotected industrial action.

October 2006
A full brand audit survey is conducted among staff, students and other stakeholders, including alumni.

Dr Theuns Eloff at his inauguration as the first Vice-Chancellor of the NWU with Litha Nyhonyha, the chairperson of the University Council (2004-2006). Their relationship later deteriorated because of divisions in the first Council.
Photo: Maclez Studio

THE FIRST INTERIM MANAGEMENT

Dr Theuns Eloff
Interim Vice-Chancellor

Prof Ngoato Takalo
Interim Vice-Principal

Prof Chris van der Walt
Interim Registrar

Prof Johan Rost
Interim Financial Director

Prof Akbar Bootha
Interim Human Resources Director

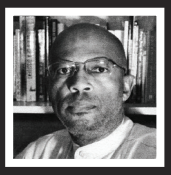
Dr Maarten Venter
Interim Information Technology Director

Prof Sevid Mashego
Interim Management Committee Member

Mr Dan Setsetse
Interim Management Committee Member

Prof Madoda Zibi
Interim Management Committee Member

Prof Piet Prinsloo
Interim Management Committee Member



Prof Nhlanha Maake
Interim Management Committee Member

Mr Robert Kettles
Interim Management Committee Member

Prof Frik van Niekerk
Interim Management Committee Member

Ms Shamiela Letsoalo
Interim Management Committee Member

appointees by 14 November from a list of eight names The PU for CHE and the NWU wanted the names of the permanent Council wrapped up by the end of November.[5]

The plan was still that the Interim Council only had to meet once to appoint the interim management, constitute the new Council and delegate all tasks to the first meeting of the permanent Council to be held on 16 January. Eventually the Interim Council's first meeting was on 9 January 2004.[6] By this time the name North-West University (with hyphen) and the logo had been approved. So at this occasion it ratified its earlier decision on the interim management. The merger was moving forward.

But the Department of Education was concerned. The merger was being rushed. Nasima Badsha, deputy director-general of higher education, Angina Parekh, head of the department's merger unit, and Ahmed Essop, a senior official, met with a team from the new university in December.

Next, in a letter, the department stated that the PU for CHE and the UNW were dealing with "too many issues as part of the preparatory work, were rushing the establishment of the new Council; and were also rushing the drafting of the new Statute". [7]

The NWU did not pay too much attention to this. Despite the criticism from the Department of Education, Eloff was adamant that no time should be wasted in getting the permanent Council up and running. He believes this was the first time the PU for CHE and the UNW united against a common enemy, the Minister of Education.

As things turned out, the last meeting of the Interim Council was on 31 January and the first meeting of the new Council of the NWU took place on 12 February 2004. There were 18 members, and Litha Nyhonyha was elected chairman and Lydia Sebego deputy.[8]

Against the odds, and in a matter of only 18 months, the foundation of the NWU was laid.

At first glance the fast pace at which the merger was progressing may be mistaken as the outcome of a solid relationship between the merger partners. This assumption would be wrong. The groundwork done by colleagues as part of the Nowets project might have brought some familiarity, but there was still mistrust and suspicion among staff, and resistance from students. Deep, lasting relationships still had to be built.

So the proclamation of the NWU on 1 January 2004 not only signalled a point of no return, it also marked the beginning of another era of hard work on many fronts to create a new higher education institution.

In the foundation or establishment phase of the merger, meetings of the NWU Council were as bloody, figuratively speaking, as battlefields.

The inaugural 'war' council (12 February 2004). **Front row** (from left): R Jager, Zoleka Sicwebu, Ngoato Takalo, Litha Nyhonyha (chairperson), Lydia Sebego, Theuns Eloff (Vice-Chancellor) and N Letlape. **Second row** (from left): Nathan Molusi, Gulam Mayet, Polly Modiko, Neels Smit, Francois Venter, Tabane Matshego, JM Joubert and Kgotso Rabanye. **Third row** (from left): Dries du Plooy, Lizette Britz, Shamiela Letsoalo, Leon Wessels, OJJ Tabane, PG Mpolokeng, Monde Ndandani and Johan van Zyl. **Fourth row** (from left): Mphane Molefe, Paul Kruger, Piet Prinsloo, Flip Buys, Friday Leburu and Chris (CFC) van der Walt. Photo: Maclez Studio

CHAPTER 11
BUILDING AN IDENTITY

"So we were breaking new frontiers as far as building a new branding identity for a merged and transformed university in South Africa [goes]…"
— Phumzile Mmope, former executive director: corporate affairs and relations[1]

By January 2004 the NWU's interim logo had been approved[2] and was being implemented. This was part of an initial package of agreements to speed up the creation of the NWU, on paper at least, and as such keep the merger momentum going, even if the pace sometimes stuttered rather than strode briskly along. Since the organisational structure was still emerging, a pragmatic approach was adopted: instead of trying to reach agreement on all elements of a new identity in one fell swoop, initial efforts were focused on seeking consensus to go forward with the logo.[3]

Lana Faasen, a graphic designer from the School of Communication Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus, came up with an icon illustrating the coming together of the two universities. It depicted two links of a chain in the legacy colours of the institutions: royal blue for the UNW and maroon for the PU for CHE. Furthermore the two links were shaped like an "n" for North-West and a "u" for University and thus also represented the name of the newly created NWU (see page 117). Faasen was guided by the words collaboration, integration, new, respect, harmony, values and merge.[4]

For the first three years the shields of the two universities continued to appear on official correspondence of the institution as a transitional strategy. Hence the initial logo carried the symbolism of the PU for CHE and the UNW as the main merging entities.

The process had its hiccups. "Potchefication" (see chapter 15) was a common word in the merger vocabulary. In this instance the perception was that the Potchefstroom Campus had once again done things without sufficient consultation. As the brand development process for a permanent logo unfolded, this grievance would surface again.

Despite the criticism from inside and outside, a brand audit conducted two years later found that 70% of students liked the logo. A total of 2 073 respondents participated in the audit. Just over half were students, 25% were alumni and 21% were staff members, 60% of whom liked the logo. Former students, however, found it hard to accept. They did not like the logo.

A fight for the Puk brand

The feedback from the brand survey was funnelled into the further development of the NWU's brand strategy.

Eloff tasked Phumzile Mmope, former executive director: corporate affairs and relations in the institutional office, with the branding.

The ensuing debate was heated and emotional. On the one hand there was a belief that NWU should start with a clean slate, an argument that Mafikeng held throughout the merger talks. On the other was the recognition that the brands of the merging universities had currency value. The Potchefstroom Campus, in particular, pushed this idea. The question was therefore whether the old should prevail and if so, what the balance should be between a new, overarching and unifying NWU brand name and the various existing campus brands.

Although the argument about the benefits of sticking with the existing brands had merit, it barely masked the continued unwillingness of the PU for CHE in particular to let go of the nickname for students: Pukke. The nickname originated in

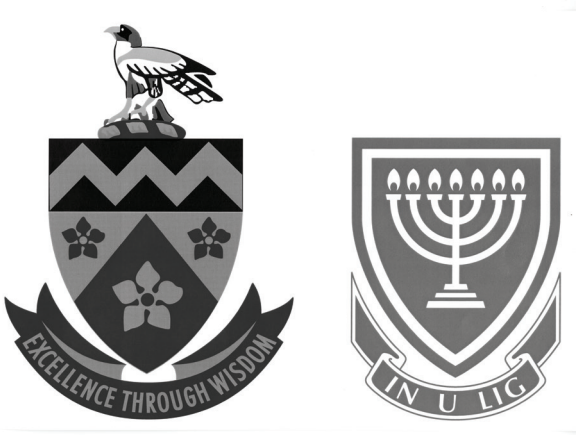
2006
The NWU is the first university in South Africa to be awarded a chair in nuclear engineering.

2006
The NWU-Puk FNB High Performance Institute for Sport is launched.

"[Our brand] is bedevilled by transformation. It is bedevilled by misinterpretation; misrepresentation...Take that out of the equation and just leave the brand as it is and all the things that we fight to substantiate - everything we say we are. I don't think anyone can floor us, honestly.

"It was very much emotional and when people become emotional they don't think rationally. They become quite irrational and the challenge was to allow those emotions to come through… because we were dealing with change and change is a difficult thing in itself… you gain something but you have to let go of something at the same time.

Phumzile Mmope, former executive director: corporate affairs and relations in the institutional office, on negotiations about creating an identity for the NWU

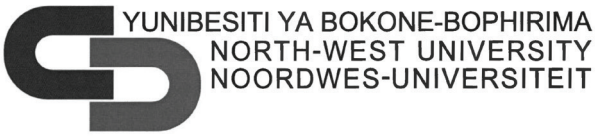


▲ "The Goshawk Eagle is popular among the Batswana and is known as Korwe. It has cultural significance in Proverbs: I, the eagle, do not eat, I hunt and work for my offspring. It is a reminder to our students that their parents have made tremendous sacrifices in order to enable them to acquire knowledge. It is a confident creature. It harmonises the high and noble aspirations of our students and their parents to those of Unibo. For those reasons it was adopted for the crest in the Unibo Coat of Arms." – Information provided by Sebastian Mahila, who was involved in the design of the Coat of Arms

▲ The shield of the former PU for CHE depicts a candelabra and the words "In u lig" (In your light). Its message is that wisdom begins with God and it wanted to make a statement of what the university stood for. The seven burning candles speak to the words "In your light" and symbolise the yearning of the university to be a shining beacon of knowledge in society. Inspiration for the design came from the Titus arch in Rome. The artist JH Pierneef had a hand in the design, but it was finalised by Maria Kamp, a former art teacher, whose husband Jan worked at the college. The emblem was used the first time in 1922. – Source: Wonderdaad...!

2006
The NWU produces the third most PhDs in the country and achieves the second highest graduation rate. The NWU delivers 33% of the national research output for the year.

24 November 2006
Dr Lydia Sebego becomes the new chair of the NWU Council. She succeeds Litha Nyhonyha.



▲ This identity represents the coming together or joining of two entities. This is clearly represented by the links of a chain. The links are left open to show an unlocked way of thinking for the road ahead. The colours are currently in keeping with those of the two former universities: blue for the former University of North-West and red for the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. – NWU's interim branding identity, 2004

April 2007
The NWU Soccer Institute is launched at the Mafikeng Campus. The English Premier League contributes R4,2 million for scholarships

2007
The High Energy Stereoscopic System research group of the Potchefstroom Campus shares the Descartes Science Prize and £1 million.

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY ®
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

▲ The new identity continued to draw on the concept of a chain but the two links became three, representing all three campuses of the NWU, and green was introduced to symbolise the Vaal Triangle Campus. The links represent the letters “n” and “u” as well as “w”. The shields of the former PU for CHE and UNW, which had been used until 2007, could now disappear. – NWU branding identity, 2007

2007
The NWU receives the 2007 PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance.

2007
The Centre for Text Technology receives the PanSat Award for promoting multilingualism.

▲ A special logo was used to celebrate the NWU's 10th birthday in 2014.

2007
The NWU receives the award for the Most Innovative Higher Education Institution from the Innovation Fund.

2007
The new pay-off line for the NWU, Innovation through diversity, is inspired by a competition entry from a master's student in Environmental Management at the Potchefstroom Campus, Malebo Matlala.

1919 when the Potchefstroomse Universiteitskollege voor Kristelik Hoger Onderwijs (Puk vir KHO) was established. Given the Afrikaner nationalist agenda of the Puk and its backing of apartheid, the nickname's historic roots were and are perhaps problematic. Yet its ongoing usage in the post-merger era has not been challenged on a political or ideological level. Perhaps in the years to come this needs to be revisited. In the meantime students have simply continued to wear, utter and display the words Puk and Pukke, or rather NWU-Pukke, with pride, contributing to the nickname's brand equity – and its emotional currency value.

Mmope, an outsider who joined the NWU in 2006, was ready to write "Pukke" out of the strategy. But she clashed with the likes of Mr Theo Cloete, director: marketing and communication at the Potchefstroom Campus.

Mmope admits that the "institutional view at that stage was very much geared towards making a clean break with what previously existed, creating something that would be as close as possible to a monolithic and unified approach.

"And then I also realised that if we do not make room that would allow the use of the acronym Pukke we were going to lose the Potchefstroom Campus…it had got to that stage where it was clear that these are the rules of engagement. If you want to take us along we take Pukke along. Without Pukke you can just forget about us supporting the other values that you want to do."

Subsequently Pukke was accepted in the brand strategy. It could be used, but there were rules...

In the absence of an institutional nickname such as Tuks for the University of Pretoria and Maties for Stellenbosch, Puk was accepted as part of the NWU identity. Says Mmope: "We will allow the use of the nicknames such as the Pukke, on condition that it will always be used together with the NWU, which was still new and still needed to grow in its own right as its own brand…Then secondly we would only use NWU Pukke in student and alumni activities and events. Never externally. When we go externally we go out as North-West University. And they accepted that. And that went into the brand strategy…and that is how basically we got the nod, you know, from Council."

So the Puk brand remained and a decade after the merger it is as solid as ever. In its favour was the fact that the Potchefstroom Campus had money to keep it thriving. It is said that substantial funds were put aside for marketing. When the merger came along Potch allegedly did not want to share the money with the merger partners – definitely not until it was clear that the merger was sound. The Potchefstroom Campus therefore has had money to pay for campaigns and promote its brand and is accused of not always adhering to the rules of using the Puk brand. This has been a thorn in the flesh of the institutional office and the two other campuses.

A senior administrator on the Vaal Triangle Campus captures the frustration: "I am certain you read in *Beeld* how often they advertise NWU-Pukke. Our campus does not have the money for that kind of advertising. Then you feel it is regrettable that the NWU still convey the image that they are Pukke. When you speak with people… How many speak of the NWU and how many of Pukke? In town I hear the people speak of Pukke; in the schools they speak of Pukke. The Pukke play rugby. Actually it is the NWU. As long as the campuses, in particular Potch is allowed to advertise on its own it will happen. We speak about it all the time." [5]

Vaal Triangle's equal status confirmed

While the debate about Pukke raged during the development of the interim logo, the Vaal Triangle Campus simply wanted to be represented in the new logo.

As a fully fledged independent campus, it wanted the new logo to reflect its status. The campus wanted to be divorced from anything that would remind it of the lesser status that it previously had as a satellite campus of the PU for CHE. Instead it wanted to be incorporated and celebrated.[6]

Its wish was granted when the new logo was implemented in March 2007.[7]

It continued to draw on the concept of a chain but the two links became three, representing all three campuses of the NWU, and green was introduced to symbolise the Vaal Triangle Campus. In addition to the letters "n" and "u", the "w" could now be added. The shields of the PU for CHE and the UNW would now disappear as well (see page 118).

The initial response was mixed. The criticism about the placement of the various links – the maroon link of the Potchefstroom was on top – reflected that the power relationship between the campuses remained contentious. A remark at the time was: "Once again you see Potchefstroom on top. Potchefication." Another unkind remark was that the

2007
Eloff receives an honorary doctorate of laws from London South Bank University. He is also elected as chairperson of Higher Education South Africa (HESA).

23 January 2008
The deputy director-general of the Department of Education Nasima Badsha visits the Mafikeng Campus.

Pukki, Vuvu (and Mafi)

Two of the NWU campuses have official mascots.

On the Potchefstroom Campus you will find the guinea fowl Pukki. On the Vaal Triangle, located next to the Vaal River, the goose Vuvu. On the Mafikeng Campus a leopard, Mafi. However, Mafi, has not yet been recognised by the campus management and therefore has no official status.

On the Potchefstroom Campus, the second post-merger Rector, Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, was the mastermind behind Pukki, which is a spin-off of the fictitious Republic of Tarentaal and its president, a student tradition on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Following a visit to the US, where the use of mascots is commonplace, he and the campus's director of marketing and communication, Theo Cloete, came up with Pukki, which makes its appearance at mass student events in particular.

Van Schalkwyk has also been keen to develop the mascot's commercial value. Already, on campus and in town, it's possible to buy a Pukki beer, a Pukki burger and a Pukki doll.

Van Schalkwyk believes even if each campus has its own mascot they could promote NWU unity – as long as the mascots promote the same values and the campuses all observe the same rules.

Vuvu was launched in November 2014 as part of the 10-year celebrations of the Vaal Triangle Campus of the NWU. The idea, however, was much older.

When the student publication Student 24/7 began in 2010, Annette Willemse, the corporate communication practitioner of the campus, suggested starting a tongue-in-cheek column about events on campus. Hence Vuvu's Soapbox was conceived.

The name was an offshoot of the 2010 soccer fever that gripped South Africa when it hosted the Fifa World Cup. Vuvuzelas became one of the defining characteristics of the tournament.

However, the research on the mascot only started in 2013. A cartoonist in Johannesburg created Vuvu on paper and a costume maker in George gave him his current, larger-than-life shape.

The NWU's brand promises over the years were:

2004 Getting it right

2008 Innovation through diversity

2012 It all starts here

lower half of the logo looks like *boude* (buttocks).

The logo came to the fore again a year later when conflict threatened to rip apart the Mafikeng Campus, and Joe Phaahla, tasked by the then Minister of Education Naledi Pandor to investigate the problems, tabled his report.

The report stated: "The depth of the alienation at Mafikeng Campus is further signified by the hostility to the new NWU logo expressed in the meeting of the same non-aligned staff. The logo is seen as symbolic of the federal struc ture of the NWU with the Potchefstroom Campus permanently on top, in a dominant position. This submission stands in stark contrast to the claim made by the institutional management that the new branding exercise, including the adoption of the logo, was successful and was an inclusive and participatory process to ensure buy-in from the university community." [8]

Once again the dominance of the Potchefstroom Campus in the corporate identity of the NWU was pointed out and would remain a challenge.

For instance on 11 June 2010, the Council minutes stated: "There were ongoing brand challenges: the usage of old brand names; the usage of old brand names at student level without linking it to the mother brand and birthday celebrations of individual campuses."

A rethink of the NWU brand

Ten years after the merger the NWU has been established alongside the brands of its three campuses. Many students and staff speak of the NWU first before they mention their campuses – if at all. The brand has taken root.

Yet the recent history of the NWU has confirmed that the Puk brand tends to trump the NWU brand and eclipse the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle brands. It has been divisive.[9] As a result the NWU often becomes the Puk in the public domain. When Prof Dan Kgwadi, for instance, was named the second Vice-Chancellor of the NWU, more than one news headline called him the new Puk Rector.

As the NWU robustly debates its future, concerns about the hybrid brand branding model, an offshoot from its three-campus organisational structure, have surfaced.

One suggestion has been that the marketing, communication and public relations function should be "reconfigured" so that there is greater similarity between the units on each campus.[10] In addition, the name "Pukke" might need to fall away in favour of a new name for all the NWU students (on all three campuses). Many Potchefstroom students have rejected the idea.

CHAPTER 12
WAR

"The left-wing group from Mafikeng dominated. Potchefstroom could not make a dent."
— Prof Piet Prinsloo, former Vaal Triangle Campus Rector [1]

The official establishment of the NWU was the start of another difficult journey.

In the first NWU Council, the clash of cultures was profound, the depth of mistrust severe.

"People did not trust each other one millimetre," says a Council member at the time.[2]

Broadly speaking, this was a coalition council in which there were still two distinct camps – the one representing the interests of the former PU for CHE; the other those of the UNW. A few non-aligned Council members floated in between.

The animosity and polarisation in the pre-merger bargaining sessions were thus neatly reproduced in the founding Council. In addition there were new rules of engagement and they too contributed to the conflict. Council meetings were intense, stormy, drawn-out affairs.

The interim Vaal Triangle Campus Rector, Prof Piet Prinsloo, a non-voting member of Council at the time, describes the atmosphere in the Council: "I think it must have been strange for the Potchefstromers because there they sit with their ties, the men, in their black suits, and here come these guys in their jeans and disrupt meetings.

"I think, subconsciously, the Potchefstroom group developed an aversion for these Council members. That interlude… it could have been why the Council struggled to make decisions. There was estrangement between us and them. Or them and us."

The Mafikeng perspective was that Potch did not want "to engage" on any matter. But the meeting culture at the two universities was like chalk and cheese. At the PU for CHE it was like a Swiss watch – precise and measured. Managerialism curtailed the number of committees and meetings, streamlined agendas and applied meeting procedures with rigour. There were no explosive debates and engagement. But in Mafikeng, Senate meetings could last up to three days and academic board meetings could become so heated that academics nearly resorted to fisticuffs.[3] A change in a culture does not happen overnight.

OJJ Tabane, higher education facilitator and Ministerial appointee on the Council at the time, says the high levels of mistrust demanded strong caucuses on both sides, especially early on in the merger when major issues such as the vice-chancellorship had to be decided.[4]

But for Potch the so-called "Super Six"[5] on the Mafikeng side was set on disrupting meetings and undermining the merger. They were suspected of meeting in advance on how to "obstruct" progress in the Council.

Says one former Council member: "They would always throw a spanner in the works. Everything seems like it is good, then they come up with something totally different. You have to have a debate on that and then very often they would say the consultations were insufficient, that was one big thing. Then, always to delay something. So the decisions could not be taken because the issue, whatever it was, had to be taken back to the stakeholders for more consultations. That was the *modus operandi* by them."[6]

From the point of view of Potch, the game plan of the Mafikeng group was to break the quorum to frustrate decision-making or to renege on earlier decisions taken in a Council committee meeting or to disagree with the minutes of the previous meeting. It was not unusual for the meetings to carry on the whole day.

Prof Chris van der Walt, interim Registrar and secretary of the Council, heard about the existence of an organised

6 February 2008
Three House Committee members at the Potchefstroom Campus are suspended from their duties after investigations into first-year initiation rites.

29 February 2008
Pandor visits the Potchefstroom Campus to open a new building for the Faculty of Education.

Gulam Mayet, former head of the Department of Education in North West Province, was a Ministerial representative on the inaugural Council of the NWU. Photo: Maclez Studio

group when a secretary from Mafikeng phoned him after he had sent out the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda of the next one.

"She asked me what time I would be leaving for the meeting in Rustenburg and if someone could travel with me. 'What was going on? I asked her. What emerged was that nine of the 30 Council members would be meeting beforehand to caucus as there was no Council meeting scheduled for Rustenburg," says Van der Walt.[7]

Of all the Council members who were said to be part of the "obstructionist" group it was only the outspoken former North West education head Gulam Mayet who was willing to explain the dynamics within the Council. For many of the Afrikaners on the Council, Mayet, an outspoken Marxist whom Asmal had appointed, was a troublemaker.[8]

He denies the existence of a "Mafikeng bloc", saying it was a spontaneous positioning by ANC Council members against those who wanted to preserve the old order. He says they were not as organised as Potch wanted to believe: "There was not a Mafikeng group. There was a sort of ANC group but we really did not meet that often. I was not part of it, because I could never get to the meeting, but someone tried to organise a meeting.

"I have been a maverick all my life even within the ANC so, you know, I am not that sort of person. So, no there was not a particular lobby. There was not somebody who went through the agendas and said: 'This is what we are going to do.' It was much more inefficient and …what is the word… deurmekaar in some ways. I mean: They never got their act together. But it was the thinking that was similar: you want more integration, you want the language issue [resolved] – those things were there whether you had been in the ANC or in any group. You want it, you know [because] these guys were trying to preserve as much of the old order as they possibly could."

Some of the other Council members agree with Mayet that the difficulties which beset Council were less about blocking decisions and more about driving transformation. Unfortunately key players in the founding Council who came from the UNW side did not want to be interviewed for this book.

Lydia Sebego, deputy Council chairperson and another Ministerial appointee, admits there were two extremes on the Council: those who wanted to protect the status quo, but also people who wanted change, on the other extreme. She says there was also the persistent fear on the Mafikeng side that it would be "swallowed" and eventually closed down.[9]

Simply put, the meeting of two worlds was dramatic and even then reflected the deep divides in South African society.

The first Council was caught up in ferocious ideological warfare.

It was not only Potch that mistrusted Mafikeng. Mafikeng, in equal measure, mistrusted Potch.

Says one former Mafikeng staff member: "…the apprehension with what you go into a meeting. What is going to hit us this time?" [10]

Such was the conflict in the Council that a facilitator was called in. At the suggestion of Litha Nyhonyha, the Council chairperson, Theuns Eloff phoned Eric Mafuna of the African Leadership Group. Nyhonyha and Mafuna had worked together on a project in the past. Mafuna searched high and low for ways to bring the people of the merging institutions closer together.

At times Mafuna felt like he was caught up in the middle of "a mud game" in which people slinging the muck did not mind getting dirty.[11]

"In most of the meetings there were always boiling points. I remember in some of the Council sessions some of the individuals walking out in disgust. You know. African as well as Afrikaner. Always, they could not resist the temptation to insult one another."

The minutes of the founding Council spell out the dramas that unfolded during meetings.

The first Council meeting was opened with a prayer – an established practice at Council meetings of the PU for CHE given its Christian character. This was untenable on two counts. Firstly, the UNW was adamant that it should not be seen as accepting any overflow of the Christian ethos of the PU for CHE into the new institution. This is despite a view that the UNW was "more Christian" than the PU for CHE. Secondly, the homogeneity of the previous Councils of the PU for CHE no longer existed. It would be untenable to open a Council meeting with a Christian prayer if there were people with other religious beliefs or even no religions who claimed their Constitutional right to religious freedom. In later years a Christian prayer has been reinstated at the start of Council meetings and other university gatherings.

Language also became an issue. Afrikaans. Some of the members of Council insisted on speaking Afrikaans. Translations were organised, but the members who spoke

6 March 2008
A group of 46 students are arrested on the Mafikeng Campus for blocking access gates. Seven students are expelled.

7 March 2008
The Mafikeng Campus is closed.

Dr Lydia Sebego was the deputy chairperson of the NWU Council (2004-2006) and the chairperson (2007). She reportedly played an important role in the appointment of Prof Annette Combrink as the Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus.
Photo: Maclez Studio

PG Mpolokeng was a member of the powerful Staff Association and part of the Mafikeng group or “Super Six” on the Council. Photo: Maclez Studio

Setswana complained about the quality.

Mafuna, who had the task of building bridges, ventured outside the formal structures. He met with people on both sides.

"Most of those were one-on-one meetings because they would not buy what I said if they did not sit down with me and say: 'What exactly are you trying to get at?' And I could not take Theuns with me. I could not take the black members of Council with me. You had to go there as a facilitator and say, 'Make me understand where you are coming from."

He said he had met ANC, PAC, lecturers, professors, heads of departments, religious people, spiritual leaders, theologians and even [Lucas] Mangope, the former president of Bophuthatswana, the apartheid homeland in which the UNW once existed.

This was a tough time for Eloff. "It was a bit like Dakar. I knew we would get through it. Or like the negotiations. During the [political] negotiations there were a few such moments: When Chris Hani was murdered I thought now we are close and when Mandela told De Klerk, after the Boipatong massacre that the violence was not under control I remember telling Fanie van der Merwe [senior civil servant involved in the drafting of the Constitution]: 'Here comes trouble.' But we got through it because they did not have another choice. We also did not have another choice. So, I don't think I thought about it. I am sure there were guys on the campuses who said it will never work. But we came through it."[12]

The founding Council had some major decisions to take.

A permanent Vice-Chancellor had to be appointed and the university's own statute had to replace the Standard Institutional Statute of the Department of Education, which kicked in on 1 January and was to remain in place until the Minister approved a new statute.

When the statute finally changed (see Chapter 13) in August 2006, so did the composition of the Council through the statutory rotation of membership. For the Potch bloc this was the moment they had been waiting for. From the Potch perspective the new Council had been "cleansed" of many of the so-called radical elements. In effect Potch "regained" control of the Council and could push through decisions. This was, according to one insider, a matter of meticulous planning and tactics.[13] In this way "we were always in control despite a minority within the Council". The first time from 2006 a decision did not go through was in 2009 when Council did not approve the appointment of Prof Daan van Wyk, who acted as the Vice-Rector of teaching-learning on the Potchefstroom campus. Prof Mariëtte Lowes was appointed.

From the Mafikeng perspective, the change in the Council's composition was a setback. The transformation agenda was weakened, if not wiped off the table.

Mayet, who was abroad when the change within Council happened, recalled his return: "Where have all my friends gone?"[14]

This was a turning point for the Council. It could shift the focus away from itself and turf wars to the day-to-day functioning of the university, which was still tenuous...

With greater support from the Council, Eloff and his NWU management could move forward with their agenda. For Eloff, success in the core business of teaching-learning and research was crucial – alongside and not before transformation. And as the merger progressed the NWU management could increasingly rely on the Council to back it during times of strife even if this meant doing battle with the Minister of Education.

The Council had faith in the NWU management. Eloff was a strong manager and took advantage of the trust in him. He did on occasion, probably with the best of intentions, run ahead of Council. The accusations of Bricksgate were not devoid of substance.

"There was always tension about to what extent does management listen to Council...and not just use Council as a rubber stamp. Those were always the big fights," says Tabane.[15]

Even so, the fights were becoming rarer because Council itself had changed and matured over time. Managerialism has begun to take root.

This is how the change over the years has been explained: "From an openly hostile atmosphere it was amazing how it gradually changed… Until you had a meeting where there was no open confrontation with each other and at the end you say: "Gee, how did we get here?"[16]

Sadly, at the time of concluding this book, Council meetings had again degenerated into occasions for ideological head butting.

CHAPTER 13
A DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE: WHERE IS THE GLUE?

"So, Theuns never had to make a choice and say, 'There will only be one head of finance'. There is not one. There is a head of finance in the institutional office and there is one on each campus."
— Rolf Stumpf, former Vice-Chancellor and higher education consultant [1]

On 6 August 2002 the plush Ministerial office on the 11th floor of Sol Plaatje House in Pretoria was shrouded in the toxic vapour of Kader Asmal's cigarettes.

The Education Minister, as was his habit, was chain smoking, even while hosting a small delegation from the PU for CHE and the UNW. As they sat down with Asmal, hopes were high that their arranged marriage would somehow be called off.

About halfway into the conversation, Asmal said, "Theuns, are you sulking?"

"Yes, but I will get over it," Eloff replied.

This was the day on which Eloff probably asked Asmal to consider a different type of union between the PU for CHE and the UNW, more along the lines of the Nowets consortium they had originally set their hearts on. Asmal probably refused.

It forced the merger partners to rethink their strategy. Eloff said: "Okay we will merge…but can we work it out ourselves?"[2]

Asmal agreed.

Although the lobbying against the merger did not succeed in preventing the unwanted marriage between the PU for CHE and the UNW, it perhaps contributed to concessions from Asmal on their ante nuptial contract.

What emerged was an organisational model that has been described as "having structural flaws", as being a "federal" structure and as "unique in the South African higher education landscape", but also as placing the university in an "iron cage" which contained "transformation and the building of a united university culture and single university brand". [3]

No matter the model's strengths or weaknesses, or what it is or isn't, it helped to cool down the heated merger negotiations. It was one of the breakthroughs. The model or structure would allow each campus a degree of independence. They could protect their existing cultures and preserve their histories. They could attempt to hang on to what was familiar and keep newness at bay for a while longer. Disconcertingly, it could even feel like business as usual.[4]

Ironically, the prospect of a degree of independence for the campuses was a double-edged sword. While this aspect of the management model helped chip away at resistance to the merger, it was also branded anti-transformational. This is why the organisational structure or model has perhaps been the single greatest source of criticism against the NWU merger. As the merger entered its second decade – following a difficult year in 2014 (see Chapter 20) – the model was closely scrutinised again as the strategic plan for the next decade came up for discussion.

Taking a step back: it was clear from the outset that neither Asmal nor his officials liked the way the NWU would be packaged: as an institutional office with "oversight" over three or four independent campuses.

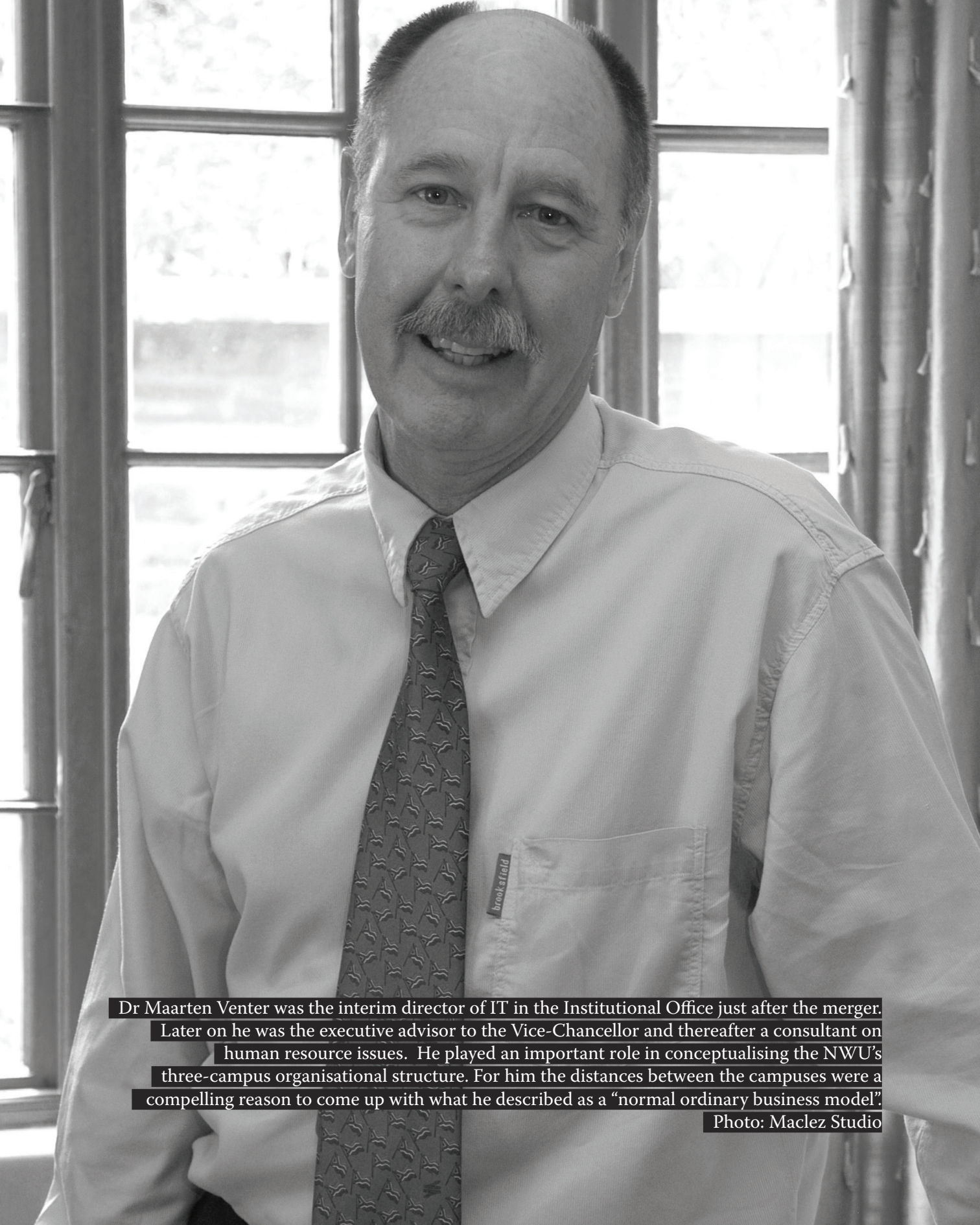
Nasima Badsha, deputy director-general for higher education, confirms that Asmal did not favour the federal model but recognised that it was a "pragmatic" option.

"We needed to get a model that everyone would buy in to," says Badsha.[5]

Although the model initially appeared to be the solution for some of the merger's peculiarities, its implementation has not been without glitches. One of the most pronounced complications has been programme alignment

April 2008
Pandor establishes a committee to probe transformation, including social cohesion, in higher education after a racist video made by students of the University of the Free State made international headlines.

26 May 2008
Students burn tyres and damage university property because of the expulsion of seven students for protests in March.



Dr Maarten Venter was the interim director of IT in the Institutional Office just after the merger. Later on he was the executive advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and thereafter a consultant on human resource issues. He played an important role in conceptualising the NWU's three-campus organisational structure. For him the distances between the campuses were a compelling reason to come up with what he described as a "normal ordinary business model". Photo: Maclez Studio

(see Chapter 16), which is the standardisation of core programmes across campuses. Another difficulty has been "Potchefication", referring to the perception that staff from the Potch Campus had a tendency to elevate processes and policies from Potch to institutional level and to act without consulting the other campuses (see Chapter 15).

Four campuses, one university

When Eloff joined the PU for CHE in 2002, Dr Maarten Venter had already been at the university for 24 months. Eloff's predecessor, Prof Carools Reinecke, had ended Venter's early retirement in 2000 by offering him an office and a job without a title to help the university's management team. The former Dean of economic and management sciences at the erstwhile RAU[6] had worked for Armscor, turned consultant and was later involved in the creation of Absa Bank when various banks merged, and[7] subsequently became the bank's group head of IT. As a former academic with extensive management and strategic know-how, Venter worked behind the scenes with Eloff to help conceptualise the NWU organogram. Eloff was the front man – the politician who had to sell the ideas of how the merger had to work to the UNW, his people in Potch and Asmal and his team in Pretoria. On top of that, Eloff the conciliator hoped for a "win-win merger".

This was wishful thinking, as Venter told Eloff: "Theuns, there is a win-lose and then the winner is gracious to the loser in the merger. There is no way in which you can organise so that both sides win. Someone has to say we are downsizing here and upsizing there; we are closing here and opening there. If you want to negotiate about everything you will never merge. I don't think he ever conceded on this point," he says.[8]

Indeed he did not. Eloff believed that the management model that Venter had come up with secured a "win-win merger". Much later Eloff explained it as follows: "…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. This was Eloff's mantra: Unity and diversity. Asmal wanted a "unitary merger" and Eloff believed he had given the Minister what he wanted.

In February 2002 – only two months after Asmal's National Working Group first proposed a merger between the PU for CHE and the NWU – Venter was already working on a management structure.

He wrote: "The Puk will have a complicated management task as a 'unitary institution' that has to steer an integrated university and technikon (Technikon North-West), as well as three geographies and distance technologies."[9]

By July 2003, literally weeks after the PU for CHE Council accepted the merger in principle, Venter had to a large extent nailed down the structure of the NWU and the accompanying organograms.[10]

The physical distances between the campuses were a compelling factor in developing the specific governance and management model of the NWU. To recap from the Prologue, the distance from Potchefstroom to Mafikeng is 220km; from Potchefstroom to the Vaal it is 110km; and from Vaal Triangle to Mafikeng it is 330km. But the distances do not reflect driving time. Potholes and suicidal drivers add significantly to time behind the wheel. Over the years several staff members have been in nasty accidents on these connecting arteries.

For Venter the logical way to transcend the distances was therefore a "normal ordinary business model" – similar to a business with a central office with branches. It would have been too costly to move all the campuses to one geographical area.

"When one uses geography (that is physical location) to define boundaries of one's division, it implies in most instances also a partitioning of the market," Venter said. "Since market needs may differ, it follows that geographical division can also imply variations in product offering. An extreme example: IBM uses a divisionalised structure to operate around the globe. Because of its size (and the size of the globe!) it even uses a hierarchical divisional structure with Africa a subdivision of the EMEA division. Because the needs of the African market differ from the needs of the European market, not all products that are offered in the European market are offered in the African market. However, the essence of geographic divisionalisation is that the customers of the (mother) firm are almost physically within the geography except for incidental presence of individuals from outside the geography. Example: Lots of customers of Game (Potchefstroom) live in or near Potchefstroom, but the manager of (the retail firm) Game (Potchefstroom) will not refuse to serve a visitor from Mafikeng because Mafikeng

20 June 2008
Peet van der Walt becomes the third chairperson of the NWU Council.

August 2008
Under the auspices of the NWU Human Rights Committee, the university conducts an Institutional Social Cohesion Audit. The results are presented to the Institutional Forum.

has its own Game. However, Game head office will intervene if Game (Potchefstroom) starts distributing leaflets in the Mafikeng geography advertising specials available in Game (Potchefstroom)."[11]

This is how the merger consultant Eric Mafuna describes the model: "[W]hat we are dealing with is a virtual institution. The concept of a unitary institution exists in the mind. The university is between campuses. Somewhere there is hovering something called North-West University. When you go to Potch campus you are not going to find the North-West University. When you go to the other two campuses the university is not resident there."

What then, one would ask, is the glue that binds the different parts of the NWU together? For Mafuna, the glue is that you are giving each one of these campuses its fair share of attention. It's a fair share in terms of all the things that matter: whether you talk about resource allocation, whether you talk about the quality of the teaching… In addition each campus brings a unique element to the bigger institution, be that the campus's culture or niche study areas.[12]

But for those critical of the merger the NWU continues to consist of separate parts, which exist overwhelmingly along racial lines. For them, the merger happened in theory, but not in practice. There is no glue.[13]

The model explained

The NWU has described itself as a unitary, multi-campus institution. As one Potchefstroom professor explained: "Everyone was used to avoiding the use of 'federal model'. It was not politically correct."[14]

In any event, the organisational model should not be seen as "federal", according to the NWU, because the university has one Council, one Senate, one Vice-Chancellor and one set of values, policies and procedures.

In terms of the model, the NWU has an Institutional Office in Potchefstroom, headed by the Vice-Chancellor, which is physically removed from the Potchefstroom Campus and housed in a separate building. Although staff members on the Mafikeng and Vaal Triangle campuses believe the Potchefstroom campus benefits from this geographical closeness – and they do in many instances – Potch staff experience the head office as removed from them. They refer to it as "institutional" or "C1".

The Institutional Office's main purpose is to create and maintain a unified organisation. In addition it is responsible for serving the institution, through its three campuses, in strategic planning, institutional policy development, institutional process design, overall institutional quality, budget apportioning to the three campuses and overall institutional branding and positioning. Operational matters requiring very scarce and specialised human resources capacity would be centralised in order to save costs and increase effectiveness and efficiency. Functions such as institutional finances, human resources, IT and co-ordination of teaching-learning, student administrative systems, research support and implementation of expertise, the secretariat and legal office were centralised at the Institutional Office and overseen by an Institutional Management of which the campus rectors are also part. This is often referred to as the shared services component of the Institutional Office and has been described as a "dotted-line" relationship between the Institutional Office and the three campuses.

In essence, then, the Institutional Office would not have any supervisory responsibilities over the campuses but would serve them by developing the strategy and planning required to maintain NWU's competitive advantage as a higher education institution in South Africa.

Furthermore, the three campuses and the Institutional Office would be equal but responsible for different functional areas.[15]

The three equal campuses are situated in Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vanderbijlpark, with a campus Rector heading each. The campus rectors are accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for day-to-day campus management. However, the three campuses are autonomous – within the bounds set by NWU policy – when it comes to providing teaching and learning, conducting research and transferring expertise (community service). In other words, they are not managerially or operationally subject to one another or to the Institutional Office but are bound by the framework of policies and processes approved for the university. Thus, their autonomy is relative rather than absolute.[16]

After 10 years of staunchly defending its management model, the situation changed in 2014 when the NWU Council instructed the institution to review its strategic plan for the next five years. When the new Vice-Chancellor Prof Dan Kgwadi started to talk about changes to the way the university was organised, he unleashed a torrent of opposition, notably from the Potchefstroom Campus. Such was the resistance that the mainly white union, Solidarity, has threatened legal action over what has been called the "one Dean one faculty model".[17]

Potchefstroom staff said they were concerned that a change may threaten Afrikaans, that there may be job losses and that they may have to move to Mahikeng.

Suddenly the previously forbidden term "federal" became the preferred terminology of everyone in favour of the status quo.

Fact is, the model has been contentious all along. Not everyone accepted the NWU's bona fides behind the model. This is why it took 18 months after the merger for the Minister to sign off the NWU's statute.

"…the governance and management model has served the university well during the first ten years of the merger. It allowed the three campuses to build on their respective strengths and address their weaknesses. However, it has not been sufficiently conducive to building an NWU-wide identity, culture and brand. This appears to be an ideal time to re-evaluate the overall management/governance structure of the university."
Van Vught report, 2014

CHAPTER 14
THE STATUTE

"It was the power of persuasion." — Molapo Qhobela, former official in the Department of Education on the approval of the 23rd version of the NWU statute [1]

With the model or structure down on paper, a statute for the UNW had to follow.

Interim Vice-Chancellor Theuns Eloff wanted to push the statute through the legal channels quickly. It would stabilise the merger.

But another battle was imminent.

It was through the statute that Eloff, with the help of the experienced Prof Chris van der Walt as his ally, safeguarded the most precious of the Potch heirlooms: Afrikaans. Eloff understood what had to be done to soothe the dissidents from Potch who were opposing the merger and wanted to pull it apart. After all, as an alumnus himself he was not unsympathetic towards his own people.

Van der Walt took the lead and the UNW was only on the periphery. Robert Kettles, who was registrar on the UNW side, explains: "The principal architect of the NWU statute was Prof Chris van der Walt, the Institutional Registrar. The Mafikeng Campus did not participate very actively in the process. I was assigned to work with Prof Van der Walt on the statute. It was clear from the beginning that he had a mandate to pursue the approach adopted on the statute of entrenching a highly divisional model, permitting maximum autonomy to the campuses. It was not articulated as such but it was clearly to maintain the character of the former PU for CHE as it then was. A proposal from my side to base the statute more closely on the joint institutional statute was rejected."[2]

The process of drafting a statute was set out in the Higher Education Act. According to the law each higher education institution had to have an institutional statute. This could not simply be borrowed from another university or bought on the Internet. It is a legacy document, which is supposed to stem from an institution's soul.

Initially, following the mergers, institutions had to use the Department of Education's standard institutional statute (SIS) to give them direction until they could come up with their own.

The department's approval of the statute was not automatic – especially if it deviated too much from the template. With its unusual organisational arrangement, the NWU statute was an anomaly.

Doing battle over the NWU statute

The power to approve the NWU's statute was in the hands of Naledi Pandor, Asmal's successor as Minister of Education.

Molapo Qhobela, a senior official in the higher education branch of the department at the time, remembers how her decision about the NWU hung in the balance.

"There were two substantive decisions – the one was the NWU statute, the other one was whether we still go ahead with the merger of Turfloop (University of the North) and Medunsa" (see Chapter 1).[3]

Pandor was the unlucky custodian of 10 mergers while in another six instances universities had to incorporate campuses that were previously part of other institutions. She managed the process competently but without the passion of Asmal, who drove the mergers vigorously, determined to leave them as part of his legacy. The officials in the department at the time were grateful that despite the pervasive crisis in South African education Asmal remained hands-on and committed to his flagship education project.

At the time Sanette Boshoff was the director of higher

25 August 2008
NWU receives first place in the 2008 PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance.

2 September 2008
Mafikeng Campus is closed and 49 students are arrested. Pandor appoints a task team to investigate these difficulties and the merger.

"Chris is a lawyer. He is very meticulous. I give him credit". Molapo Qhobela, senior official in the Department of Education, describes Prof Chris van der Walt as the architect of the NWU statute. Van der Walt was the institutional registrar after the merger.
Photo: Nico Blignaut

“The NWU won.”

Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education (2004-2009), inherited the merger process from Asmal. She did not want to sign off on the NWU statute, which provides for the three-campus organisational structure. Photo: GCIS

education management and support, which included dealing with legislative matters such as the statutes. She sums up her impression of Asmal: "From principle to nitty gritty. He was available."[4]

She recalls that Asmal had strong views on the NWU merger.

"Asmal was deeply concerned over federalism. The NWU was not only about a historical white institution that merged with a historical black institution. There was the further complication of language. So, if you had to transform …and get rid of all the baggage of the past you were faced with these two points of concern. If you then had a federal model our biggest fear was a disparity in quality. A BA programme on the Potchefstroom Campus should not be different from a BA programme on the Mafikeng Campus."

The battle over the statute was fought primarily between Nasima Badsha and Sanette Boshoff on the side of the department, and Eloff and Van der Walt, on the side of the NWU. Eben Boshoff as the chief legal representative of the department was also involved.

Perhaps the division of labour could be explained as follows: Sanette Boshoff, Eben Boshoff and Van der Walt dealt with the letter of the law; Badsha and Eloff with the spirit thereof.

The meetings over the statute were cordial but tense.

Sanette Boshoff and Van der Walt clashed. Both of them had strong views on the merger and on what the statute should look like. As a result there was much toing and froing of drafts over a considerable period of time.

Bone of contention

Both remember how a particular bone of contention was the term "campus Rector" as each of the three campuses, according to the NWU model, would have its own head.

Van der Walt recalls the debate around this: "Eben said it was illegal. 'Gee Eben, where do you see that?' [He said]: 'The word 'Rector' is not defined anywhere – not in the white paper, not in the green paper. It is nowhere. Ja, but usually…' I said: 'Wait, to say it is nowhere is different from saying it is illegal.' He said he did not know what the Minister was going to do with it. There it got stuck. The other thing I can remember was the way in which it [the name North-West University] was written." [5]

Sanette Boshoff confirms that "Campus Rector" was a sticking point. "The Higher Education Act provided for certain offices. There was no such thing as a campus Rector. What is it?" The spelling of North West was another.

However, the delay in the finalisation of the statute was not about "little words" and whether they were included or not. It was about the total submission that ultimately would go to the Minister. From Sanette Boshoff's vantage point it had to be more than a legal document. It had to embody the essence of what Asmal intended: access, equity and a break from the past. And there was a suspicion that Potch was attempting to preserve as much of its history as possible by pushing a federal arrangement.

Van der Walt's approach was different. He said he did not always pay too much attention to what Asmal wanted (such as the Minister's spelling preference for North West). He was legalistic, bureaucratic, strong-willed and sometimes as unmoveable as the Rock of Gibraltar in his determination to create a document that would serve and protect the institution and its interests. He was particularly concerned about Potch.

Van der Walt was instrumental in creating the legal framework of the NWU in accordance with what the new institution wanted. But he also dealt with practical matters. The initial sentate had 265 members. Just in terms of physically getting people to meetings in itself a virtual impossibility. It was reduced to 90 people.

Qhobela even calls him the "architect of the framework: Chris is a lawyer. He is very meticulous. I give him credit." [6]

But while Van der Walt and Sanette Boshoff were wrestling over the legal document, the statute's political acceptability was still in the balance. Eloff and Badsha were talking to each other and it was Eloff's political credibility, ultimately, which secured the approval of the statute.

Boshoff sums it up: "I think it is an open secret that everything which has been achieved by the NWU is thanks to Theuns. Look, they have wonderful people on the Council. They have wonderful people everywhere, but Theuns is the person with integrity. Even if you tell him this thing can be seen as federal…if he tells you it will not be applied federally, you give in at the end."

So, notwithstanding the concern of Asmal and his officials over the model's federal traits, they had to appreciate the model as a "solution of convenience". It secured buy-in from unwilling merger partners. By implication this meant

22 September 2008
The Mafikeng Campus reopens.

October 2008
The Ministerial Task Team led by Dr Joe Phaahla investigates the turmoil on the Mafikeng Campus and difficulties with the NWU merger.

uninterrupted academic functions and it also overcame the very real difficulty of distances between the campuses.

After 18 months and 23 versions the statute was finally approved.[7]

A decade later, Sanette Boshoff is sceptical about how the model has unfolded but is unequivocal in her assessment of how it happened.

"The NWU won."

Side-effects

The NWU model had two significant spin-offs, which have had an impact on several layers of the institution - the social cultural, the academic and the transformational levels. There are others, but Potchefication and the alignment of programmes emerged as the most prominent when the established NWU had to weave together its different parts.

"Asmal was deeply concerned over federalism. The NWU was not only about a historically white institution that merged with a historically black institution. There was the further complication of language. So, if you had to transform… and get rid of all the baggage of the past, you were faced with these two points of concern. If you then had a federal model our biggest fear was a disparity in quality. A BA programme on the Potchefstroom Campus should not be different from a BA programme on the Mafikeng Campus." – Sanette Boshoff, former official in the Department of Education

CHAPTER 15
POTCHEFICATION

"Potch campus is still the campus. You sit in a particular department and discuss… [and] the comment will come: 'But at Potch they do it like this...' Every time." — Staff member, Vaal Triangle Campus[1]

The management model coupled with the tension and mistrust between people spawned "Potchefication"[2]. It entered the merger conversation during the early days when, on the Mafikeng Campus, the staff "felt they could not match their counterparts in terms of the technical competence to implement the merger", leaving them feeling marginalised and disenchanted with the NWU. [3]

Then, once the merger had formally taken place, the new university had to align systems, policies and practices across the three campuses. Potchefication became the term to describe the dominance of the Potchefstroom Campus in these processes. Since the Vaal Triangle Campus and its staff used to be part of the PU for CHE, Mafikeng often tarred that campus and its personnel with the same Potchefication brush. But for many on the Vaal Triangle Campus, Potchefication by the Potchefstroom Campus was as real as it was for their colleagues in Mafikeng. Even staff members from the former Sebokeng Campus of Vista University were quick to gather that the Potch way of doing things was often seen as the only way of doing things.

In time the meaning of Potchefication evolved. From an anti-merger sentiment it flowed into a rejection of anything that could be associated with either the Potchefstroom Campus or its perceived ally 300m down the road - the Institutional Office. A meeting scheduled in Potch for all three campuses could be interpreted as Potchefication. A new IT system introduced by the Institutional Office for all three campuses could be rejected on the basis of Potchefication. A content change of a module by the Potch Campus without telling the Vaal Triangle Campus is an example of Potchefication that continues to come up. Introducing a new administrative system without communicating the technical changes to the campuses which have to use it is another example of Potchefication.

Potchefication was a power struggle. The merger between a black and a white institution plucked people from their post-democracy comfort zones. This was a merger between unequal partners. The PU for CHE was the bigger, older and richer partner. When dominance in numbers becomes paternalism – in particular if the contact is overwhelmingly and problematically racially aligned – a phenomenon such as Potchefication is likely to be the outcome.

Many of the staffers from the Mafikeng Campus felt they were protesting white *Baasskap.*[4] In Potch, staff members tended to be oblivious that their often well-intentioned efforts to act in the best interest of the NWU were experienced negatively. However, there were many occasions during which Potch simply did not pay attention to how other campuses were doing things. The assumption was that the old PU for CHE was simply better – no matter what.

A former staff member from the former Vista, which used to be an institution with seven [teaching] campuses, says Vista University as a multi-campus institution had had to introduce measures to ensure quality in the examination process, from the setting of papers to their moderation. When she arrived on the Vaal Triangle Campus after it had absorbed staff from Vista's Sebokeng Campus, she felt these quality measures were lacking in the school into which she was incorporated.

"We [Vista] were 15 years ahead. The quality was impeccable. The colleagues on the [Vista] campuses – many of them are now in top positions at other institutions – made

7 October 2008
Seven students from the Potchefstroom Campus are charged for their alleged involvement in a racist Facebook group.

16 October 2008
500 students disrupt graduation on Mafikeng Campus; police are called in.

Prof Thanyani Mariba, former Rector of the Vaal Triangle Campus (2010-2015), said Potchefication was a habit, which had to be challenged.
Photo: Vaal Triangle Campus

these academic inputs. I think if there was a synthesis of all our efforts [during the merger] everyone would have benefited. But my opinion is that it was simply thrown out and they said: 'We do as we do and that's final."

She attributes Potchefication to a racist perception: "Vista was a black university, therefore it must have been substandard." [5]

A staff member from the Vaal Triangle recalls that Mafikeng had "really good documentation" – procedure manuals. However he would often find Potch documents becoming NWU policy. "Remember, that university [Unibo] was established during apartheid – and only the best [was good enough] for them. They could appoint consultants... [to help with policies and systems]." [6] A counter view is that the glossily bound and beautifully presented documents were often unknown to the UNW people. Hence the documents were not tabled during working group sessions.

Be that as it may the outcomes of Potchefication were therefore that the best systems might not necessarily have been chosen or incorporated when the new university was established. In addition the ideas, systems and practices from Potch were sometimes rejected purely on the basis that they originated from the "wrong" campus and not for how effective they were. The loser in this fight was the NWU.

Potchefication snowballed during the foundational phase of the merger. It had the potential to hurt the NWU. It had to be tackled and managed. It required a mind shift from staff.

Staff on the Vaal Triangle Campus for instance could rightfully claim a bigger role in the academic process after the merger since their campus was no longer a mere satellite of the PU for CHE. Academics on the campus used to receive study guides and examination papers from their colleagues in Potch. In future, if a colleague in Potch was going to draft these documents, she should expect and accept valid input from her peer on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

Prof Thanyani Mariba, rector of the Vaal Triangle Campus from 2010 to 2015, said Potchefication was a habit, which had to be challenged.

"What would you expect from somebody who has worked here for 20 years while everything has always been centralised at Potch? When you engage with them they would say: 'But we have always done it like this.' …Normal, human behaviour."

Mariba says human nature also dictated that people resisted change. "Once you change, you lose control. Change always threatens you…I would say: Do we think it is the best way? We do it. If it is, we do it. If not, we look for alternatives. [But] the loyalty is still towards Potch. So you do find it here."

He said the Vaal Triangle and Mafikeng campuses have conscientised Potch not to dominate.[7]

Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, Potch Campus Rector from 2010 to 2015 has also taken heed of the inter-campus dynamics. When he arrived on the Potchefstroom Campus that year, he experienced it as dwarfing the other two campuses.

"I have worked hard to get rid of it. Potchefication is actually to say you act in a paternalistic manner. Many of the staff members on this campus thought they were being helpful , but the way they were offering their help was condescending. So as the Potchefstroom Campus we had to go forward as an equal partner with the other campuses. We cannot appear to be paternalistic; to know it all. We can offer our help if we are asked and we can offer our help to improve all campuses and a campus can decide to turn it down or not."

Van Schalkwyk does not believe the management model is to be blamed for Potchefication. He says people and the manner in which they do things are to blame. In addition, it could be a consequence of where we come from: "an apartheid system in which people thought they were better; they know better, etc".[8]

Vice-Chancellor Prof Dan Kgwadi, appointed as the Mafikeng Campus Rector in 2005, agrees that anti-Potch sentiments do not always emanate from the model – although he believes there was also a lack of understanding of the merger model. He explained how he experienced it while he was Rector:

"The fact is …just a simple appointment of a staff member… you have got to have your forms at the head office by the first of the month for that staff member to get a salary. You must know when the payroll runs. If the line manager fails to do that and sends it in somewhere around the 15th…come the end of the month and the staff member does not receive a salary: 'No I sent it to Potch.' And it is not about Potch. You just did not abide by the process. You failed in terms of the process and here we have a staff member who is not going to get a salary by the end of that month because you did not do the right thing and then you find a very quick and easy way to take the blame away from you. You will say Potchefstroom did this. You don't say it as if there is an Institutional Office. No, it is Potch Campus."[9]

16 October 2008
Students hold a march against racism on Potchefstroom Campus in response to a racist Facebook group.

21 November 2008
Eloff is appointed for a second term as Vice-Chancellor.

Although Potchefication manifested itself in many guises, it has, on occasion, been abused to obfuscate obstructionism. A plan or decision could always be blocked or rejected in the name of Potchefication. It superficialised the authentic, deep-rooted feelings behind the term when it originated.

After 10 years, Potchefication has faded somewhat into the background. Some people say they have not even heard the word "Potchefication" on campus in two years – even five – and that new appointees do not know about the existence of the word. However, its meaning has also mutated. It is no longer about choosing whether the PU for CHE or UNW has the best parking system or an expression of anti-merger sentiments; it has become a word that describes the attitude of superiority that staff members from other campuses still experience when they visit the Potchefstroom Campus. As such Potchefication remains a challenge for the three NWU campuses.

Another major and ongoing challenge, on a more technical level, has been alignment. Once again, goodwill across campuses has also been a requirement for success.

CHAPTER 16
ALIGNMENT RAISES TOUGH QUESTIONS

"Potchefstroom Campus still feels it knows best, the Vaal Triangle Campus is struggling to find its role in this process, and the Mafikeng Campus, at times, simply is against everything." — Stumpf report 2008[1]

The alignment of academic programmes across all three campuses of the NWU has been an arduous project – and remains one of the biggest ongoing post-merger challenges.

It was a direct offshoot of the three-campus model of the NWU.

On the one hand the sheer scope of the alignment has bedevilled rapid progress. On the other hand the already difficult and time-consuming process has been plagued by campus politics – a remnant of the estrangement during the early days of the merger, subsequently amplified by Potchefication. [2]

Initially, in the first year or two into the merger, the academic programme offerings on the three NWU campuses continued unchanged. In 2006 the PU for CHE (Potch and Vaal) offered 410 academic programmes and Mafikeng a total of 310.[3] In terms of the three-campus structure, only the core programmes were to be aligned[4].

But in 2007 the new Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) was in place, setting timelines and processes for academic alignment. From 2009, all new academic programmes[5] would have to fit into the framework and existing programmes would have to be amended to reflect the names and curricula content required by the framework. In addition to rethinking its academic programmes, the NWU had the opportunity to align them across campuses.[6]

When a consultant evaluated the management model in 2008, some interviewees felt that in professional programmes, "which are subject to some form of external validation (usually by a professional board) much progress had been made. This was due to the programme guidelines and expectations developed by these professional boards which meant that fewer differences existed in the programmes than would have been the case for general academic programmes such as those leading to the award of a BA or BSc degree for example."[7]

The faculties of Law at Potch and Mafikeng, for instance, had aligned their LLB programmes, which had to meet minimum national requirements. Similarly, their Faculties for Economic and Management Sciences, which train CAs, had to do so in accordance with the outcomes expected by the profession.

Prof Akbar Bootha, former director of the School of Accounting on the Mafikeng Campus, says he was satisfied with the alignment with the Potchefstroom Campus. He also believed the process worked because he and Susan Visser, the former director of accounting in Potch[8], knew each other well.[9]

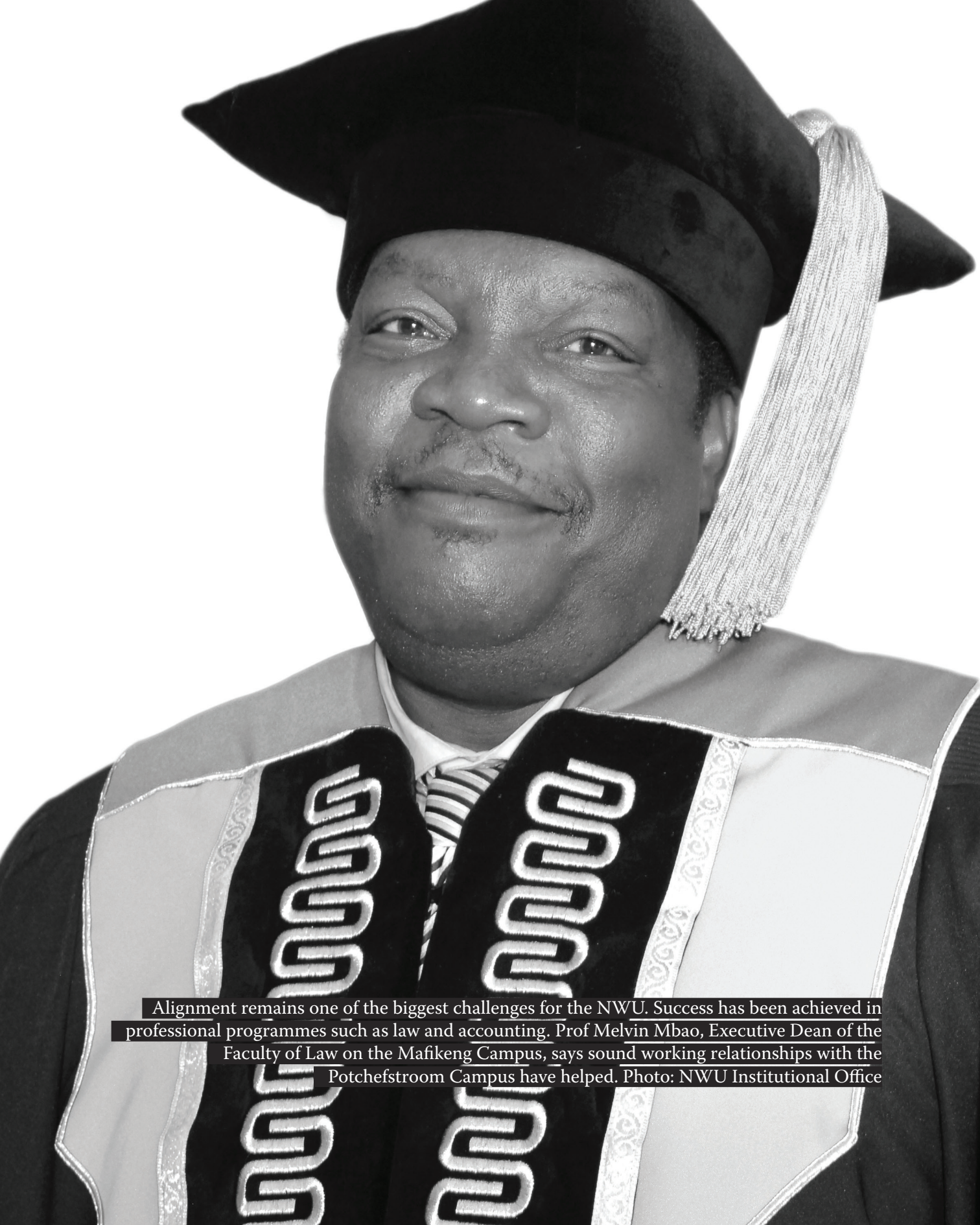
"I am happy with it [the alignment]. We sent our files to SAICA [South African Institute for Chartered Accountants]. They said: 'But you have the same [material]. We said: 'Yes, it is alignment. We write the same exam, we use the same study guide. Everything is the same."

The alignment of the LLB programme also took advantage of an external context: the Law Society's concern over the quality of law graduates required the development of a new curriculum. This encouraged Potch and Mafikeng to talk and work together.[10]

Prof Melvin Mbao, executive Dean of the Faculty of Law in Mafikeng, agrees that alignment benefited from the existence of a consortium of law faculties in the region before the

27 November 2008
The DST names the NWU Most Innovative Higher Education Institution in South Africa.

22 January 2009
The NWU honours one of its best-known alumni by holding the FW de Klerk exhibition in the Ferdinand Postma Library on the Potchefstroom Campus.



Alignment remains one of the biggest challenges for the NWU. Success has been achieved in professional programmes such as law and accounting. Prof Melvin Mbao, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Law on the Mafikeng Campus, says sound working relationships with the Potchefstroom Campus have helped. Photo: NWU Institutional Office

merger, as well as from sound working relationships.

"We used to talk about the LLB …The foundation was there… When alignment for law came it was easier," says Mbao.[11]

Whereas the core subjects are the same on the two campuses, there are still differences. The two campuses could not agree on the electives. In Mafikeng the teaching is in English; in Potch the teaching is in Afrikaans.

The main challenge now is to ensure that employers do not distinguish between a degree from Mafikeng and one from Potch (although degree certificates only carry the name of the NWU and not the campus).

The international panel which reviewed the merger in 2014 confirms: "Several programme alignment processes appear to have worked well, particularly in the professional areas such as LLB."[12]

Whereas the alignment process certainly progressed in some areas, the general assessment on its progress was much bleaker. This came to the fore in two other investigations done in 2008 and 2009. In these, alignment was interpreted in a wider sense to include closer inter-campus collaboration.

This is alluded to in the Phaahla report (see Chapter 18), the outcome of the 2008 Ministerial probe into the merger, which was triggered by the upheaval on the Mafikeng Campus. It states: "The university should devise a strategic programme to actively encourage co-teaching and student exchanges as part of its drive to attain full academic alignment. While the Task Team acknowledges that such a programme will inevitably need some further funding, we suggest, however, that in the meantime some of the funds that are being used in other areas, such as social functions, can be directed partly to the exchange programme."[13]

A year later the HEQC committee also put its finger on the spot:

"The merger cannot be regarded as having been fully accomplished until the process of programme alignment embarked upon is complete, and more significant progress has been made towards the achievement of the transformational objectives. That students receive the comparable levels and quality of programmes on all three campuses, is the crucial hallmark of an integrated institution. These are issues requiring urgent and decisive actions."[14]

It was around this time (13 July 2009) that Dr Maarten Venter also wrote about how the NWU should go forward with the alignment process: "We should study in much more depth than currently what our 'staple offerings' must be: those programmes (and for that matter those modules) that will be offered on all campuses. These should be totally aligned in every respect, from quality to assessment. All other programmes should be investigated to discover the amount of similarity or overlap between campuses, and rather than alignment discussions, we should have discussions on how to position such programmes further from each other."

He added: "Maximise the differences in programme offerings per campus; or inversely, minimise the overlap or similarity in programmes per campus."

He continued: "It is true that for a long time to come, we will assist 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 only having to choose one of our campuses based on the programme offerings on that campus. If we do not go this route, we will end up with our campuses competing with each other to gain students, rather than competing with other universities." [15]

But it is the idea of having unique offerings, of not competing with each other, that has created some tension between the same disciplines on different campuses. In addition, language has been a stumbling block.

An academic on the Vaal Triangle Campus explains: "We will add a programme to the PQM[16]…Potch should [therefore] not offer the programme. It is a Vaal Triangle programme. Then Potch start to offer it. Just like that. Then they start to change the programme. They don't talk to the people here… They are experts. It is the disrespect for the fact that we are in this together."[17]

Former Vaal Triangle Campus Rector Prinsloo says "If the best scholar in a subject is on the Vaal Campus, the postgraduate students from the other campuses should take advantage. Or the best academic should draft the study guide and a panel could decide on examination questions… I am afraid there are still fiefdoms in certain places."

According to an academic from Mafikeng, alignment has been uneven across faculties. He said: "Yes, in Potch they are on their own and here they are on their own. That is why the alignment in certain faculties is slower if you compare it to

February 2009
The Phaahla report raises questions about the success of the merger and urges the NWU to fast-track its transformation process.

March 2009
The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Institutional panel visits the NWU for its first audit.

the faculty of economy and management and with the faculty here. Law is also going faster, but law is a different type of alignment, the law papers from Potch are moderated here and our papers are moderated in Potch. The moderation works like that and at least the paper and the memorandum are in Afrikaans and English."[18]

Indeed the language differences between the campuses have been an obstacle to alignment.

By 2014 the international merger audit panel was still concerned about the alignment process, but stated that the appointment of a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor for teaching and learning should bolster the NWU's alignment efforts.

Even so it was clear to the panel "that a great deal of further work has to be done here".[19]

The importance of academic alignment was this: The credibility of the NWU as a unitary institution hinges on it. Intrinsically the silofication of academic disciplines across campuses amounts to self-sabotage. Campuses simply have to start combining their strengths if they want to unleash the full might of the NWU – in particular on the research front where it is making huge strides.

Prinsloo makes the case: "The time has come for some tough questions on alignment."

Potchefication and alignment were not the only teething problems to beset the NWU. As the merger progressed there were others crises too.

CHAPTER 17
MOER DIE BOER

"I was more scared than I was of the AWB." — Theuns Eloff, Vice-Chancellor of the NWU, on being caught up in student protests on the Mankwe Campus[1]

Early on the morning of 1 November 2005 the Mankwe Campus of the NWU had long been awake. In fact, it never went to sleep the previous night.

A pack of agitated students were waiting for the arrival of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Theuns Eloff.

They were looking forward to a showdown with the managers of the NWU who wanted to close their university campus and turn it into a Further Education and Training (FET) college[2].

Located near the rural town of Mogwase in the Moses Kotane Local Municipality – about 60km from Rustenburg – the Mankwe Campus brought higher education into a deep rural pocket of the North West Province.

On the morning of 1 November the students wanted the Vice-Chancellor to receive their objection document personally. After all, when he had campaigned for the vice-chancellorship just more than a year earlier, they had heard him say twice that the Mankwe Campus would remain open. Even the former Minister of Education Kader Asmal had promised that the university mergers would not lead to campus closures.[3]

When the students spotted the Vice-Chancellor's metallic dove-grey 320 BMW they changed gears.

This is how Eloff recalls the event: "I was slightly early and I phoned Dan [Kgwadi]. He said he would come. It was about 7:30. I saw a group of students…dancing and so on. They opened the gate and I entered and parked. As I got out of the car and looked around I saw about 100 students running towards me…the Collins chap [Collins Mokone] came to greet me. Some [students] jumped on my car…fortunately he [Collins] told them to stop. Dan phoned to say he would be there shortly. [But when he arrived, the students refused to let him in]. And I walked to the gate…That must have been what Piet Retief felt like. I felt so…they did not touch me, but I felt them…and I only walked until I reach the gate."[4]

As Eloff approached the gate the students were chanting: "Moer die Boer! Moer die Boer!" [5]

For Mafikeng Campus Rector Dan Kgwadi the morning's events were "breath-taking". "When Theuns said: 'I am already here'. I said: 'Oh, that is now bad…' Theuns does not know these things. You don't go into an environment…into that. It becomes dangerous. They could do all kinds of...I was really surprised. I saw how brave he is. He has got to face a situation and he goes into it."[6]

Outside the gate Eloff and Kgwadi and staff members from the Mankwe Campus waited for the students to hand over their objection document. When they addressed them later on to explain the future of Mankwe the students insulted them.

The anger directed at them was part of a much bigger emotional torrent springing from the students, many staff members, the surrounding community and even from the Mafikeng Campus.

Mankwe was closing and they resisted. They wanted Mankwe to stay open, even expand. The students' discontent would escalate in the days to come.[7]

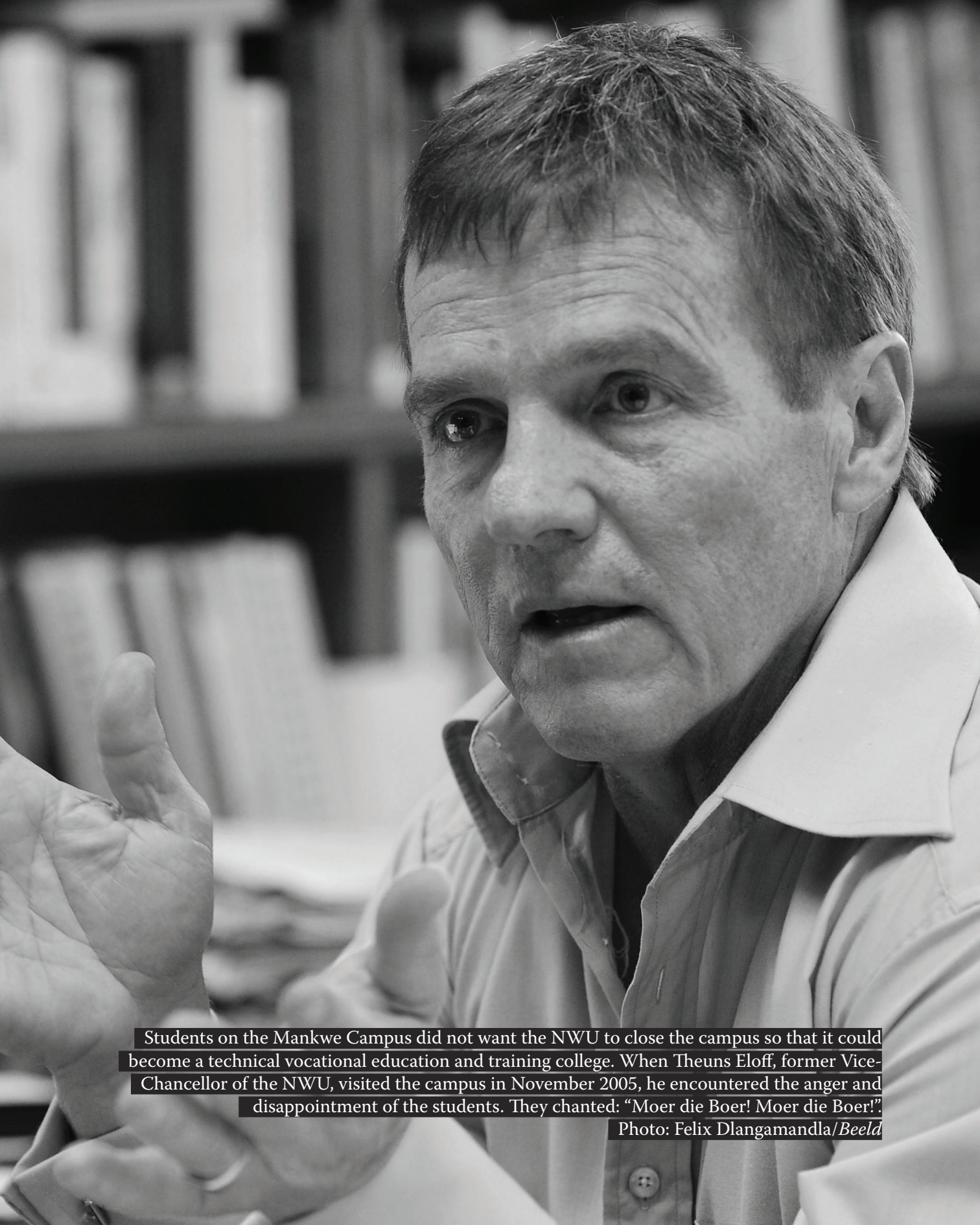
Mankwe's future in the balance

The UNW Council decided at the end of 2003 that the new university would have to decide on the future of Mankwe.

Its prospects of staying open were grim and to make matters worse the decision about its future would become a drawn-out affair, which unfolded largely within the NWU Council. One moment the NWU Council recommended

13 and 14 March 2009
The NWU Council holds a two-day workshop that focuses on the longer term future of the NWU and culminates in the 2020 vision and mission.

July 2009
The new Minister of Higher Education, Dr Blade Nzimande, announces that his department is planning a national conference on racism to discuss transformation and discriminatory practices at tertiary institutions.



Students on the Mankwe Campus did not want the NWU to close the campus so that it could become a technical vocational education and training college. When Theuns Eloff, former Vice-Chancellor of the NWU, visited the campus in November 2005, he encountered the anger and disappointment of the students. They chanted: "Moer die Boer! Moer die Boer!". Photo: Felix Dlangamandla/*Beeld*

closure only to recant at the next meeting and say it was not an option. Ultimately the university management pushed through the closure and the Council followed – a strategy that the institutional management had used before: do first; ask permission later.

Although the students would leave once they graduated and were perhaps not the main determinant in the future of the campus, they were desperate for its longevity. Having a university down the road – in their rural town – was giving them and their brothers and sisters access to a university – and being a student gave them status and prospects.

Mafikeng Campus Rector Kgwadi explains: "You were dealing with sentimental issues. The community there felt like… this is status. We are losing a status."[8]

On a practical level the students objected to taking their studies to the NWU Mafikeng or Potchefstroom campuses, both 220km away, where they could not afford the residences and the food.

They had many questions. "Why should we travel all the way to Mafikeng? We don't know anybody there. There are none of our family members there. Who is going to look after our kids? Who is going to feed them? We want a university within walking distance."[9]

Unknown entity

From February 2004, 30 days after the merger, Eloff was vigorously gathering more intelligence on the Mankwe Campus. By now he had seen the reports and the balance sheet. In the short term he had to find a way to plug the hole into which millions of rands were disappearing annually.

The possibility of cooperating with an FET college in some way or another was an early consideration. In fact, on 28 May 2004 Maryna Marais, CEO of Orbit FET College, had already visited the campus with Dr Maarten Venter of the Institutional Office. She was convinced that her council would approve a takeover (and undertook to have a follow-up conversation with her superiors in the North West Education Department. FET colleges at the time were still the responsibility of provincial departments of education). [10]

By now the university knew it could not make money off the land on which the college was built. As a matter of fact it was not clear who owned the land – at least initially. On the one hand was a claim that the campus was on tribal land; on the other that it was municipal property. Later on it emerged that the whole area was still being transferred from the previous Bophuthatswana government to the local government and only then would it be transferred to the NWU. [11]

Furthermore, an investment of about R11,9 million would be needed to repair the buildings on the campus. Although functional and well-built they had not been maintained.

"We lost R5 million a year. There was not proper quality control. The links between Mankwe and Mafikeng were weak. And we decided we had to get rid of it," Eloff says.[12]

On 18 June 2004 the Council decided "that the situation of the Mankwe Campus, in the light of the low student numbers, should be reviewed." A Management Investigation Team consisting of Dr Maarten Venter and Dr Ngoato Takalo, Vice-Rector, who had already been looking into further education and training possibilities on the campus, was now mandated to talk to all relevant parties, including the provincial department of education. It also consulted with the Mafikeng Campus's Staff Association and the Mankwe Representative Group (MRG).[13]

Two fact-finding reports, one in August and the other in September, followed. In the first one several possible strategies for the Mankwe Campus were put forward, including closure, turning it into a pure teacher training college, significantly expanding its general university training, transforming it into a hospitality school, turning it into a specialist campus for the Business Schools, improving its current focus and adding FET-type programmes or transferring it to an FET service provider.

Subsequently, in the second report, only two options remained. Firstly, to keep the Mankwe Campus, but with an improved focus and with additional FET-type programmes; and secondly to transfer Mankwe to an FET service provider. Another meeting with the Orbit FET College CEO Marais and the North West Education Department's head Abe Seakamela indicated that they were still positive about taking over the Mankwe Campus.[14]

In the meantime staff from the Mankwe Campus challenged the report of the Investigating Team, saying it did not provide an "accurate picture" of the campus and that much of the information was either "incorrect" or "hopelessly out of date". After providing detailed background on the history of the campus, its facilities, staff and programmes, they made recommendations, including a request that Mankwe be given three years to prove its viability. The three

July 2009
Eloff is elected Chairperson of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

17 September 2009
Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi is inaugurated as the second Chancellor, and Eloff as Vice-Chancellor for a second term.

years should commence with the implementation of new programmes, and all the necessary resources should be in place; for example, all modules must have a lecturer.[15] In addition they asked that the earlier turnaround recommendations of PriceWaterhouseCoopers be put to work – such as that a governance structure be implemented, a campus manager appointed and that Mankwe be given the staff and a budget for day-to-day running costs, covering basics such as stationery, repairs and photocopiers.

But this letter could not change the fate of the campus. When the Investigating Team of Venter and Takalo reported back to Council on 8 October 2004 it seemed as if Mankwe's days as a satellite of the NWU were numbered. The Council asked the institutional management to start the processes and set up the structures to deal with staff members who might be affected by a change in the status of the Mankwe Campus. Furthermore Takalo and Venter had to implement the resolution. Later on they were called "saboteurs" and were undesirable persons on the campus – if not the area.

Venter says: "I took it [the closure] up to a point when I was so persona non grata with that bunch that CFC[16] had to do the formal closure."[17]

In November 2004 the NWU Council appointed another Task Team. The Network Task Team consisted of external Council members who had to talk to those affected, including community leaders in the Mogwase area and education officials. The Council members were Dr Lydia Sebego, Gulam Mayet and Siphiwe Ngwenya.[18]

They met with a long list of influential people and groups: the Premier of North West Edna Molewa, the MEC for Education OJ Tselapedi, Dr Anis Karodia, deputy director-general of the North West provincial department of education, traditional leaders including Kgosi Pilane and Kgosi Shongwane, the Mankwe SRC, the Staff Association, the MRG, as well as the national Department of Education's Merger Unit.

The process was slow. Eloff remembers that the community did not buy into the idea; neither did the students. He spoke to some of the Kgosis.

"They said: 'You are taking away our university?'"

Eloff: "We are not taking it away. It is not going away. We are negotiating with the FET college and the type of thing that the FET college does will give more people in the surrounding areas work. They bought it. The staff did not have a choice. They had to go to Mafikeng or Potch … But for the students the closure was a major thing. Obviously it was major politics."[19]

There was also politics within the Council. For Task Team member Mayet the closure was also a difficult matter, considering the economic growth in the area at the time. He believed that although it appeared to be an economic inevitability, more should have been done to obtain resources for an "unusual merger" and to save the Mankwe Campus given its location. He said: "…[T]hey should have improved on it – where people were able to come to a local university and not have all the cost associated with it and in the Rustenburg area which was a booming area. You would think that they would do something there. One would think they had a hidden agenda to do something in Rustenburg itself, but whether they ever did that or not I don't know."

By April 2005 the Mankwe Campus was out of breath. It had been kept alive by politicking and students were beginning to display their dissatisfaction.

Mankwe an FET college[20]?

On 15 April the Council condemned the looting of university assets and damage to property that occurred on 13 April at Mankwe and requested [Collins] Mokone, the SRC president in the campus, to renounce and condemn such actions.

The Council Task Team of Sebego, Mayet and Ngwenya reported in June that "the Mankwe Campus did not appear to be adapted to be a sustainable and viable fully-fledged university campus, both on financial and educational grounds." However, the greater Mogwase/Bojanala area and communities wanted and need a higher education or post secondary education facility.

This was the time when the education authorities, nationally and provincially, started to focus more sharply on the role of FET colleges and increased their support to the sector through substantial funding and a new curriculum. It was against this backdrop that the North West provincial department of education remained enthusiastic about taking Mankwe over as an FET site.

Hence by June 2005, the Council decided that the land and buildings of the Mankwe Campus should be returned to the provincial department of education and that the NWU should continue to rent some of the buildings and attach its name to it. The consultations with staff were halted until there was clarity on the future of the campus as an FET college (since there was a possibility of them staying and taking jobs at the college). Students did not sign the

16 October 2009
The Potchefstroom Campus celebrates its 140th anniversary. The main event is the unveiling of the statue of Totius on the campus. At the end of 2015 it was moved to an unknown location.

November 2009
Prof Thanyani Mariba appointed to replace Prof Piet Prinsloo as Vaal Campus Rector in 2010.

agreement at the beginning of 2005 agreeing to relocate.

In June, therefore, the Mankwe Campus appeared to be closing as a university site. But by September, the closure was off [21]. This was the decision that was taken:

"The Mankwe Campus will not be closed down. Instead, the provincial department of education will be engaged to take over a sizeable portion of the campus to offer FET courses that would respond to the needs of the communities around Mankwe area. In addition, North-West University will retain a visible higher education (HE) presence at Mankwe by using it as a delivery site for selected programmes.

"These programmes will be selected on the basis of financial and academic viability, as well as the needs of the greater Mogwase/Bojanala region. This will include part-time education programmes (for example the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and the BEd (Hons)). Other areas that will be considered are financial and management training, as well as tourism management.

"A Task Team, consisting of the Mafikeng Campus Rector Kgwadi and Mafikeng registrar Mr Robert Kettles, as well as a representative from the Moses Kotane Municipality, would consider the introduction of courses at certificate level in the subjects that were in demand in the area, with a link between FET and HE, and also possibly in preparation for the HE programmes in the future.

"Management will now implement this decision. This will include interacting with staff and students about the future of the college in 2006 and also involving the provincial department."[22]

Anxiety, anger and closure

On 21 October Kgwadi conveyed the decision to staff and students and in a follow-up meeting explained the practical implications to students. These included that no new full-time students would be registered in 2006, that part-time ACE and BEd (Hons) would be retained and new students recruited where appropriate, and that the 80 full-time BA, BCom, BSc and BEd (foundation phase) students had to relocate to the Mafikeng Campus (or any of the other two campuses). The students who had to move to Mafikeng would receive an allowance of R8 600 per annum until they had completed their studies. In addition, Kgwadi said, Science and Commerce Foundation students would complete their studies, but no new students would be recruited. He said the possibility of National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) students using the Mankwe Campus would be investigated and the NWU, together with the municipality, would investigate the needs of the greater Bojanala area to see which courses had to be presented from 2007 onwards.

This was not what the students wanted to hear.

The tension that had been building up on the Mankwe Campus for nearly two years had finally reached breakpoint.

Two days later, on 28 October, the Mankwe SRC president Mokone walked unannounced into the office of Vice-Chancellor Eloff in Potchefstroom.

The event was described in great detail in an institutional management report: He "demanded an appointment. After rescheduling of meetings Dr Eloff saw Mr Mokone. During the meeting, Mr Mokone requested that the decision of relocating the students to Mafikeng should be phased in. Dr Eloff once again went over the process with him and undertook to consider this request in consultation with Dr Kgwadi. Mr Mokone also requested Dr Eloff to come to the Mankwe Campus to address the students on this issue. Dr Eloff responded by saying that he would be available on Tuesday morning, 1 November, for this purpose and would confirm the arrangement."

Shortly after the meeting the students of the Mankwe Campus announced that they were embarking on a demonstration. It was on 1 November that Eloff had to face the angry students when he arrived to receive the students' document of objection.

The documents and demands that the students had formulated were clear on what they did not want. They did not want the Mankwe Campus to become an FET college.

This was how they expressed their frustration in one of their protest documents addressed to Eloff: "[W]e believe that there is a hidden agenda behind this decision taken by the Institutional Management or by yourself, students perceive this as a racial move and an insult to the students studying in Mankwe Campus and the Community at large (Because the Institutional Management thinks the Bojanala Region does not deserve an Institution of Higher Education but they deserve an FET College.)."

But on 2 November, the executive committee of the NWU Council told the institutional management to continue with the process. Under the surface, emotions were becoming charged again.

2009
The NWU announces it will be sponsoring the National Press Club's Journalist of the Year competition from 2010.

21 February 2010
The NWU receives two awards during the PanSALB annual multilingualism awards ceremony.

According to the institutional management report on Mankwe Kgwadi phoned Eloff early on 11 November. The students had started to burn tyres and had flooded the entry hall to the administration with water. It appeared that they wanted to disrupt the examination that was due to start that day.[23]

Kgwadi, in consultation with Eloff, closed the campus until further notice. Arrangements were made that the students who wanted to write examinations do so at a nearby hall. The others had to leave the campus by 4pm.

"This notice was followed by a flurry of phone calls from the students to, amongst others, the chair and the deputy-chair of Council, the Premier and the Mayor of the Moses Kotane Municipality."

Eventually, Kgwadi had to return to the campus and after more talks late on the Friday night, agreement was reached that the students would begin to write their examinations on the Monday morning, 14 November.

The examinations were concluded without further strife.

There were about 80 students resisting the Council decision. They all had to relocate to Mafikeng, and would receive allowances, some of which would include food allowances.

But by the end of 2005 an agreement had been reached with the provincial department of education to take over a section for FET training that would cater for the needs of the surrounding community.

On 24 March 2006 the NWU Council tackled the institutional management for "not implementing" a Council decision. It was determined to enforce its earlier decision.

It stated: "That management did not demonstrate good leadership when changing a Council decision following consultations with students in January 2006, thereby not only disregarding a Council resolution, but also disregarding earlier consultations with all stakeholders."

But the NWU management, despite its "assurance that there has been no intention to undermine Council's [earlier] resolution", appeared equally adamant about drawing a line under the Mankwe matter.

In response to the Council's criticism it stated that it had been in the process of implementing the Council's decision when it had received a petition from Mankwe students in the programmes BA Conservation, Tourism and Sustainable Development and BEd, demanding relocation to the Mafikeng Campus. Their reasons were "quality of education and financial incentive".

Only seven students had not signed the petition, but it was not feasible to retain seven lecturers for these few bodies. With the intervention of the mayor of the Moses Kotane Municipality, four of the seven students also decided to go to the Mafikeng Campus. Only three could not relocate because they were employed in the region and were studying part time.

However, the NPDE was still being offered at Mankwe.

Management stated "that students were not requested by management to relocate and that management was even taken 'off guard' as they were initially not ready to admit an additional forty students".

Staff members were also being relocated to Mafikeng and Potchefstroom.[24]

The future of Mankwe after 2007 had to be determined by a further study about the educational and skills needs in the region, as well as the educational and financial viability of any programmes. There was no evidence that this study was ever done. Mankwe Campus was closed.

In hindsight Eloff says the matter could have been handled better: "I said publicly it would not be closed."

Eloff's view was echoed from the Mafikeng Campus. On an emotional level the closure of Mankwe had an influence on how staff members from the Mafikeng Campus experienced the merger. One senior staff member explains:

"So initially they were working on four campuses but then Mankwe was closed down and then people became a little bit uncooperative on this campus, because they said we agreed on four and now it is only three. That was peculiar, because I went there and I knew what was happening there, That campus was neglected for a long time and that area was full of things like termites, for instance they had them in the library, right through the whole structure. There was no maintenance on the campus… So I know that that was a relief to the new institution to close Mankwe, but the people did not understand it, because we close Mankwe but they [Potch] didn't close Vaal."

■■■

CHAPTER 18
'WE ARE GOING TO THE GATE'

"It is exorcising the demons...and all hell breaks loose. And it had to." — Prof Dan Kgwadi, Mafikeng Campus Rector, later Vice-Chancellor of the NWU[1]

In 2008 – four years into the merger – the Mafikeng Campus was in flames. Such was the upheaval that the academic year was punctuated by three disruptions – in March, May and September. The last one lasted for about 42 days.[2]

The intensity of the events which played out in 2008 was unusual even though student protests were part of the Mafikeng Campus's institutional core, moulded during the Bophuthatswana days when it was also a site of struggle against apartheid. "We are going to the gate" became the expression that students used to signal action.[3] Often their dissent was not limited to a gathering at the university's entrance gate, but rolled destructively across the campus.

Student demonstrations were a regular feature of the South African higher education environment post-1994. In an open society, student politics could thrive and leaders raise their banners on behalf of their constituencies, in particular over the dire shortage of funds for poor students to go to university or complete qualifications. On the Mafikeng Campus, the state of post -'94 student politics was robust. An SRC would be elected in September and by March the next year students would revolt because the SRC would be underperforming. Following the merger, the university recorded periods of upheaval in 2004, 2006 and 2008 over accommodation, fees, the SRC and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

The outburst in 2008 did not therefore come out of the blue. But it was different not only because of how many days it lasted – and the fact that two staff members were injured – but how the Mafikeng and NWU management dealt with it. It was as if a wave of destructive energy emanating from the students' anger was heading for an immoveable force: campus Rector Prof Dan Kgwadi, supported by Vice-Chancellor Theuns Eloff and, in time, the Council of the university. Kgwadi was set on changing the culture on the campus. There would be no leniency and tolerance. The decision would come at a cost.[4]

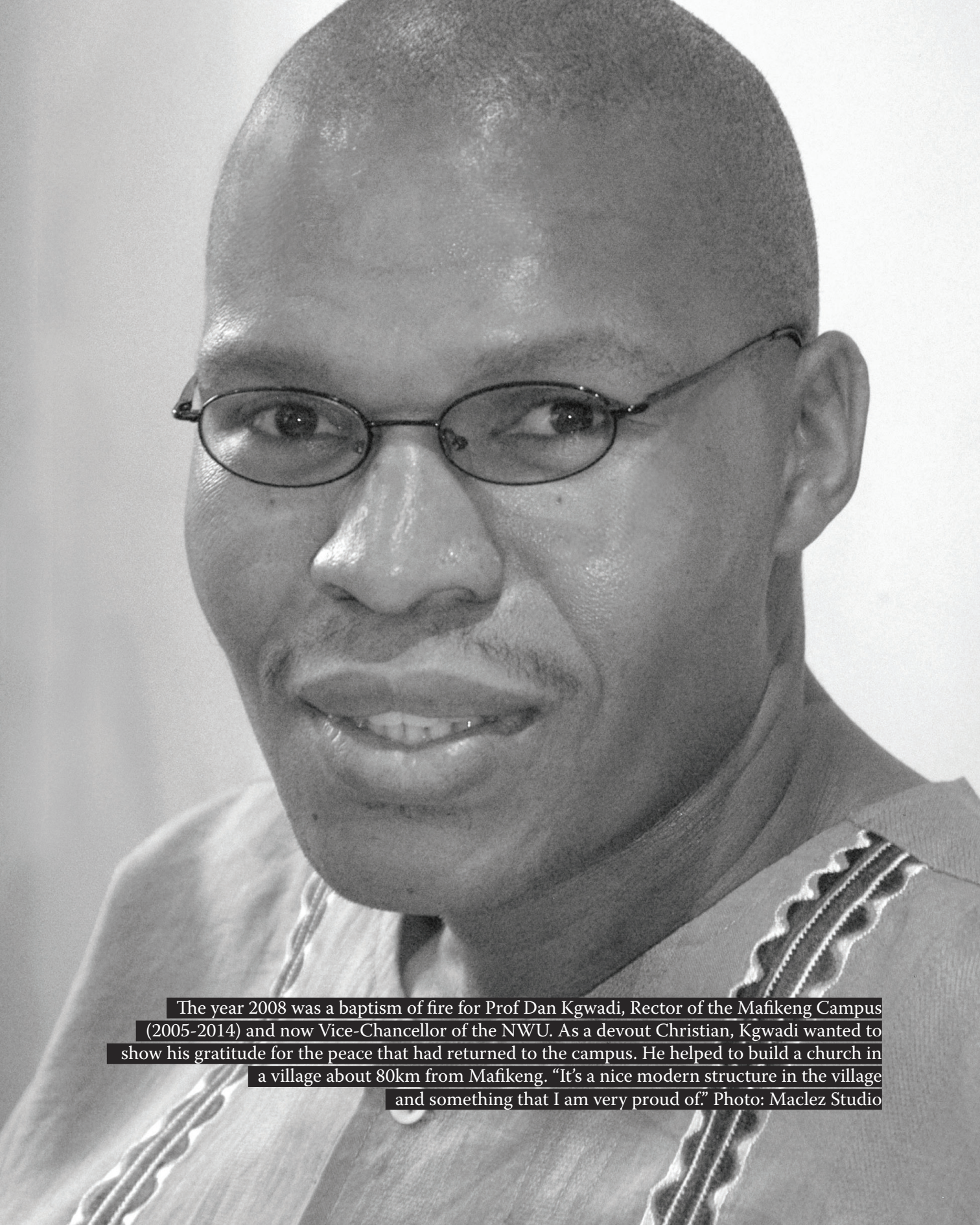
In 2008 the clash between management and the students was about a 13% hike in fees. Management blamed the South African Students Congress (Sasco), saying that if Sasco was not in charge of the SRC it challenged the SRC's decisions [in this instance about tuition]. Fee increments were negotiated at the end of 2007, but a few months later, at the start of 2008, Sasco wanted to renegotiate. When management refused, trouble ensued. The students argued that a Council decision in 2005 to equalise the fees of the three NWU campuses was flawed since Mafikeng students could not pay the same as students in Potchefstroom because they did not receive the same levels of service.[5]

On 6 March 2008 a total of 46 students were arrested when they blocked the entrance to the university. The police used rubber bullets to disperse a crowd preventing others from entering the campus. Students were prohibited from damaging property and on 8 March were ordered to leave the campus, which was closed.[6]

A few weeks later, at the end of May, students went on the rampage again following the expulsion of four students and the suspension of another three for their involvement in the March protests. They questioned the disciplinary process that was followed. A particular gripe was that wrongdoers on the Potchefstroom Campus were not treated as harshly as those on the Mafikeng Campus. Campus property was set alight. Stones were thrown. Even so, a temporary agreement

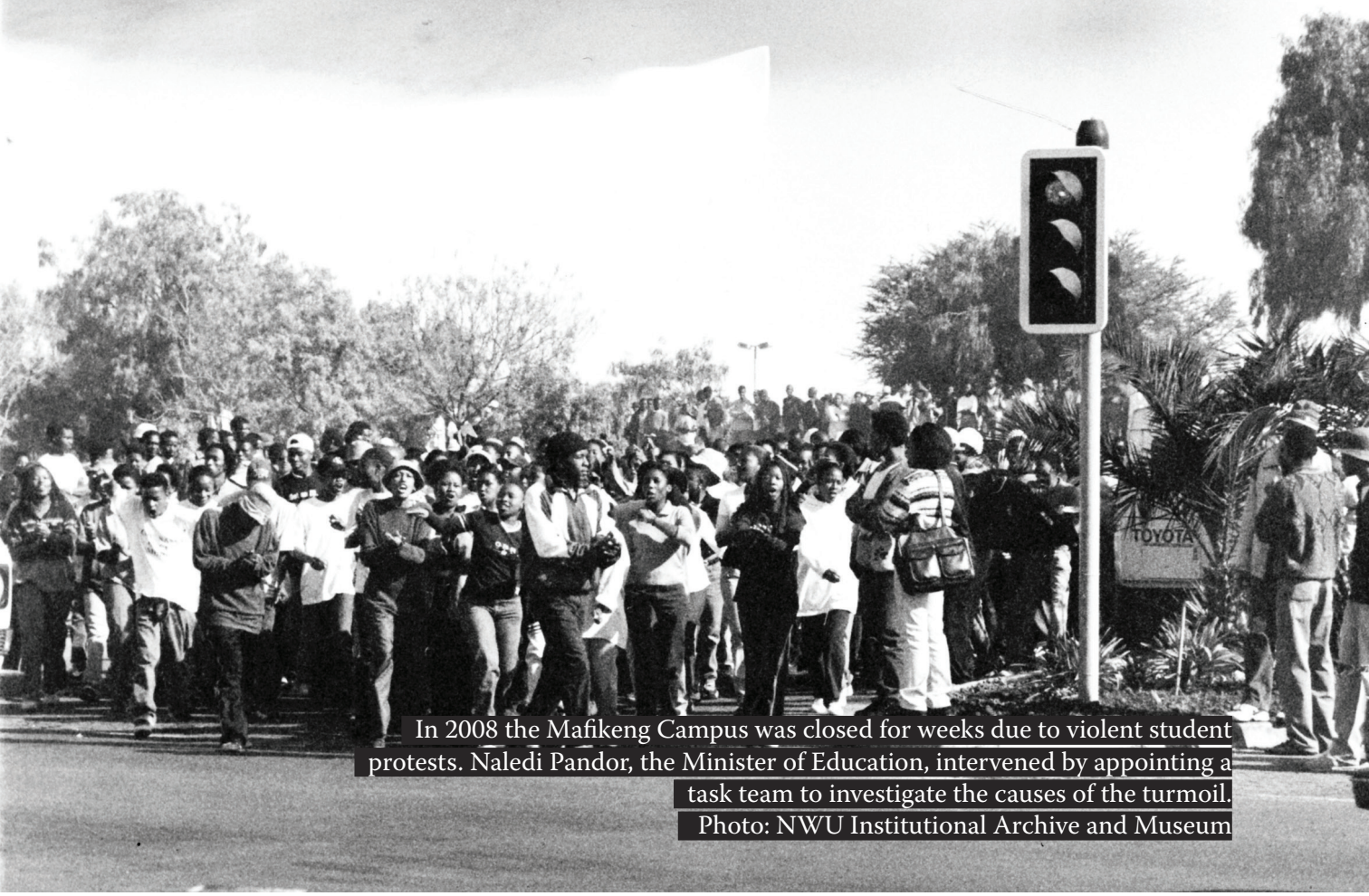
23 March 2010
Prof Herman van Schalkwyk is inaugurated as the second Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU.

12 May 2010
The final report of the HEQC Institutional Audit is issued. The NWU is commended for its robust teaching-learning and research, but criticised for transformation matters.



The year 2008 was a baptism of fire for Prof Dan Kgwadi, Rector of the Mafikeng Campus (2005-2014) and now Vice-Chancellor of the NWU. As a devout Christian, Kgwadi wanted to show his gratitude for the peace that had returned to the campus. He helped to build a church in a village about 80km from Mafikeng. “It’s a nice modern structure in the village and something that I am very proud of.” Photo: Maclez Studio

“The Rector had hired the Red Ants. They came into James Moroka, Block E. They were looking for the SRC president and the deputy. They broke down doors. I have never seen anything like it. If you were in your room, whether you were involved or not, regardless of your political affiliation or if they knew your mother, you went to jail. Over 40 students went to jail. There was a curfew. As we walked out of the residence we got shot with rubber bullets. My friend got hit on the chest. I got hit on the bottom. I felt it was unnecessary [to bring in the Red Ants].”
- A student, a first year at the time, remembers the unrest[9]



In 2008 the Mafikeng Campus was closed for weeks due to violent student protests. Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Education, intervened by appointing a task team to investigate the causes of the turmoil. Photo: NWU Institutional Archive and Museum

allowed examinations to take place.

This was still not the end of the ructions. Early in September students burnt the guardhouse at the main gate of the Mafikeng Campus, torched parts of buildings, and shattered windows and lights. A black Mercedes Benz was allegedly seen driving around on campus and handing students Molotov cocktails.[7] This was in support of the students who were previously expelled. A total of 49 students were arrested for arson and the damage they caused on campus, which ran into millions of rands.[8]

During the September unrest the campus management brought in a security company from Johannesburg to help restore peace. The management had hoped that this move would prevent the intimidation of those who had to maintain order on campus. But following the arrest of the students, the police apprehended 19 security guards who had allegedly stolen from the students. They were thrown in jail. The police were believed to be in cahoots with the students, thereby preventing order being restored on the Mafikeng Campus. Later on the guards sued the Minister of Police for wrongful arrest, won and were each awarded R250 000. [10]

By October parents were also getting worried. On 1 October, management assured a group of 150 parents gathered in Rustenburg that lectures would resume on 6 October. Even the campus SRC president Jabu Moleme gave them the assurance that their children were safe. Management and the students agreed that the Department of Education should appoint a facilitator to break the deadlock. But not even the facilitator could help the conflicting parties to find common ground.[11]

In mid-October, 500 students disrupted a graduation ceremony and the police had to help restore order.

The students who were suspended in March were found guilty and expelled from the university. [12]

August 2010
In an article in *Sunday Independent* former Minister of Education Kader Asmal says while the university mergers are still "a work in progress, they've been bedded down".

September 2010
The NWU becomes the first university in the country to establish a mobi-site.

Pandor vs Kgwadi

Pandor: "You know I am very worried about your safety …can you just allow these students back for peace sake?"
Kgwadi: "Ma'am peace is not cheap. It does not come cheap. I am glad about your concerns about my safety. I am also very careful...But in the interest of the university: If we can allow these students back the culture will never change. Until you change the culture of that campus you [will be] better [off] starting another university next to this university. You will get it to be more profitable and productive. That one will remain a waste of taxpayers' money if the culture does not change. Culture does not change easily."
Pandor: "No, but if they don't come back to school what are they going to do? Then they will not take any exams."
Kgwadi: "If we have graduations of anybody of this lot it will be a mockery. People will laugh at our standards…Let us send transcripts home to say: 'Did not write.' "
Pandor: "No, Rector are you sure you going to do that."
Kgwadi: "No, we can do it. Let us do that."
Pandor: "The next day all your students will be gone. They will go to other universities."
Kgwadi: "It will be better."[13]

Pandor vs Kgwadi

As a former student agitator and SRC member, Prof Kgwadi, the campus Rector, thought he was prepared for upheaval. But, when the campus was set on fire he was deeply shocked.

"When they were burning down the buildings I said: "That is when the demons must burn. So do not panic about this. We must just let this burn down with the demons and we will rebuild it. But the culture…You cannot do anything if the culture does not change."

There was considerable political pressure on Kgwadi to undo the lifelong expulsion of four of the students – one of the reasons for the ongoing conflict. The Minister of Education Naledi Pandor stepped in, asking Vice-Chancellor Eloff and Kgwadi for leniency. The Director-General of the department, Duncan Hindle, also asked Eloff for leniency. But Kgwadi took a hard line. He wanted a change in the campus culture.

At one point Pandor summoned him to OR Tambo International Airport to meet her there. He refused to change his mind – even after a tough discussion with Pandor (see Pandor vs Kgwadi).

But at the end of September – after the university

October
The Mafikeng Campus celebrates its 30th anniversary.

12 October 2010
Former president FW de Klerk gives a lecture on the Potchefstroom Campus.

was closed again – Pandor had grown irritable and impatient with the turmoil. She was fed up with all the travelling she had to do from Pretoria to Mafikeng. At night. During the day.

She had to talk to the students. Her impression was that management was not willing to "hear" the students, which was why they turned to the ANC structures in the province: the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu), the North West ANC and the ANC Youth League. Thanks to the close proximity of the North West provincial government[14], students had developed the habit of literally running across the road to highlight problems on the campus. MECs would come and offer their help. Officials would want to interfere. An election was coming and Pandor could not appear to be sitting idly by. She had to act.

But Pandor said she was simply concerned about a problem that was not being dealt with satisfactorily: "Well, the student protests had continued unabated and were of a character that was very worrying. They tended to be very violent and they brought the institution to a standstill every year. I couldn't allow that to continue untested. They appeared to centre around a student attitude toward[s] the Vice-Chancellor but all, particularly students, feeling that government was not giving sufficient attention to the impact of the merger and the state of the Mafikeng Campus of North-West University."

When she had had enough, she appointed a task team to investigate.[15]

Eloff targeted?

Eloff was furious about Pandor's probe.

The NWU management and Council experienced this as political interference of the worst kind: unnecessary, uninformed and agenda-driven. In addition, they said Pandor announced the probe without first talking to Eloff or the university Council – a claim she denies.

The official brief of the task team, with Dr Joe Phaahla[16] as the chairperson, was to investigate why Mafikeng had to lock its gates so often to students during lecture time – in particular during 2008. But the "disruptions, instability and discontent" had to be placed within a broader context: the merger and whether it had succeeded in creating a new institution with a new culture.

The task team recorded the university's attitude towards it as follows: "Senior management displayed doubt, lack of trust and paranoia about the intentions of the Minister in appointing the task team, regardless of the documented terms of reference. 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 first draft report to the Council before submitting it to the Minister and the tone and content of the a newsletter circulated by the VC prior to the arrival of the task team."[17]

The Council's minutes of a meeting on 16 October 2008 indicate that there was correspondence between the Council, the Minister of Education and the deputy director-general of higher education. There was also a meeting between the chair of Council, Peet van der Walt, the Minister of Education, her deputy, the deputy director-general for higher education and a special advisor.

Van der Walt told the meeting that the Council was worried about the possible "impact on the university's independence". He said that he believed the task team was a "sincere effort" by the Minister to obtain first-hand information as she "gets confronted by many constituencies". But there were still dissenting voices from within the Council that the objectivity of the task team's secretariat and – hence its integrity – was not above board.

The Council decided to write a letter to Pandor. While the task team's terms of reference logically

19 October 2010
The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) announces Prof Mary Metcalfe, director-general, will leave the Department in 2011.

27 November 2010
The NWU sends the Quality Improvement Plan to the HEQC.

spoke about the closure and the merger as focal points, its unofficial brief allegedly had a different aim: Get rid of Theuns Eloff. A memo – indicating that the "rector" of the NWU was a problem – was allegedly discussed between some officials in the department of education and the trade union Cosatu.[18]

Eloff said he saw the note himself when he and a few members of his management team had a meeting at the department. The room that they would be using had just been occupied for another meeting. Eloff picked up a piece of paper left behind. It was the memo.

This has been corroborated by one of the task team members. Dr Nico Cloete is a heavyweight in the South African higher education arena. As the full-time director of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), an influential think-tank, he is an outspoken analyst and intellectual.[19]

Cloete understood the task team's brief to be "there was a problem with the Rector". However, it later became clear that this referred not to Kgwadi but to Eloff.

"I told Minister Pandor that she would set the merger back if Eloff left." He refused to sign off the report, instead opting for a minority account.[20]

Pandor denies any conspiracy to get rid of Eloff, saying that as an academic she thinks it is inappropriate for politicians to determine who heads institutions.

"No, it's not my business. I don't believe in that," she responded.[21]

A senior official in the department at the time, Molapo Qhobela, in support of Pandor, suggested it was an overreaction on the part of the Vice-Chancellor: "Look every single Vice-Chancellor has to accept there will be people who want him and there will be others who will want to see the back of him…I think it will be foolhardy of a Vice-Chancellor to think I am loved by everybody. So, accept the good, the bad and the ugly coming together. There was never a political conspiracy to try and unseat Theuns Eloff." [22]

The Phaahla report

The relationship between the students and campus management was troubled, according to the Phaahla report.

The students wanted Kgwadi to be removed. They did not believe the merger was working. Instead they expected the Mafikeng Campus to be closed down.

But, said the report, management could not offer an explanation for the specific problems students had over the extended period of unrest. It was critical of management's position that outside forces – "a third force" such as political parties, trade unions and businesses – influenced student activists.

"Apparently these political forces are responsible for the disruptions at the Mafikeng Campus. The management had even openly alleged that the Minister was in cahoots with Cosatu in instituting the current investigation. Indeed, this fear of third forces was most visible during discussions about the role of student political formations in SRC and student governance processes in general," stated the report.

Perhaps the most important finding of the task team, which looked at a range of themes influencing the merger, was that the NWU did not appear to have a plan to lift Mafikeng from its persistent troubles.

Calm returns

Despite the report's apparent scepticism about the role of "external forces" in the mayhem on the Mafikeng Campus, Eloff stuck to his guns. Hence when he noticed in 2009 that one of the new Ministerial representatives on the NWU Council was a provincial representative of Cosatu, he was alarmed. He believed he had had a hand in the 2008 unrest at the campus.

Eloff went to Mary Metcalfe, director-general of higher education. He told her not only about what he believed to be collusion between political forces and the department to get rid of him, but also about the appointment of the Cosatu representative.

2010
The NWU's Sports Village in Potchefstroom hosts the Spanish national soccer team which won the FIFA World Cup.

2010
The Puk Rugby Institute receives a Special Mayoral Award from the Tlokwe city council for "being the most successful rugby club in South Africa over ten years".

Her advice: "I can't win this one for you. You won't win it. Just manage it." A week later Metcalfe left the Department of Higher Education and Training.[23]

The fall-out from the Phaahla investigation was significant. In the short term a rift in the relationship between Pandor and Eloff opened. The break between them also affected officials in the Department of Education and the NWU Council.[24]

But Pandor was unapologetic about the task team: "Theuns Eloff I think, felt that I was making a statement about him and his view was there were much more serious problems in higher education than the little protests at North-West University. I disagreed with that view but I certainly got that impression from him. In fact if he didn't say it to my face he certainly said it to other people. So from that time relations between us did sour."[25]

In the end the Phaahla investigation appears to have brought down the temperature on the campus. Calm returned. The academic project could go forward. Relationships between the management and students improved. Relationships between the management and staff improved. Most importantly: the culture had begun to change. Despite the shortcomings for which the Phaahla report was criticised, it did point out cracks in the merger outfit which needed fixing.

Some of these remain challenges for the NWU.

A changed campus culture

For Kgwadi 2008 was his baptism of fire. The student protests, the attacks by staff and the political pressure on him to handle the crisis in a specific way had left him traumatised. In many respects, though, it was a turning point for the campus. It was as if the reality of the merger had finally dawned.

Without the support of Eloff, the university's management team and the Council, Kgwadi might not have been able to withstand the political pressure.

"This combination really helped to change the culture. But the culture of the campus is changing. I am convinced the culture of the campus is changing when I see the outputs. That for me is the only indicator. I can say, 'Hey, there is a culture of delivery here.'"[26]

CHAPTER 19
VISTA AND THE VAAL: A TRAUMATIC UNION

"Oh, it is wonderful now. In terms of facilities – just look at how beautiful our campus is. Look at how dynamic our campus is. Just look! There is life. There is energy. There is pride. There is a vibe."
— Elbé Steyn, Vaal Triangle Campus registrar.[1]

"Vista's staff feel uncertain and disempowered," Prof Talvin Schultz said when it was his turn to address the group in front of him. He appealed to the managers from both VaalPukke and Vista: "Please treat them well."

Schultz, the merger manager of Vista University, stressed the importance of salaries, benefits and pension funds for the people of an institution that would soon cease to exist.

Each of Vista University's seven contact campuses was to be swallowed by the universities closest to them, so Schultz must have had a keen sense of the mood on the ground.[2]

One of the academics remembers how staff members felt: "The uncertainty was the worst. What is happening? The choices. Severance packages or not? What about the future? Will one be able to do one's own thing? It was bad – to say the least."[3]

Schultz was one of the five people from Vista University in the first formal introductory meeting on 5 February 2003 with the management committee of the then VaalPukke about the future of the Sebokeng Campus.

But the Vista personnel were not the only ones who were anxious. On both sides people felt panicky about their jobs. Everyone was asking questions: Were they going to be retrenched? Would they be declared redundant? Would they have to reapply for their jobs? Was there a hit list to get rid of those whose who were too old, too unproductive or too difficult before the incorporation?

This was despite the Minister's guidelines for incorporations, which meant that staff of incorporated campuses would keep their jobs, their salaries, benefits and other conditions of service.[4]

In times of change news travels fast and very far.

Elbé Steyn, who later became registrar of the Vaal Triangle Campus, grew up in a town about 300km away. She received an unexpected call from her father.

"What is going on?" was his concerned question. "I hear you are going back to private practice?" A dominee (minister) in her hometown had told her father that he had heard the Vaal Campus was closing. The rumour mill was ablaze with disinformation.[5]

Then, on 19 November 2003, some relief:

Eloff writes in a letter to staff: "We are on track. As you can see we are heading in the right direction. All staff will be notified officially at the end of November 2003 that their conditions of service, rights and duties will be transferred automatically and unchanged to the North-West University on 1 January 2004."[6]

Soon after the worst doubts about job losses had been dispelled, the coming together of the campuses happened. It was strenuous on both a professional and cultural level. The activists from Vista met the Boers of the Vaal. It was a traumatic union.

In the meantime students from Vista – who were members of organisations such as Sasco, Pasma and Azasco – were not comfortable about moving to a new campus. They were worried about the culture on the Vaal Campus and about access. The cost of study and leniency towards tuition debt was a particular case in point. In 2003, a BA at Vista cost only R5 200 whereas on the Vaal it cost R8 430. At Vista you could continue with your studies after paying R1 000 and 30% of your outstanding fees. At the Vaal, students had to pay registration and the first payment of their tuition fees.[7]

The 25km that Sebokeng students now had to travel was

April 2011
Qualifications offered at the NWU come under the spotlight with a view to the revision of the national Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF).

May 2011
The Potchefstroom Campus hosts the annual meeting of the African Council on Distance Education.

"I think the campus today is a model which was created by the majority of staff and students, by uniting moderates against groups on the left and the right."
– Prof Piet Prinsloo, former Rector of the Vaal Triangle Campus (2005-2009)
Photo: Nico Blignaut

another concern. In the incorporation budget presented to the Department of Education, R517 000 was budgeted for a bus, which would be travelling from Zone 10 in Sebokeng. But the response from the Sebokeng side was that Zone 10 could not be the only pick-up point. "Sedibeng is such a big region with different destinations. We therefore propose that there must be different pick-up points throughout the region at different times."

In the end the campus bought a bus which would be in service for the next decade. It would travel between Zone 10 and the Vaal Triangle Campus on a daily basis.[8]

Money matters

As fears over the future chipped away at staff morale, the monetary impact of the incorporation hit home. It would suck up every available cent – and demand much more than what was available. The financial projections were bad news for the soon-to-be-established Vaal Triangle Campus.

Had the status quo remained, the PU for CHE's Vaal Campus would have broken even in 2004. For a decade it had been tightfisted while managing to repay a loan of R13,5 million for student residences.

The incorporation of the Sebokeng Campus threatened to plunge the campus into bankruptcy. Vista's Sebokeng Campus had a deficit of R2,5 million and making the incorporation happen would demand millions – R83,8 million according to calculations.

According to the estimates an amount of about R52 million from the Department of Education would be needed to cover expenses. A total of R44,2 million of the money would go towards the building of an administration building to accommodate Vista support staff, the development of a student centre, an academic building with computer and technology laboratories and library facilities, and an academic building with lecture halls, offices and facilities for teacher training as the Vaal Triangle Campus would be the only centre for the training of teachers in the region. In addition a residence with beds for 200 students was needed to supplement the existing 400 places. A further R7,8 million of the requested R52 million would be for operational costs.

The department turned down the grant application.[9]

Asmal had agreed that the Vaal could continue to use the Sebokeng campus for three years, together with the Vaal University of Technology to enable the transition, in particular to assist pipeline students. The Vaal pushed ahead with the move from Sebokeng, even though staff had to be squashed in wherever there was space at their new campus. The move was completed by December 2004, two years earlier than anticipated.[10]

On 1 January 2005 the new NWU Vaal Triangle Campus was born.

In time the campus's finances would recover.

Former Rector Prof Piet Prinsloo says: "I think this place has pulled itself up by its bootstraps, which is a story in itself."[11]

Incorporating Vista

Although the merger would bring rewards to the new institution, some remember the transition as a time of loss. People lost the seniority they enjoyed as managers; the recognition they valued as academics; their jobs, their health, their offices.

In fact, during the early days of the Vista-Vaal union, working space was a source of conflict. Many former Vista staff members remember how they were suddenly like drifters. They did not even immediately claim certain areas as their own. Being office-less confirmed the alienation many of them initially felt.

"It was bad in the sense that we had to share offices," recalls one professor. I think there were three or four of us in one office. I have never been able to work in an open-plan office. I think academic outputs go to waste. You have to be able to focus. It was bad for me".[12]

The available space on the Vaal Triangle Campus posed a challenge to the merger. Student numbers on the campus had soared from 1 276 in 2123 to 2 177 in 2004. Despite its five academic buildings, 48 lecture halls, 2 385 seats for students, 113 offices and beds for 385, the campus was bursting at its seams. The 51 staff members and 597 students from the Sebokeng Campus had to be squeezed into the available facilities. This was because all the buildings on the Sebokeng Campus were transferred to the Vaal University of Technology and were therefore not available to the Vaal Triangle Campus. These included two seminar rooms, 14 lecture halls, two study halls, three geography halls, 2 070 seats for students and 96 offices.

It was up to the Vaal Triangle's chief director Bertie Visser

1 June 2011
Dr Ingrid Tufvesson is appointed in the position of Executive Advisor on Transformation and Diversity.

June 2011
The NWU gets a new university anthem as the previous one was too difficult to sing.

The incorporation budget consisted of the following budget items

ITEM	AMOUNT
FACILITIES	R75 917 334
A BUS TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS FROM SEBOKENG	
▶ Capital cost	R320 000
▶ Running cost	R197 000
IT COST	R2 457 300
SHORT-TERM INSURANCE	R50 000
MAINTENANCE OF THE SEBOKENG CAMPUS OF VISTA UNIVERSITY	R1 300 000
SHORTFALL IN THE VISTA BUDGET FOR 2004	R3 525 053
TOTAL	R83 766 687

R14 million

Funds for building projects approved by the Minister

August 2004 : Planning of phases one and two of new academic buildings on the VTC finalised and tender process kicks off. Funds for building projects approved.

Phase I: Office block for:
- School of Education Science
- School of Modelling Science
- Information and Technology Management

Phase II: New computer labs
Lecture halls and labs for Education

** Source: Vaal Triangle Archive in P.J.J. Prinsloo, North-West University: A merger and incorporation story, 2004-2014, draft, 27 June 2015, pp. 138 - 139*

to deal with the logistics. His task was executed with military precision, according to the campus Rector, Prinsloo.

Prinsloo explains: "I had to handle difficult meetings where they said they counted the colours of the chairs on the Vista campus and it was made fun of. And the reason was we did not have lecture halls or chairs for the people – so we had to know exactly how many offices we had, how many lecture halls and how many chairs. So Bertie dealt with the incredible detail." [13]

Another senior manager at the time agrees with Prinsloo. He says he regards the incorporation as an administrative process. "Bertie Visser basically executed it with attention to minute details; planned when what had to happen and it went as smooth as silk. Next thing we saw the lecturers were here. They simply blended in and carried on."[14]

Whereas the incorporation might have been smooth on an administrative level, it was not necessarily executed with the greatest political flair – as a later survey also seemed to confirm.

In 2009 a staff climate assessment of 31 former Vista employees who were still at the NWU confirmed that they had found their initial move tough.

Vista was a black university. The Vaal was historically white. Many at the Vaal Triangle Campus thought Vista was a second-rate institution with mediocre academics who could not be trusted with postgraduate students or study supervision. More disconcertingly, a comfortable, warm, Afrikaans enclave was confronted, even disrupted, with the arrival of a mixed group of people with an alternative view of the world.

Some Vista staff members have vivid memories of feeling unwelcome. In meetings, in at least one faculty, a staff member recalls how they were referred to as: "You people from Vista." This went on for at least two or three years.[15]

For other Vista academics, the incorporation with the Vaal was an escape from an unstable, chaotic, crumbling environment.

Although many staff members on both sides have bad memories, others simply put down their heads and carried on. In fact, they remember the transition as smooth.

"I did not really have any problems with the transition," says one of them. "…so I had no problems adapting. So for me it was quite alright."[16]

The worst dust of the incorporation eventually settled, although there were still questions about the pace of transformation, a racial divide and non-academic staff who felt that they needed a "black" trade union to look after them.

Conflict in the library

By all accounts, the incorporation of Vista into the Vaal Triangle Campus was acutely felt in the library where factors such as a lack of office space and evening work, coupled with

4 August 2011
The International Cycling Union signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the NWU to develop a first-class indoor cycling track.

September 2011
Eloff is elected president of the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI).

discord over disparities in salaries, contributed to tension. Vista staff used to have offices, whereas at the Vaal Triangle Campus, the office space was open plan. Evening work was also contentious. Vista staff were reluctant to do evening shifts because of transport difficulties. A room was made available in one of the residences to accommodate those who did not have their own vehicles and had to work late. In time, though, the problem was sorted out.[17]

The case that captured the tension best was the appointment of the head of the new, combined library. Two librarians were in the running: San Geldenhuys, who had been the head of the Vaal library, and Faith Hosana, who had been the head of the Sebokeng library.

When Geldenhuys died in a car accident the management of the library was restructured to resort under IT. This was perceived as an attempt by management to keep Faith from occupying the position Geldenhuys used to have. She left the university.[18]

In the years to come, the library continued to represent shifting dynamics on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

When a massive concrete building began to emerge towards the end of 2012, the usual campus sounds changed. The hooting and braking of the never-ending flow of incoming and outgoing vehicles through the nearby gates, a student voice ringing out and an angry quack of one of the institution's ducks were overwhelmed by the incessant hammering and drilling on a huge construction site.

The R76 million building, which became the new library towards the end of 2013, was a sign of how far the Vaal Triangle Campus had come in the decade since it was allowed to shake off its status as the stepsister of the former PU for CHE and become independent. The library itself had been expanded substantially.[19]

The number of books issued alone is an indication of the progress: from 14 075 in 2005 to 35 063 in 2012, with a spike in 2005 when the incorporation of Vista University's Sebokeng Campus and its library was concluded. Between 30 000 and 40 000 books were moved from the Sebokeng Campus to the Vaal Triangle Campus, greatly adding to the diversity of titles[20] – including politically radical ones. This alone was a reason for some academics to rejoice.[21]

Interestingly enough, while the combined library had many thousands of books, it was a single book that sparked the biggest crisis in the first years of the Vaal Triangle Campus's existence.

The Maake book

Compared to the 2008 student unrest on the Mafikeng Campus and 2014 Sieg Heil and initiation debacle on the Potchefstroom Campus (see chapters 18 and 21), the Vaal Triangle might look as if it had escaped lightly. But given the relatively small size of the Vaal Triangle's university community and the nature of the book that ignited the crisis, its effect was perhaps as intensely felt.

Prof Nhlanhla Maake was appointed as the campus principal or director of Vista University's Sebokeng Campus on 1 April 2003. On 27 October his request to be part of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) was approved.[22]

At the time, the negotiations for the merger between the PU for CHE (including the Vaal Triangle Campus) and the UNW were already at an advanced stage. Not that it mattered. Being an incorporation – a word former Vista staff members detested – they felt as if they had less bargaining leverage. Although Maake moved with his title of "director" he was no longer the head of a campus but rather the director in the office of campus Rector Prinsloo. Things appeared to have started slipping early on. Maake was not accommodated in the building where all the other administrators and managers sat but in the "last building in the back of beyond…a good place to store inconveniences". Other staff members also noted that Maake, a campus Rector, had to occupy a back room. It is no secret that office space on the Vaal Campus was scarce. However, this was obviously a sore point for Maake and given his position, not without merit.[23]

Maake's book, *Barbarism in Higher Education: Once Upon a Time in a University*, was published in 2011 and detailed his time on the Vaal Triangle Campus from 1 February 2005 to 27 July 2007. He documented the deteriorating and acrimonious relationship with Prinsloo, which started in the second half of 2004 and coincided with his compilation of a dossier of allegations involving fraud, financial irregularities and nepotism. Several other staff members were named as accomplices. Maake also stated that the NWU Vice-Chancellor Theuns Eloff allegedly failed to follow NWU policies, procedures and rules, and protected Prinsloo.

An investigation failed to confirm any of the claims of fraud, nepotism and financial irregularities. A number of matters of a procedural nature were found, but they did not amount to fraud, nepotism or corruption. The report was not released and Maake, convinced the probe had not

December 2011
The NWU appoints McCann Worldgroup as brand consultants to assist with strategic brand development in the complex multi-campus environment.

2011
The NWU receives R30,9 million from the NRF for research in 2011 and is one of the top-earners in the NRF's Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme.

been independent, took matters to the media and the office of the Minister of Education Naledi Pandor. As a result he was charged with "causing detriment to the university or a colleague by providing false information", "breach of internal procedures" and failure to protect the employer's interest". But before the case reached the stage of a hearing, Maake and the NWU settled.

Some staff members criticised the circumstances under which Maake left. Was he a casualty of the merger? Did the NWU harass another errant employee? Did he unsettle the NWU establishment too much?

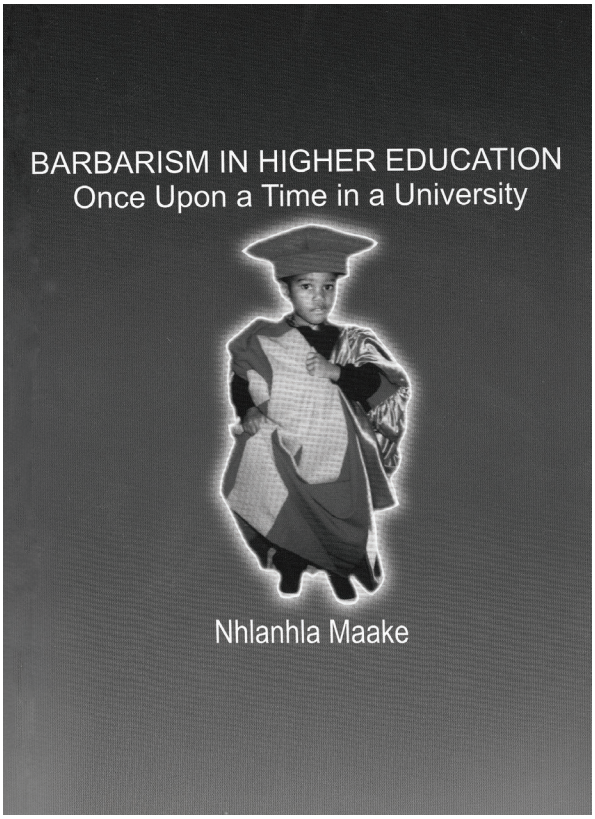
After Maake there were other instances of NWU staff members on the other two campuses who left following disciplinary procedures against them because, so it seemed, their biggest offence was that they dared to point at the shadows spoiling the NWU picture.

The Maake book is something of a legend on the Vaal Triangle Campus. Everyone appeared to know about it. Some had paged through it and several had read it from page 1 to 333. Former and current academics, students and support staff on the Vaal Triangle Campus were named for what they had done or failed to do. This is perhaps why so many bought the book.

Opinions on the book vary. The former Vaal Triangle Campus Rector Prof Thanyani Mariba said if he had read the book before accepting the position he would have declined. Some said the truths in the book should have been addressed, others say it was littered with half-truths. Many staff members describe Maake as a good guy, but say that the succession planning process meant to see him take over from Prinsloo went off the rails. Others thought Maake was set on causing divisions, wanted Prinsloo's job, had promised jobs to friends but could not deliver, and was protected by the black caucus in the Council. Still, the book shocked many of his former colleagues and there was certainly a group of people who believed that it tore the campus apart.

For many of those whom he accused in the book, it was libellous hurtful and humiliating. Be that as it may, the university decided not to take action over the book. As a result, whereas many of the claims were disputed, not all of the allegations were publicly answered, which was problematic. Staff members and outsiders drew their own conclusions when they read the book and the image of the university and some of its senior managers was tarnished.

During work on this book about the merger, several



▲ Prof Nhlanhla Maake's book upset the Vaal Triangle Campus community.

people, mainly former employees, asked whether this project (Forging unity: the story of the North-West University's first years) was intended to counter the Maake book. The purpose of this book was not to investigate the allegations made in his book or make pronouncements on truths or lies. Its focus was the merger and what the book and its publication said, if anything, about the merger.

In the context of the merger, the book made a contribution by providing perspectives on how many people from Vista experienced the incorporation. These feelings and experiences form the subtext of the Maake book when he talks about the merger as a hostile takeover, disempowerment, alienation, exclusion, racism and discrimination. On the other hand Vaal managers experienced their Vista peers as obstructionist.

A Vaal Triangle academic said black people from the ANC and PAC met Christian National Education and found themselves among the Boere, many of whom had known

2011
For the fifth consecutive year, the NWU wins the first place in the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance.

21 January 2012
Thabang Makhoang (19) a first-year student from Wolmaransstad, drowns in the swimming pool of the Fanie du Toit sport complex on the Potchefstroom Campus. He was taking part in the annual fruit festival, part of the formal reception programme of first years.

The R76 million building, which became the new library towards the end of 2013, was a sign of how far the Vaal Triangle Campus had come in the decade since it was allowed to shake off its status as the stepsister of the former PU for CHE and become independent.
Photo: Vaal Triangle Campus

each other for many years. It was a clash on many fronts: politically, culturally, socially. It was traumatic for black and white alike.

It was not easy for Vista staffers to experience the end of their university. Maake wrote: "Vista, a university which had served mostly the black community and opened access to some of the poorest students over the last twenty-one years, was totally annihilated from the landscape of education in South Africa."

Throughout the book, difficulties related to the joining up of the two campuses were woven into the storyline: the use of Afrikaans in meetings, which made those who do not use Afrikaans as a first language feel like outsiders, and the departure of former Vista academics from the Vaal Triangle following what they experienced as racial discrimination.

The point is this: Maake chronicled the human side of the merger, brutally and painfully.

Neither the Vaal Triangle nor the NWU administrations might have intended to disadvantage Maake or Sebokeng staff members or students, but this was certainly how some of them experienced the process. And vice versa. Dismissing these recollections would be to disrespect history, which had casualties on all sides and which presented themselves in many forms.

This applied not only to the NWU, but to the broader higher education landscape. People paid with their physical and mental health and with their careers in the making of new universities.

■■■

CHAPTER 20
PART I: A DROWNING

"I sat with the mother on the ground with the boy in his coffin." — Ingrid Tufvesson, former executive advisor on transformation in the institutional office[1]

On most evenings the Fanie du Toit sport complex is deserted by 7pm. But by nightfall on Saturday, 21 January 2012 a lone swimmer, doing lengths, was taking advantage of the empty pool and the gradual onset of darkness during the height of a scorching summer. Wearing diving goggles, he plunged into the murky water. Seconds later he emerged and fled from the pool. Terrified. He went back, came out and made a frantic phone call.[2] Deep below the surface a shadow had startled him. It was a human body weightlessly suspended in the surrounding blackness.[3]

Thabang

Thabang Godwin Makhoang was 19 when he died. It was four days after he had arrived as a first-year mechanical engineering student on the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU. As the first child in his family to go to university, the hopes of his clan – in fact a whole community – were pinned on him to bring them a better life.[4] And he wanted to succeed, if only to build his mother, Sannah, a beautiful house. She was a domestic worker in Krugersdorp, Gauteng. He stayed with his grandparents in Tswelelang township near the town of Wolmaranstad in North West. Makhoang did well at school. He matriculated from Reabona Secondary School and in his final exam achieved the highest marks in his year for mathematics (84%), physical science (72%) and English first language (76%).

On 17 January 2012 the young man set off for Potchefstroom, a distance of about 200km. He told his mother he had to go and write a test at the NWU and would then come back. It was the last time she saw him.[5] It seemed that because the official reception and introduction programme had already started on the Potchefstroom Campus he was directed to his new residence, Ratau Lebone, where he was supposed to have checked in earlier in the week already. First years tend not to go home for the duration of the orientation programme. But Makhoang did not appear to be ready to stay. He had nothing with him – no clothes, bedding, toiletries. He was in a desperate predicament. In the end he asked one of the cleaners for "a piece of towel".[6] He was too ashamed to talk to anyone. Other first years seemingly did not want to embarrass him and therefore did not tell the house parents or the house committee that Makhoang was battling.

Nobody noticed he was missing…

The shy yet jovial Makhoang was one of 77 first years in Ratau Lebone and one of only four English speakers in the group. On 21 January he lined up to participate in the annual fruit festival, an official part of the formal reception programme. Firstly, students would smear each other with sticky watermelon; then they would be hosed off and finally, jump into the pool at the Fanie du Toit sport complex. This would be done on a residence-by-residence basis. Ratau was 23rd out of 28 groups to get a turn in the pool and it had its own ritual. One by one the first years would fall into the water in a domino effect after crying: "Almal vir een en een vir almal" (All for one and one for all) three times. On the face of it, all possible precautions had been taken: an

8 February 2012
The NWU Council holds an extraordinary meeting to discuss Makhoang's death. The Council institutes an investigation run by advocates Louwtjie de Koning (SC) and Vusi Pikoli.

30 March 2012
A second extraordinary Council meeting is held to discuss the report from independent investigators into the drowning of Makhoang. Council supports the establishment of the Thabang Makhoang Bursary Fund, as well as the erection of a basic house for his family.

Potchefstroom
Herald

Hultzer-trofeewenner (beste koerant 2001, 2002 en 2006)

3 Februarie 2012

Prys: R4,20

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TERMITES
26 YRS SERVICE!!!
TERMITE EXPERTS

Verdrinking:

Polisie ondersoek

Foto: Cobus Groenewald

Die polisie het 'n onderwater-sigbaarheidstoets gedoen by die swembad by die Potchefstroomkampus. Dit is deel van hul ondersoek na die verdrinking van 'n student op Saterdag 21 Januarie in dié swembad.

The *Potchefstroom Herald*, one of the town's local newspapers, reported on 3 February 2012 about the drowning of Thabang Makhoang. The headline reads: "Drowning: Police investigate." Cover provided by the Potchefstroom Herald.

NWU Puk SCUBA

The pool in which Thabang Makhoang drowned. It is part of the Potchefstroom Campus's Fanie du Toit sporting complex. Locals call it 'the Fanie'. Photo: Nico Blignaut

announcement that those who could not swim should not enter the pool or should go to the shallow side; trouble spotters to watch out for any problems in the pool; 47 safety staff.

Two minutes passed, perhaps five. Nobody noticed anyone flounder. Nobody noticed that Makhoang did not surface. Until his body was found hours later at the deep end of the pool – a depth of nearly four metres – nobody had even missed him.

How was this possible? As Dr Ingrid Tufvesson, former executive advisor on diversity and transformation, stated: "I cannot understand how a student, who is in the minority by the clear symbolic of his colour, is not missed. I have used the analogy of… a bowl of butter beans and 72 of those are white and you only have five that are black – you know, and they walk in separately – it is almost impossible to not miss if one is missing."

An investigation

The Council of the NWU instituted an investigation. Advocates Louwtjie de Koning (SC) and Vusi Pikoli were appointed.

In their report De Koning and Pikoli found that the drowning of Makhoang was "an unfortunate accident for which no blame could be levelled against any individual or entity."

Furthermore: "The circumstances surrounding the death of the deceased were, in our view, free of any foul play and/or negligence on the part of any individual and/or entity. All reasonable safety precautions seemed to have been arranged and were in place on the particular day. The failure of anybody to have seen the deceased in distress, save for the single explanation proffered therefore, ie that he must have simply gone straight down, remains unexplained."

The investigators also stated that he died during an official part of the reception and introduction programme and not during any form of initiation.[7]

According to the report, safety arrangements during the reception and introduction programme, as well as the training of those involved, had to be looked at. In addition the report focused on the use of Afrikaans, and De Koning and Pikoli recommended that announcements and instructions at residences had to be in both Afrikaans and English, a single bilingual Puk first-year guide should be prepared, and functional multilingualism on grassroots level and particularly in the hostels had to be monitored.

These recommendations followed their findings that oral communication in the various residences during the reception programme appeared to be done primarily and in some instances only in Afrikaans, with the resulting outcome that some of the newcomers did not understand – and therefore did not take heed of the announcements - with the accompanying risks.

Too many questions

The death of Makhoang continued to haunt the NWU and his family.[8]

There were persistent and uncomfortable rumours of an alternative run of events on the day he drowned. This was not to suggest the De Koning-Pikoli investigation did not do what they could with the evidence they had access to.

Whispers about foul play had continuously found expression by means of unanswered questions: Why did Thabang Makhoang swim on that fateful day when he knew he could not stay afloat in deep water? Did he, as an English student, not understand the Afrikaans announcements? Did he die much later, after the fruit festival, during an initiation incident? What happened to the video footage? What happened to the security guards on duty?[9] Was Thabang Makhoang murdered?

Tufvesson said when she continued asking questions about Makhoang's death she was forced to leave the NWU.

Months before her departure, as she sat on the ground with Mrs Sannah Makhoang next to her son's coffin in Tswelelang, she knew she had to investigate reports she had received of a cover-up.[10] Subsequently the Minister of Higher Education and Training, union members and even academics have continued to ask questions about the drowning.

The inability of the NWU to bring about a greater sense of closure to the matter had not only continued to fuel suspicions that some information at least had been hidden, but also kept alive the sorrow of a family who had lost a son and grandson.[11]

This, despite restitution efforts by the university. At a Council meeting on 15 June 2012 Council noted: that a house would be built for Mrs Makhoang in Tswelelang and that a job had been secured for her at the local high school.

2012
A new pay-off line, It all starts here / Dit begin alles hier / Gothle go simologa fano, is developed, replacing the previous line Innovation through diversity.

June 2012
The Council approves the establishment of a Unit for Open Distance Learning on the Potchefstroom Campus in the place of the existing School of Continuing Teacher Education.

The house was handed to her on 10 February 2014.

Furthermore, a bursary fund had been established for scholars from Thabang's former high school (Thabang Makhoang Community Bursary Fund); a bursary fund was also established for his one sibling; 14 grade 12 learners from Reabona Secondary School were enrolled in the NWU's Ikateleng Project for support in mathematics (in 2012).[12]

By 2015 the NWU had also erected a tombstone on the grave in which he was buried with an uncle.

But his family had not collected the spirit from the place where he had died.

At the time of concluding the book arrangements had been made for the completion of the important after-death traditional ritual.[13]

This is why the Wessels task team, which was appointed in 2014 to investigate the introduction and reception of first years, recommended the NWU deal with the drowning once and for all. The task team also recommended that an annual lecture – The Thabang Makhoang Memorial Lecture on Human Rights and Diversity – be instituted.[14]

After the drowning

Makhoang's death should be seen as a defining moment for the Potchefstroom Campus. It represented many of the collective transformation challenges that the campus had been wrestling with for much of its existence as part of the NWU. One harrowing event tied some of these together: a well-intentioned reception and introduction programme for first years which went horribly wrong; a language policy which did not intend to, but could have inadvertently contributed to a student's death; and leading from that an institutional culture in which a 19-year old from a township would rather turn to a cleaner for help than to a housefather, a house committee member or even a fellow student. Then there was the apparent intolerance towards individuals who dared to question the official version of events. All of these concerns would surface again and throughout 2013 as part of the build-up to the next crisis, which erupted on the Potchefstroom Campus at the beginning of 2014 and would pose, once again, serious questions about the merger.[15]

CHAPTER 21
PART II: THE ATTACK[1]

"What is happening in Potchefstroom?" — Adriaan Basson, editor, Beeld, 18 February 2014

In the early hours of Monday, 8 September 2013, Kevin du Plessis, editor of the Potchefstroom Campus newspaper *Wapad,* and some of his journalist friends set off for Bourbons Street. Bourbons is perhaps the oldest watering hole for students on the Bult, a popular area crammed with a variety of restaurants and shops a mere five-minute strut from the main campus.

After the bar closed at around 4am Du Plessis was sucked into one of the many scattered groups on the pavement just outside the entrance to the bar. Soon he realised he was in hostile territory. Two of the students, occupants of the male residence Veritas where he had stayed for three years, started to violently push him.

He fell and as soon as he got up the two men would be waiting to push him again. Punches were thrown from both sides. After stumbling off some metres, Du Plessis heard the two men say, "Don't you have any pride in your residence?" and "If I read anything about this in the newspaper…"[2]

But the attackers did not have to fear a report in the newspaper. Hours later, on Monday morning, the newspaper, which had started publishing in 1946, had been closed. [3] [4]

The assault would set in motion a chain of events that would deeply unsettle the Potchefstroom Campus and the NWU – 10 years after its establishment.[5]

A strained relationship

From the *Wapad*'s first edition on 7 February 2013 there was conflict between the newspaper, the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the campus's Marketing and Communication directorate, known as BEK (which is the Afrikaans abbreviation of the name of the unit).[6] Such tension is healthy and is to be expected since journalists and reputation managers or spin-doctors have fundamentally different goals as far as news is concerned. When both parties are part of the same organisation, in this instance the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU, further complications could – and did – arise. [7] [8]

The headline of the front-page lead on 7 February was: "SRC threatens to discipline *Wapad*" (SR dreig *Wapad* met tug). According to the article there was a dispute between the SRC and *Wapad* on how to report an incident during which five first-year students had fainted at a mass gathering in the campus's amphitheatre. This was during the reception and introduction period for first years. The sticking point was whether pictures of those who had collapsed should have been allowed. This was debated in the article within the context of freedom of speech, the right to privacy and public interest.[9]

The relationship between *Wapad* and the SRC and BEK subsequently became strained. This was how Du Plessis described it: "In O&B [Reception and Introduction for first-year students] 2013 I was called into the SRC chairperson's office and asked the question 'Do I love this campus, or do I want to destroy it?' I was so shaken up at being confronted with this question, I didn't know how it was relevant, or how our work had anything to do with what my personal notions or love for a campus had to do with it. In short, I was threatened with hearings and all kinds of boycotts and protests… Throughout the year we were antagonised by student authorities who at times refused to talk to us, refused to have the paper delivered to certain places on campus and I received countless reports from anonymous sources on what kinds of things were being communicated within leadership structures and after that down to residential students. 'Don't talk to *Wapad*,' I would hear."

Wapad in 2013 was a different beast compared to the

June 2012
In an opinion piece in *Pretoria News*, Eloff says: "It seems all universities are being burdened with overregulation because of the sins of a few."

19 July 2012
The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union organises a march to the NWU Institutional Office. Hundreds of protesters, including students and staff, take part.

The assault of Kevin du Plessis set in motion a chain of events at the NWU and the aftershock is still being felt. Du Plessis was the editor of *Wapad* student newspaper on the Potchefstroom Campus during 2013. His reports on the student culture and initiation made him a target for abuse. Photo: Nico Blignaut

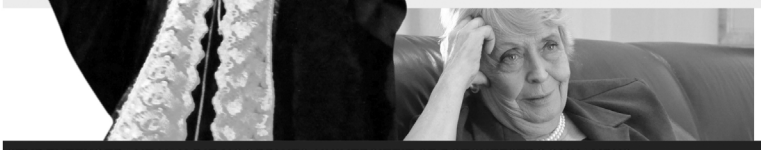
K&V
Seksistiese KykNET-programme?

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

9 Eerstejaarskonsert: Nog 'n beker vir VMN en Patria

Wapad

LEES JOU KAMPUS 7 FEBRUARIE 2013 / VOL 2



BINNE
Eksklusiewe onderhoud met ons eie Potch Hoofdogter

STUDENTEKOERANT VAN DIE NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT SE POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS >> JAARGANG 67 >> WAPAD@NWU.AC.ZA

Konflik oor wat foto-joernaliste mag afneem

SR dreig Wapad met tug

HANNES KRUGER

Joernaliste van *Wapad* is deur die Studenteraad (SR) gedreig toe hulle wou berig doen oor eerstejaars wat tydens amfisessies gedurende O&B flougeval het.

Wapad het ten minste vyf eerstejaars gesien wat vroegaand op 14 Januarie, 'n baie warm dag met 'n temperatuur van oor die dertig grade Celsius, mediese behandeling gekry het. Die O&B-voorsitter Izelle Mostert, het *Wapad* se joernaliste met tug gedreig nadat hulle wou foto's neem van dié eerstejaars.

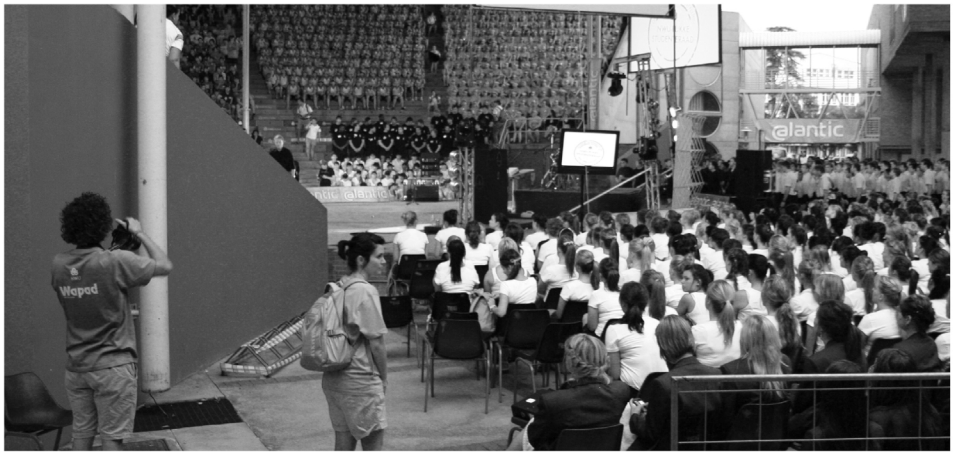
"Wanneer 'n pasiënt tydens behandeling afgeneem word, word daardie persoon in 'n vernederende posisie geplaas," het Mostert later by navraag gesê.

Janco Jordaan SR:voorsitter, het ook gesê dat 'n pasiënt die reg op konfidensiële behandeling het en "dit nie die plek van enige kampus-joernalis is om hom of haar daarvan te ontneem nie".

Kevin du Plessis *Wapad*-redakteur, het gesê, "Ons het hulle nie daarvan ontneem nie. Dit gaan vir ons oor die fenomeen dat eerstejaars flouval en nie oor die individu nie. Ons sou die foto's oordeelkundig publiseer het, maar het toe nooit eers die foto's geneem nie".

Tydens nog 'n amfisessie van 17 Januarie het 'n O&B-komiteelid sy hand voor die kameralens van 'n fotojoernalis gedruk toe sy 'n eerstejaar wou afneem wat flougeval het en deur twee O&B-komiteelede gedra is. Jordaan en dié komiteelid het haar toe beveel om die foto's op die kamera vir hulle te wys.

Prof. Johannes Froneman 'n joernalistiekdosent en die ombudsman van *Wapad*, het gesê dat daar wel sulke foto's geneem mag word, maar dat dié kwessies oor twee sake gaan: openbare belang en die reg tot privaatheid.



Wapad-fotograaf Jandré Meiring wat die eerstejaars in die amfiteater afneem op Saterdag 12 Januarie. FOTO: CONRAD VAN WYK

"Wat die eerste aanbetref: dis duidelik in openbare belang (as eerstejaars tydens O&B flouval). Wat die tweede aanbetref: sodanige foto's moet in goeie smaak wees en nie die persoon onnodig in die verleentheid stel nie. Ek sou dus nie die persoon identifiseer nie (en ook nie sy of haar gesig identifiseerbaar toon nie)," het hy gesê.

Cornia Pretorius 'n joernalistiekdosent, het gesê dat 'n verbod op die neem van foto's van eerstejaars wat flouval, bloot soos sensuur lyk.

Verskeie eerstejaars het ook tydens O&B aan *Wapad* gesê dat hulle nie met *Wapad* mag praat nie. Onderhoude is oor 'n tydperk van verskeie dae met eerstejaars gevoer. Baie van hulle wou nie praat oor hul O&B-ervaring nie.

> Ons HK het gesê ons mag nie met *Wapad* praat nie

"Ons HK het gesê ons mag nie met *Wapad* praat nie," het 'n eerstejaar van Karlien gesê toe 'n mede-eerstejaar 'n vraag wou antwoord wat 'n *Wapad*-joernalis aan haar wou vra.

Eerstejaars van Wanda-dameskoshuis was meer as bereid om met *Wapad* te praat totdat 'n HK-lid op die toneel verskyn en hulle gekeer het om verder iets te sê. "Ons wil nie hê julle moet met ons eerstejaars praat nie," het sy gesê.

"Ons is bewus dat eerstejaars die reg van vryheid op spraak het," het Karlien se primaria Magdali Reitz, gesê. Sy het gesê *Wapad* het die aanname gemaak dat eerstejaars nie met joernaliste mag praat nie.

Die SR het ook in reaksie gesê dat daar nie beperkings op *Wapad* is nie. Daar is egter kommer oor die gehalte van joernalistiek en vrae oor onder watter gesagstruktuur *Wapad* behoort geplaas te word.

Jordaan die SR:voorsitter, reken "kampusmedia sal nie noodwendig beperk word as dit onder een gesagsliggaam geplaas word nie. Ons kan op dié manier verseker dat deeglike opleiding aan joernaliste gegee word".

Jordaan is egter gekant teen die voorgestelde wetsontwerp op inligting in Suid-Afrika en voel dat die media nie deur die regering reguleer behoort te word nie.

Joernalistiekdosent Cornia Pretorius, voel dat *Wapad* deur die SR met rus gelaat moet word om hul taak uit te voer volgens die goedgekeurde reglemente wat daar vir *Wapad* ingestel is. "Daarvolgens is *Wapad* deel van die SR-strukture. Maar dit werk op dieselfde beginsel as die SABC. Dit is 'n openbare uitsaaier, maar dit behoort nie die regerende-party te dien nie."

"Die NWU is nie 'n Nazi-strafkamp nie. *Wapad* is daar om oor studentesake berig te doen en om na studente se belange om te sien – in die geval was dit dié van die eerstejaars. Dit is veronderstel om 'n plek te wees waar debat vrylik gevoer word en selfs eerstejaars mag deelneem (hopelik sonder hul *flair*-lose pakkies)," het Pretorius gesê.

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issuu.com/wapad

previous years. Du Plessis who had said his game plan was to "spice up the newspaper in terms of its content" confirmed this. Hence during his term as editor the paper would frankly discuss "issues such as racism, sexism, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) movement, initiation practices; in short forward-thinking ideas." [10] He felt that he had more space to manoeuvre following a revision in the paper's constitution in 2011 to bring about greater independence. Previously BEK, on behalf of the SRC, had published the paper. [11] Following a revision, requested by the Campus Rector Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, the new constitution was supposed to hand the paper back to the students, with an editorial board assisting purely in an advisory capacity. Its members were drawn from the Rector's office, BEK, the School of Communication Studies (journalism) and the SRC.[12] However, despite these changes BEK still kept a close eye on *Wapad*.[13]

Another troublemaker

As the *Wapad* was finding its own, more independent voice, a new journalism lecturer at the School of Communication Studies on the Potchefstroom Campus attracted attention in some of the university's corridors of power.[14] Hannelie Booyens, who also worked as a *Beeld* columnist, robustly tackled themes such as race, gender, prejudice and discrimination on a weekly basis – and often took a swipe at the Potchefstroom establishment and the res culture on the campus. She was especially critical about initiation and also raised questions about the death of Thabang Makhoang.

Early in 2013 she heard that the "long knives had been drawn". What some of her superiors found particularly upsetting was when Booyens, a feminist, in a column in the *Wapad* and on the student radio station PukFm, challenged the fact that women were addressed as and referred to as "ladies" on campus. This was followed by an article in the erstwhile Media24 weekend supplement, By.[15] [16]

An award-winning journalist who had worked at establishments such as *Huisgenoot*, *Die Burger* and *Beeld*, and as the lecturer of the Rykie van Reenen chair in journalism at Stellenbosch University, Booyens was also a Facebook celebrity when she joined the NWU in mid-2012. As an intellectual, her posts are characterised by incisive satirical social commentary and scant regard for holy cows. Sensitive readers might find some of Booyens' posts offensive.

It was against this backdrop – and following a run-in with a housefather who wanted to censor a student's examination project exposing initiation activities[17] – that an infuriated Booyens took to Facebook when she heard about Du Plessis' assault.

She wrote: "Last night the editor of the NWU's student newspaper (Kevin du Plessis) was assaulted by a res student for supposedly not having "hostel pride". Can anybody still doubt that the fanatical res culture is the single most toxic and undermining influence on campus? It's insane how often hostels get away with blatant abuse. Should be interesting to see if this scoundrel will be expelled for his behaviour. By now his arm is probably numb from all the congratulatory punches he received from fellow residence cult members."[18]

Later, in response to one of the comments on her posts (and the exam project saga), she wrote: "A year later I realise there are few people so devious and dishonest as a hostel housemaster. The university has prohibited all initiation practices but in every single res it is still happening – with the knowledge and approval of res 'fathers' and 'mothers'. And without exception they are all Christian and oh so pious. It's sickening." [19]

These were part of several rousing posts for which Booyens would later face disciplinary charges. The complaints came from a dozen or so housemothers and fathers, as well as three students.[20]

Wapad closes

On Monday morning at 6am, only a few hours after the attack on Du Plessis, Theo Cloete, director of marketing and communications on the Potchefstroom Campus, sent an email to the editorial staff of *Wapad* to tell them the paper had been closed.[21]

The closure immediately created the impression that the newspaper was being punished – censored – for the

◄ The *Wapad* and the SRC clashed from the word go in 2013. This is the first front page of the student newspaper, published on the Potchefstroom Campus in 2013. The headline was "SRC threatens to discipline *Wapad*" (SR dreig *Wapad* met tug). According to the article there was a dispute between the SRC and *Wapad* on how to report on an incident during which five first-year students had fainted at a mass gathering in the campus's amphitheatre.

September 2012
The NWU Council approves a media policy for the entire NWU.

18 October 2012
Eloff receives the International Association of Business Communicators Africa Excellence In Communication Leadership Award.

Hannelie Booyens, an award-winning journalist, was already a Facebook celebrity when she joined the NWU as a lecturer in mid-2012. Her incisive social commentary on aspects of the Potchefstroom Campus's student life and campus culture, notably initiation practices, did not go unnoticed. Photo: Nico Blignaut

Hannelie Booyens in Potchefstroom
8 September 2013

Last night the editor of the NWU's student newspaper (Kevin du Plessis) was assaulted by a res student for supposedly not having "hostel pride". Can anybody still doubt that the fanatical res culture is the single most toxic and undermining influence on campus? It's insane how often hostels get away with blatant abuse. Should be interesting to see if this scoundrel will be expelled for his behaviour. By now his arm is probably numb from all the congratulatory punches he received from fellow residence cult members.

Like 34 2 32

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Like 5

▲ Two of the Facebook updates which would cost Booyens her job.

direction that it had taken; therefore raising questions about management's commitment to freedom of speech on the campus.

This perception was fuelled by a vigorous debate among students and sympathetic academic staff members on social media. A Facebook group, Protest against censorship on the NWU-Puk, was created.[22] The view was further entrenched because BEK, acting outside the structures created to oversee the *Wapad*'s operations, did not want the newspaper to publish online.[23]

BEK said the reason for the closure was *Wapad*'s finances. It was R79 000 in the red. Later BEK said the closure was only temporary and that once the money owed by advertisers was collected the paper could open again. Initially BEK indicated only R7 000 would be outstanding after advertisers had settled their debts, but this later became R39 000.[24]

In fact, what surfaced even later is that the individual responsible for keeping track of *Wapad* advertisers and collecting their money failed to do so due to personal difficulties.[25]

At a meeting called and facilitated by campus Rector Van Schalkwyk about the closure of the *Wapad*, BEK indicated that it no longer wanted to be involved with the paper. Journalism lecturers from the School of Communication Studies who had supported the paper attended the meeting, along with Du Plessis as the editor, BEK and the SRC. Subsequently the *Wapad*'s Constitution was once again amended and the newspaper now resorts under the office of the Dean of Students and works with the SRC to manage its own finances. It also cannot publish if it does not have sufficient income.[26]

The paper published again on 10 October.

As one could expect from an experiential training ground, the *Wapad*'s provocative reporting was not always perfect. The minutes of the advisory committee, which met after every edition, revealed its shortcomings.[27]

19 December 2012
The Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act is promulgated. It gives unprecedented power to the Minister of Higher Education.

January 2013
Tufvesson leaves the NWU after a disagreement with Eloff about the way the NWU deals with transformation.

Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, former Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, repeatedly tried to end or at least limit initiation. He was warned about the dangers of the gesture that students were using, resembling the Nazi Sieg Heil salute. Photo: NWU Archive

But the *Wapad* worked hard to get debate going on the campus. And young journalists at academic institutions deserve to learn in environments where freedom of speech is understood and respected.[28]

Pictures and videos uncovered

On 21 November 2013, Booyens was charged for damaging the NWU's image with her Facebook statements the day after the *Wapad* was shut down.[29] Although the complaints were laid in September, the documents were only delivered to Booyens the day after the Campus Rector Van Schalkwyk lost the race for Vice-Chancellor against Mafikeng Campus Rector Prof Dan Kgwadi. This was relevant in the further unfolding of the crisis.

As Booyens started to collect evidence to defend herself at her hearing – specifically to prove that she had grounds for her statements on initiation – a colleague came across a folder of pictures and videos on a Potchefstroom Campus computer server used by students and academic staff to save projects and large files. The images and footage depicted first-year student from various male and female residences who were reenacting what appeared to be a Nazi salute. The videos and pictures were taken at different times, at different residences and in different years. She also included a picture of the salute that a senior professor had taken several years ago.[30]

On 12 December, Booyens also wrote a column in *Beeld* titled "The power of love vs the power of hate" *(Die krag van liefde teenoor krag van haat)* about the salute and its use on the campus.[31]

By this time, senior managers on the campus had been warned on more than one occasion about the potentially explosive nature of a salute which looked like the Sieg Heil captured in pictures and videos. Early in January the campus management asked students to stop using the salute, which had for decades been part of greeting rituals on the campus and previously at the PU for CHE.[32]

But videos posted on the *Wapad*'s website showing a gathering of first-year students revealed that some residences had disregarded the ban.

Moreover, instances of the earlier usage of the salute, before it was declared taboo, were still to be found online.[33]

It was at this time that Booyens decided to settle with the NWU and leave the institution. According to the 2014 annual report, she was paid R376 400. She also signed a confidentiality agreement. But as the salute scandal unfolded publicly, the crisis was pinned on her. What made it easy to do this was that Booyens was an outsider. She was fairly new to the institution, she had already been branded a mischief-maker, and her various identities – being a gay feminist and atheist – clashed with the stereotype of what used to be a traditional Puk employee.

As Booyens' negotiations were being finalised, the campus acted against three residences for alleged initiation practices. The house committees of the female residence Karlien and the male residence Over de Voor (Overs) were suspended, while an incident in Ratau Lebone, the residence in which the late Thabang Makhoang stayed, was also being investigated after a first year was injured.[34] The media wanted to know what happened in these residences, but the campus was vague. This prompted *Beeld* to investigate.

The editor Adriaan Basson explained: "*Beeld*'s interest in initiation practices in Potch was stirred by the decision of Prof Herman van Schalkwyk, the campus rector, to suspend two house committees of two residences following alleged offences. The role of journalism is to dig deeper. This is why we sent a team of journalists to find out what had happened in these residences (the NWU refused to issue details about the incidents)."[35]

What they returned with was material of students using, what resembled the Nazi salute. And although the Potchefstroom Campus management had banned the usage of the salute earlier in 2014, first years continued to make the gesture. In addition, there were still online versions of the salute.

Pukke sê: "Heil!"

The front-page article published by *Beeld* on 21 February 2014 was the end of a long chain of events on the Potchefstroom Campus.

But it did not begin in 2012 with the death of the first-year Thabang Makhoang. It did not begin in 2014 in the lifts or halls or corridors of Karlien or Overs or Ratau. An overview of *Wapad* reports since 2004, the year of the birth of the NWU, showed that cases were repeatedly reported year after year during the orientation period of first-year students. Prior to the existence of the NWU, the PU for CHE had had its share of incidents. The build-up was gradual and cumulative.[36]

Therefore the backstory to the salute was the history of initiation on the Potchefstroom Campus, coupled with the *Wapad*'s reporting, the subsequent attack on its editor for

February 2013
Management says it will spend approximately R380 million on new buildings and upgrading existing buildings and equipment over the next three years.

March 2013
There are reports that the Minister of Higher Education wants the Hawks to launch a new investigation into the death of first-year student Thabang Makhoang.

SS pryse styg drasties Hoekom? 6

NUUS 5
Pukki-liedjie nie YouTube gehalte

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

20 Februarie 2014 / VOL 2

Wapad

LEES JOU KAMPUS

Karlien, Overs: 'AfriForum is verantwoordelik'

STUDENTEKOERANT VAN DIE NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT SE POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS — JAARGANG 68 — SMS-LYN 31750 MET WOORD 'WAPAD' VOOR — WAPAD@NWU.AC.ZA

'Die bewerings teen ons tot dusver is onwaar' - Karlien se primaria

Karlien, Overs én Ratau in die sop

HANNES KRUGER

Ons was uit die veld geslaan. Ons het dit glad nie verwag nie!

Só het Chantelle Ludik, prim van Karlien-vrouekoshuis, gesê ná die HK van dié koshuis tydelik geskors is ná klagtes van beweerde onbehoorlike praktyke.

Volgens Ludik kan hulle op hierdie stadium nie dink wat die aard van die klagtes is nie.

"Ons het die reëls deeglik gevolg en streng gehou by die goedgekeurde tradisies."

Volgens Ludik het die hele koshuis 'n SMS op die dag van die tydelike skorsing gekry wat sê dat die hele koshuis om 17:30 in die ontspanningsaal moet wees vir 'n vergadering met die rektor.

"Die HK is egter apart geroep vir 'n vergadering in die raadsaal. Dit is waar vir ons gesê is ons is tydelik geskors en dat ons teen 20:00 moet ontruim."

Karlien en Over de Voor-manskoshuis, wie se HK ook tydelik geskors is na aanleiding van onbehoorlike praktyke wat aangemeld is, word tydelik in die Dennepark wooneenhede tydens die ondersoek gehuisves.

"Ons het onveilig gevoel. Daar was een loper wat al die kamers in Dennepark kon oopsluit. Daar is mense wat ons nie ken nie wat ook daar bly," het Ludik by navraag gesê. Die probleem is egter nou opgelos.

Volgens Ludik veroorsaak die tydelike huisvesting ongerief.

"Daar is geen internet nie. Ons moet die heeltyd kampus toe ry wat baie ekstra brandstofgeld uit die sak jaag om van die internet gebruik te maak."

"Ons moet nou ook betaal om ons wasgoed te was waar dit in die koshuis gratis was."

Intussen is daar geen nuwe inligting oor die presiese aard van die klagtes deur die kampusbestuur bekendgemaak nie.

Volgens prof. Herman van Schalkwyk, kampusrektor, sal daar meer inligting ná die verhoor bekendgemaak word.

"Anders is ons besig om die ondersoek en moontlike verhoor vooruit te loop en individue in die openbaar te verhoor," het Van Schalkwyk gesê.

Luidens 'n verklaring wat verlede week deur die universiteit op hulle Facebook-blad geplaas is, het heelwat studente, seniors en eerstejaars van albei koshuise die ondersoekspan met belangrike inligting genader wat egter nog bevestig moet word.

Op grond van hierdie verdere inligting word onder meer beweerde voorvalle van intimidasie (geskreeu en gevloek) en sogenaamde rondstampery deur die span ondersoek.

"Gerugte onder studente wat die *Potchefstroom Herald* te hore gekom het, is dat die HK's van Karlien hulle eerstejaars verbied het om te eet en van toiletgeriewe gebruik te maak," het die *Potchefstroom Herald* berig.

Hulle moes glo van emmers in hulle kamers gebruik maak.

Volgens Ludik het die media tot dusver die dam onder die eend uitgeruk.

"Hulle laat dit lyk asof ons skuldig is nog voordat ons skuldig bevind is," het sy gesê.

"Die bewerings is onwaar. Ons het konkrete bewyse wat ek besig is om saam te stel dat ons nie oortree het nie."

Volgens Ludik is die bewerings dat eerstejaars in emmers moes urineer omdat hulle badkamergeriewe geweier is totaal en al onwaar.

"Eerstejaars mag enige badkamer in die koshuis gebruik. Dit het wel so in die verlede gewerk dat eerstejaars en seniors verskillende badkamers moes gebruik. Dit werk nie meer so nie. Eerstejaars mag enige badkamer in die koshuis te alle tye gebruik, asook die voorportaalbadkamers."

JD Conradie, prim van Overs, het teen druktyd nog geen kommentaar gelewer nie.

Boonop is die koshuisouer van Over de Voor-manskoshuis ook tydelik onthef van sy verantwoordelikhede hangende die uitslag van die ondersoek.

> 'n Ondersoek is ook in Ratau Lebone-manskoshuis begin weens beweerde wanpraktyke in dié koshuis tydens O&B.

Volgens Van Schalkwyk hou die rede hiervoor verband met die bewering van wanpraktyke in die betrokke koshuise en die versuim daarvan om dit te rapporteer.

Die koshuisouers van Karlien is egter nie tydelik onthef van hulle verpligtinge nie.

Volgens Louis Jacobs, mediawoordvoerder van die institusionele kantoor, is hulle nie van hulle verpligtinge onthef nie aangesien "elke geval van 'n skorsing op eie meriete gehanteer word".

'n Ondersoek is ook in Ratau Lebone-manskoshuis begin weens beweerde wanpraktyke in dié koshuis tydens O&B.

'n Eerstejaar wie se ouers altwee glo in die regspraktyk is, het 'n klagte by die studentedekaan gelê.

Volgens prof. Rikus Fick, studentedekaan, is die saak aan die dissiplinêre kantoor oorgegee.

"Daar is nog geen bevindings gemaak nie. Die ondersoek is nog aan die gang. Soos met die geval van Over de Voor en Karlien sal daar baie streng opgetree word as en wanneer iemand skuldig bevind word," het Fick gesê.

Dié koshuis se HK-lede is egter nie tydelik van hulle verpligtinge onthef nie.

Volgens Frans Erasmus, prim van Ratau Lebone-manskoshuis, het hulle geen inligting tot dusver ontvang van die besonderhede oor die klagtes nie.

Volgens Erasmus het daar geen onbehoorlike praktyke plaasgevind nie.

"Ons is nie bewus dat die klagtes met enige senior te doen het nie, sou ons bevind dat die klagtes wel verband hou met 'n senior sal daar verseker opgetree word," het Erasmus gesê.

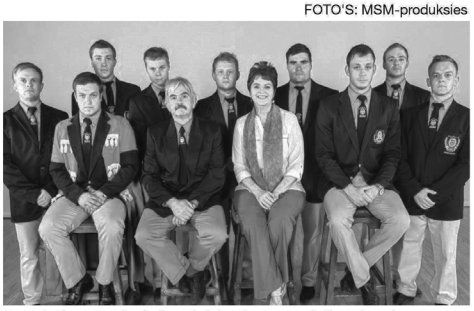
Luidens die verklaring op die NWU-Puk se Facebook-blad leef die kampus steeds sy "Omgee"-ingesteldheid uit en streef daarna om studente in 'n veilige atmosfeer voor te berei om afgeronde en gebalanseerde studente vir ons land op te lewer.

Daarom is die universiteit ook ernstig om praktyke wat nie strook met die land se grondwet en die universiteit se doenwaardes nie, met wortel en tak uit te roei.

In die proses word almal versoek om die Universiteit ruimte te gee om die ondersoek deeglik af te handel, ook om begrip te toon dat die Universiteit nie voortydig inligting bekend kan maak nie. Dit kan die ondersoekproses benadeel.

Karlien-vrouekoshuis se huiskomitee wat tydelik geskors is.

FOTO'S: MSM-produksies



Over de Voor-manskoshuis se huiskomitee wat tydelik geskors is.

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having no "pride" in his residence and a vocal anti-initiation activist-lecturer's outburst on Facebook. This was not an isolated case of a lone video being blown out of proportion by a sensationalist news organisation. Students, first-year students in particular, have been making the gesture, which looks like the Nazi Sieg Heil salute, for many years as part of greeting ceremonies.

It had been part of traditions dating back to the days of the PU for CHE, which immersed white Afrikaans students into their culture. It is not clear where the Heil greeting comes from. It could even stem from the time when PU for CHE staff had strong links with the National Socialist Ossewabrandwag Movement around the time of World War II. Be that as it may, by 1994 student and management alike should have reevaluated traditions such as Nazi-like greetings. By 2004, when the merger took place, this assessment should have been repeated. In fact, it was the perfect time to break with old traditions and rebuild the institutional culture from scratch. The failure of the NWU and the Potchefstroom Campus to do so is an indictment against the management and has undermined the successes of the merger.

Massive support for Pukke

At 1 o'clock on 21 February 2014, the day on which *Beeld* reported that students were using the salute, the SRC called a mass meeting in the amphitheatre of the Potchefstroom Campus. It was packed with hundreds of students.

"We apologise unconditionally if we caused any offence," the Dean of students on the campus Prof Rikus Fick said by way of introduction. SRC chair Janco Jordaan was next. He told the students no gestures that could cause any offence or have any negative historical symbolism would be allowed on the campus.

"We cannot allow ourselves to be placed in a similar predicament," he said. "We have to learn to be critical and to think objectively about how people on the outside look at things and interpret them." He called on students to focus on positive traditions.

By this time the campus Rector Van Schalkwyk had also apologised. He was the first, at 5am that morning, to comment online on *Beeld*'s article. Van Schalkwyk apologised on behalf of the university. He wrote: "We know and understand that these thoughtless and uninformed actions of our students could be hurtful." [37] [38]

More apologies would follow. Some days later, on 6 March, the chair of the Council Peet van der Walt joined Fick, Jordaan and Van Schalkwyk.

He said the NWU Council would not tolerate any abuses of human rights: "There were violations. We unconditionally apologise [to those] that took offence. We also took note of strategies when we heard of investigations in three residences. Prof Herman van Schalkwyk [had a] constructive meeting with [the] Jewish Board of Deputies. Council took note of [the] request of Blade Nzimande: Ensure initiation ceases immediately. Council must do a thorough investigation [of practices] that seem to exist with tacit approval." [39]

The Council of the NWU and Dr Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, requested a report from the institution.[40] But while the Minister was planning his intervention in Pretoria, a significant backlash against *Beeld* was unfolding on social media platforms and in some print media.

Twitter in particular, was ignited with a groundswell of support for the Pukke and fierce attacks on *Beeld* and its editor, Basson.[41]

With hash tags such as #dankiePuk[42] and a specially designed Puk Facebook logo, which students could use to replace their profile pictures, students on the Potchefstroom Campus fiercely defended what they viewed as an attack on their campus, its residences and the student culture.[43]

Students also contributed to *Beeld*'s Twitter feed.

In addition the opinion pages of *Beeld* exploded with contributions of writers both defending and criticising the use of the salute.[44]

The Council acts

Notwithstanding public support for the Potchefstroom Campus – and even initiation – the NWU had to act.

The Council subsequently appointed human rights and legal expert Dr Leon Wessels as the leader of a task team to investigate the welcoming and introduction of first-year students at the university. The other members were academic and political analyst Prof Somadoda Fikeni, CEO

◄ The front page of *Wapad*, student newspaper on the Potchefstroom Campus, reported in the beginning of 2014 that the house committee members of three residences – Karlien, Overs and Ratau – were being investigated for initiation practices.

5 April 2013
Eloff says religion plays an important role in science practice and has a place at modern research universities, including the NWU. He spoke at a conference about religion and the idea of a university at the School of divinity at the University of Cambridge in the UK.

2 May 2013
The Council for Geoscience enters into a contract with the Centre for Applied Radiation Science and Technology (CARST) on the Mafikeng Campus. It will provide support for radiation measurement and assessment in a council project that focuses on derelict and ownerless mines.

B23

Beeld
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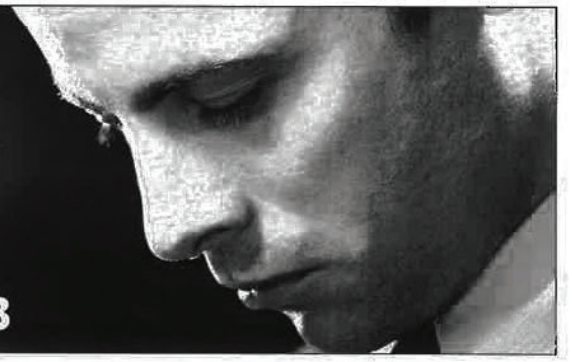


ONTHULLING: Skote klap, maar Oscar sê als is 'fine' – 3

Pukke salueer: 'Heil!'

Eerstejaars se omstrede saluut

Rektor ontken 'Nazi-kultuur'

'n Videogroep waarin eerstejaars van die Wag-'n-Bietjie-vroueskoshuis op die NWU-Puk begin met die omstrede "studentegroet" vir hul primaria, Jenny van der Heever. Die groet herinner sterk aan die "Sieg Heil!"-groet van Nazi-Duitsland.

Só eindig die "Puk-groet" in YouTube-video van die Wag-'n-Bietjie-vroueskoshuis. Die video is gisteraand van die internet verwyder. Dit is nog te sien op Beeld se webwerf, beeld.com.

Ondersoek deur Pauli van Wyk, Lourensa Eckard en Monique Vrey

Dié foto's is nie genoeg in Adolf Hitler se Nazi-Duitsland nie, maar 'n maand gelede op die Noordwes-Universiteit (NWU) se Puk-kampus in Potchefstroom.

Beeld kan onthul dat studente op dié kampus tot 'n paar weke gelede die "Sieg Heil!"-saluut as 'n studentegroet gebruik het.

Dit is 'n gevestigde instelling op die Puk wat sporadies en verál tydens die eerstejaarsverwelkoming gebruik word.

Die saluut gaan dikwels gepaard met eerstejaars én seniors wat skreeu: "Heil Puk!"

Op 21 Januarie het prof. Herman van Schalkwyk, kampusrektor, en prof. Rikus Fick, Puk-studentedeskaan, alle Nazi-agtige simbole verbied op 'n vergadering met die 28 Puk-koshuise se primarutsse.

Die vergadering is gehou 'n dag nadat 'n YouTube-video van die Wag-'n-Bietjie-vrouekoshuis se eerstejaars, op die foto's hierbo, die "Sieg Heil!"-saluut uitgevoer het as groet aan hul primaria tydens die universiteit se amptelike ontvangs-en-bekendstellingsprogram (O&B).

Puk-eerstejaars gebruik die "Sieg Heil!"-saluut.

Van Schalkwyk het volgens Bertie Jacobs, woordvoerder van die universiteit, gesê tugstappe sal gedoen word teen enigeen wat sedert 21 Januarie weer dié saluut of enige Nazi-simbool gebruik.

Die Hombré- en Wag-'n-Bietjie-koshuis het vanjaar vir die jool 'n vlot gebou waarop Hitler en sy soldate uitgebeeld is.

Dit was volgens Fick bedoel om die "haat-element" in die tema "liefde vs. haat" en "lig vs. donker" uit te beeld.

In 'n werwingsvideo vir die Minjonet-vrouekoshuis wat op 29 April 2012 op YouTube geplaas is, skreeu die primaria: "Heil Minjonet!", waarna die inwoners dit herhaal terwyl hulle in geïld staan.

Van Schalkwyk het gisteraand onthou dat die saluut ooit in sy teenwoordigheid uitgevoer is.

Die saluut is egter sedert verlede jaar herhaaldelik deur talle mense onder Van Schalkwyk se aandag gebring, het 'n Puk-dosent gesê.

Volgens die dosent was die topbestuur van die universiteit se antwoord dat die saluut "in konteks" gesien moet word.

"Dit is belangrik om die studente nie hiervoor te blameer nie. Ek is oortuig die meeste weet nie wat dit beteken nie.

"Daarom is dit soveel duideliker dat ons 'n dringende opvoedingstaak het," het die dosent gesê.

'Ondersoek is nog aan die gang'

Volgens prof. Herman van Schalkwyk, kampusrektor, is dit absurd om die Puk-kampus van 'n toeareserdary te beskuldig terwyl die ondersoek na bewearde ontgroeningspraktyke aan die gang is.

"Ons moet ook versigtig wees vir lasterelse indien 'n verhoor in die media ontstaan en mense wat geïmpliseer word later onskuldig bevind word."

Van Schalkwyk het gesê 'n bakleiery tussen die koshuise Hombré en Over-de-Voor se eerstejaars tydens 'n onlangse dinee word ondersoek.

"Hombré se huiskomitee het ingetree, maar dié van Over-de-Voor het níks gedoen nie. Daar is ook verskeie klagtes van intimidasie teen Overs, onder meer 'n geskree en vloek op ander koshuise se inwoners."

Die ondersoek na wanpraktyke in Karlien gaan grootliks oor die ontneming van voorregte soos die gebruik van geriewe soos hysbakke.

"Daar is ook klagtes dat seniors op 'n eerstejaar gevloek en geskel het. Die huiskomitee was glo daar, maar het níks gedoen nie." – Susan Cilliers

In 'n onderhoud met *Beeld* het Van Schalkwyk, wat vier jaar gelede op die Puk aangestel is, gesê enige sprake van 'n "Nazi-kultuurmelging" op die kampus is vergoeilik.

Die hoogseregshof in Pretoria het verlede jaar 'n dringende interdik aan die NWU toegestaan om 'n Facebook-inskrywing van die Higher Education Transformation Network (HETN), waarin die swastika saam met die NWU se naam verskyn, te verwyder. Die universiteit het toe aangevoer Nazi-simbole is lasterlik.

■ In nog 'n verwikkeling het dit aan die lig gekom dat 'n eerstejaar van die koshuis Over de Voor onlangs geopereer moes word om skade te herstel aan ligamente en kraakbeen in die knie wat beseer is toe hy en ander eerstejaars rondgestamp is, berig Susan Cilliers.

Dit is onthul in die NWU se ondersoek na moontlike wanpraktyke in dié manskoshuis en die vrouekoshuis Karlien, het Van Schalkwyk gesê.

"Die beseerde student het nie gekla nie, maar ons het tydens die ondersoek van sy besering bewus geword. Fisieke kontak tussen seniore en eerstejaars is teen die universiteitsreëls.

"Ons probeer nou vasstel wie direk by die stampery betrokke was."

Dr. Pieter Warnich, Over de Voor se koshuisvader, is saam met die hele huiskomitee (insluitend die primarius), tydelik van hul pligte onthef hangende die ondersoek.

"Daar was verlede jaar al klagtes oor 'n stampery en toe reeds het ek die primarius en koshuispa gewaarsku dit moet stop," het Van Schalkwyk in 'n onderhoud gesê.

■ Nog op bl. 4, 5, 11.

'n Eerstejaar oorhandig tydens verlede jaar se rektorsgroet 'n kroon as geskenk van haar koshuis aan prof. Herman van Schalkwyk.

Kontrak-dwarsklap spoor Elgar aan

Michael Green

Port Elizabeth. – Die een dag hoor jy jy het nie meer 'n kontrak met die Proteas nie en net 'n paar *dae* later moet jy hulle help om nie naam weg te gooi teen Australië nie.

Dit is die verhaal van Dean Elgar, wat gister hier 'n vegtersbeurt van 83 lopies op St. Georgespark in die tweede toets teen die Aussies behaal het.

"Dit was teleurstellende maar net so voor 'n toets en dit het my ekstra motivering gegee om te probeer goed vaar," het Elgar gister gesê. Hy het Maandag gehoor hy is nie meer op Krieket Suid-Afrika se lys van gekontrakteerde spelers nie.

"Dis nie asof ek iets aan sekere mense wou bewys nie, maar ek wou darem net wys dat hulle nie die regte besluit geneem het nie."

Hy het eergisteraand gehoor dat hy dalk as aanvangskolwer of as kolwer nommer ses gebruik sou word. Toe Alviro Petersen gisteroggend steeds siekerig was, het Elgar saam met Graeme Smith die tuinspan se beurt geopen. Die eerste klompie boulbeurte het min lopies opgelewer.

"Hulle het regtig goed geboul," het Elgar gesê.

"Ons moes hard werk vir elke lopie. Ek het *gewaad as ek tot* stemstyd kon inbly, soos dinge maklikker raak. Dit was ook so, totdat die Aussies weer die skroewe begin aandraai het."

Elgar is uiteindelik met 'n swakkerige hou uit wat hom kwaad gemaak het, want hy het gevoel hy kon vir " 'n dag en 'n half" op die Baaise bled kolf.

"Hike lopie wat jy in die eerste beurt hier aanteken, is goud werd," het hy gesê.

■ Suid-Afrika het teen uitskeityd gister 214/5 behaal.

of the National Nuclear Regulator Dr Mzubanzi Tyobeka, and chairperson of the NWU's human rights committee Advocate Rehana Rawat. A fourth member, Rhoda Kadalie, withdrew.[45]

The Wessels task team faced huge pressure. In a limited time it had to try and deliver a credible report to the Council. The polemic playing itself out on social media platforms and on the pages of newspapers suggested the opinions on the matter were continents apart and the task team would not succeed in pleasing anyone. Interestingly, two Afrikaans papers, *Beeld* and *Rapport*, appear to have taken on opposing roles in their reporting, with *Beeld* being the bad cop and *Rapport* the good cop.

In the meantime, the chairperson of the NWU Council had announced that Eloff would retire from his position early to allow his successor to handle the 2014 crisis.

With this intervention the NWU could send the message that it was accountable for its actions and that somebody was paying the price – even if Eloff only had two months to go before his contract expired. Eloff felt he was being punished – and he did not take it well.[46]

But his persistent refusal to acknowledge any wrongdoing on the part of the Potchefstroom students undermined the NWU's effort to send an unambiguous message to the rest of the world that the institution truly regretted the actions of its students – whether they knew what they were doing or not.[47]

Eloff also had little confidence in the Wessels task team. Before the release of the report he said he knew "Leon was under pressure" and that the task team would therefore produce a "political report".[48]

Later on he expressed concern that the report was based on anecdotes and that people who had an axe to grind were involved in its compilation.[49]

During this time the issue of initiation practices was considered of such importance that a Puk forum discussion was hosted where various speakers presented their views and where students and staff could debate the matter. The forum arranges these events when issues of considerable significance arise on campus.

On 29 May the executive committee of the NWU Council discussed the Wessels report.[50] But when it was submitted to a full Council meeting on 19 June, a news report suggested that the Potchefstroom Campus had rejected it. Former campus Rector Van Schalkwyk, Dean of students Fick and SRC chairman Jordaan submitted a minority report to emphasise the work that had been done to end initiation practices on the campus and the actions taken to deal with the salute.[51] Van Schalkwyk had indeed repeatedly tried to end or at least limit initiation. When he had taken firm action against Veritas male residence in 2011 following the assault of first years, he was attacked from many corners. At the time he said: "I am not trying to upset students or student life. In fact, I am trying to protect the best and the beautiful of our student life and to act on behalf of the campus."[52]

The Council did not want to release the Wessels report, which is critical of the Potchefstroom Campus in particular, but it was leaked and has been widely circulated.

What the report said was that the university was opposed to and forbade any form of initiation, including any form of physical and psychological abuse. There were clear policies to that effect. Yet the traditions in residences dated from a pre-democratic, pre-merger period when the PU for CHE was overwhelmingly white and Afrikaans. Activities to introduce first years to their residences such as songs, dances and salutations to their hostels, senior students and house committee members – predominantly in Afrikaans – were unwelcoming to students from other cultures, but also to some Afrikaans students. The report also pointed at difficulties with the uniforms worn by first years.

The Wessels report found that the purpose of many of the practices in residences was to strip students of their individuality, identity and human dignity, and to force them to function only as a group. Moreover, those who did not participate tended to be ostracised by the residence community. It made 10 recommendations, some of which had been made in one form or another in previous investigations into and audits of the NWU merger.

The Wessels task team called for the radical normalisation of residences in which about 80% of students were still white; the fundamental reconfiguration of the university's marketing, communication and public relations unit (in the light of the functioning of BEK on the Potchefstroom Campus), and a review of the NWU's three-campus management architecture which insulated each campus and

◀ *Beeld* newspaper reports that first-year students on the Potchefstroom Campus have been using a gesture similar to the Nazi Sieg Heil salute. Several other reports inside the paper looked at initiation rites on the campus.

14 May 2013
The NWU receives a three-star rating after becoming the first university in Africa to be audited and rated by the international Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rating System.

8 September 2013
The editor of the Potchefstroom campus student newspaper, *Wapad*, Kevin du Plessis, is physically assaulted by a student from a male residence of the Potchefstroom Campus for having no "pride in his residence".

undermined the creation of a uniform institutional identity. The report recommended that all initiation rituals be banned and only university-sanctioned orientation programmes be used. In the same vein it stated that although there was no fascism or Nazism, there were traditions that drove certain unacceptable practices.

The university should also revise its vision, mission and values to foreground transformation and cultural diversity, and revise aspects of its language policy which may inhibit integration and institutional cohesion.

Furthermore, there should be a university-wide dialogue on the implementation of an appropriate welcoming programme, the human rights committee at the NWU should be empowered to reach its full potential and there should be inter-campus exchange programmes for academics, campus leaders and managers.[53]

The Wessels report was considered before the NWU Council, which compiled a final report for Nzimande. It was handed to him on 26 June. It stated that while fascism or Nazism did not drive initiation the human rights of students were abused.

A special Council committee was appointed to ensure the implementation of the recommendations, including a ban on all initiation practices, the protection of dignity by means of, among others, educational programmes and the promotion of integration and diversity.[54]

Students rise up

The investigations triggered a split on the Potchefstroom Campus between those in support of what was reported by *Beeld* and those who believed it was vicious overkill driven by Basson and Booyens. Generally initiation as an expression of unacceptable violence or human rights abuses against junior students was rejected. However, the context in which these aberrations happened – namely residences and the power dynamics inside them – was contested. Students and parents defended the residences as spaces in which they could adapt to and flourish in a new environment.

A few thousand students on the Potchefstroom Campus participated in a campaign called #SalJyOpstaan (Will you rise up) to tackle "wrong" views about the NWU-Pukke.[55]

A month later, on 24 July they took to the streets – the first protest march by Potch students since the establishment of the NWU.

The SRC member for residences Magdeli Reitz said: "We have been silent long enough while the media drag our name through the mud and apologised enough while we did nothing wrong.

"We are not racists or fascist and no-one's puppet. We are proud South Africans who believe in democracy, inclusiveness and positive traditions – not in initiation and human rights violations."

Yet when Kgwadi, upon receipt of the students' memorandum, tried to reassure students about Afrikaans – like direct translations of English lectures to Afrikaans – some students shouted "No! No!" and walked away.

Nzimande only reacted to the report early in October 2014. He was brutal in his assessment of the situation.[56]

He called the Potchefstroom Campus an "apartheid enclave" which is a "hostile and foreign environment for people who are not white Afrikaners" and in urgent need of transformation.

Nzimande also lambasted Eloff.

He said Eloff had "not been prepared to transform Pukke …" He added that the merger's structure "had been designed to keep the Potchefstroom Campus Afrikaans and white".

Nzimande also pointed out that various reports over the years had indicated the problems on the Potchefstroom Campus – in particular "residence-specific initiation practices mainly directed at first-year students who are vulnerable, especially those who are not from the dominant Afrikaans feeder schools. Given the various reports, the university management…cannot claim ignorance of such practices, but have steadfastly refused to act on the evidence. A culture of fear exists at the institution and people do not talk freely for fear of victimisation," he said. In an open letter, Eloff responded angrily (see Chapter 25).[57]

9 September 2013
The *Wapad* is closed by campus management, citing financial considerations for the decision.

10 September 2013
The NWU holds its first alumni awards ceremony, paying tribute to 10 top alumni who helped shape the country.

Prof Dan Kgwadi, the new Vice-Chancellor of the NWU, addresses students from the Potchefstroom Campus during a protest march on 24 July 2014. Their message was that they did not believe in initiation and human rights violations. Students shouted “No! No!” when he spoke about translating English lectures to Afrikaans. Photo: Attie Gerber

Puk: 'n Vertrouensbreuk

Beste Tim
Dit spyt my om jou mee te deel dat ek na aanleiding van 'n stortvloed versoeke uit die Afrikaanse gemeenskap 'n dispuut met *Beeld* verklaar as gevolg van die vertrouensbreuk tussen die koerant en 'n wesenlike deel van sy lesers. Ek doen dit in die vorm van 'n ope brief omdat *Beeld* die toekoms van die laaste Afrikaanse kampus en die laaste Afrikaanse koerant in die noorde in die gedrang gebring het deur die swak oordeel van sy redakteur.

Ek motiveer ons dispuut en redes vir die vertrouensbreuk en stelling oor sy oordeelsfout soos volg:

Die leuenagtige Nazi-koppeling met die NWU se Potchefstroom-kampus

Dit is verregaande om die Potchefstroom-kampus van die NWU aan Nazisme te koppel, soos wat in *Beeld* van 21 Februarie gedoen word. Daar is nie sprake van Nazi-praktyke, -kultuur of -beïnvloeding van studente nie.

Om die kampus aan 'n veragtelike ideologie te koppel, is 'n beswaddering en belastering van die kampus se voortreflike rekord en die bewese geskiedenis van dr. Theuns Eloff en prof. Herman van Schalkwyk.

Die herdoping van studentegroete tot "Sieg Heil!"-Nazi-salute is net so verwerplik as die Nazi's self. Dat die gewreakte en misplaaste "saluut" net 'n sekonde van 'n saamgestelde reeks liedjies uitmaak, word nie genoem nie. 'n Onnadenkende en naïewe halfsekonde is darem ver van 'n doelbewuste Nazi-saluut.

Daar word ook nie voldoende erkenning verleen aan die kampus se sterk optrede teen ontgroeningswanpraktyke en die feit dat die gebare reeds verbied was nie. Die langtermyn-gevolge van die swarismeer van die Puk vir die reputasie en goeie naam van die studente, dosente en bestuurders is ook nie moontlik om te voorspel nie.

As een van 'n groep mense wat lief is vir Afrikaans en vir die Puk, en Nazisme verafsku, grief *Beeld* se verdraaiing van die gebeure my juis so.

Beeld se anti-Puk-veldtog teenoor gewone nuusdekking

Die doel van 'n koerant is om nuus te publiseer en om as openbare waghond op te tree. Dit is gevolglik verstaanbaar dat *Beeld* nuus rapporteer, maar om jou eie agenda te dryf is totaal iets anders. Wanpraktyke in ontgroening is nie verskoonbaar nie, en *Beeld* sou reg gewees het om dit te ontbloot.

Baie hang egter daarvan af hóé dit publiseer word. Die probleem is dat *Beeld* veel verder as dekking gegaan het en die nuus buite verhouding opgeblaas en oordryf het. Daar het byvoorbeeld net op 21 Februarie agt berigte en 'n spotprent daaroor verskyn, terwyl 18 verwysings na Hitler of die Nazi's geplaas is.

Die uitvoerende hoof van Solidariteit, Flip Buys, verduidelik in dié brief aan Tim du Plessis, uitvoerende redakteur van Afrikaanse nuus in Media24, waarom die vakbond 'n dispuut met Beeld verklaar oor die Puk-debakel.

Flip Buys, uitvoerende hoof van Solidariteit.

Die redakteur het daarby op 20 Februarie die volgende stelling op Twitter aan duisende mense gemaak: "Nazi Germany? No: Potch." Hy het ook 'n reeks foto's van eerstejaars op Twitter gepubliseer en met selektiewe halfsekondes van hul "groeterituele" dit as "Sieg Heil-Nazi!"-salute beskryf. Honderde studente wat op die foto's herkenbaar is, word só op 'n lasterlike wyse blootgestel.

Die wyse van ondersoek versterk die indruk van 'n anti-Puk-veldtog omdat 'n hele span joernaliste die kampus onder die dekmantel van gewone studente besoek het. Daar is klaarblyklik ook saamgespan met enkele gegriefde personeellede.

Die deurlopende onthulling van ou nuus en die opdiep van verouderde visuele materiaal bevestig die gevolgtrekking van die fabrisering van nuus en 'n veldtog teen die kampus.

Die tydsberekening van *Beeld* se aanval, nadat dr. Eloff se uittrede bekendgemaak is en voordat sy opvolger oorgeneem het, lyk in die lig van al hierdie gebeure nie toevallig nie.

Voorsienbare gevolge van regeringsinmenging vir Afrikaans

Die gevolge van *Beeld* se hantering van die gebeure kan groot gevolge vir Potchefstroom as die laaste oorblywende Afrikaanse kampus inhou. Die klaarblyklike vervreemding van 'n groot deel van sy leserskorps kan ook groot skade aan *Beeld* as die laaste Afrikaanse dagblad in die noorde beteken.

Die redakteur het nie die nuuswaarde van sy stories behoorlik opgeweeg teen die maklik voorspelbare gevolge daarvan nie. Dit is 'n bekende feit dat die betrokke minister nie ten gunste is van 'n grootliks Afrikaanse kampus nie, en dit is nie verbasend dat hy reeds aangekondig het dat stappe teen die kampus gaan volg nie.

Die gevolge van regeringsinmenging vir Afrikaanse hoër onderwys, vir Afrikaans as akademiese taal, en vir die toeganklikheid van hoër onderwys vir Afrikaanse studente is teen hierdie tyd mos welbekend. Die vraag bestaan ook wat die gevolge van hierdie vertrouensbreuk met so 'n groot deel van sy lesers vir *Beeld* inhou.

Hoewel enkele sekondes van die studente se groeterituele die geleentheid vir enkele gegriefdes gebied het om dit te misbruik, veroorsaak *Beeld* se ophaas van die saak tot 'n krisis waarvan Afrikaans die gevolge gaan dra, en dat die Puk en *Beeld* as Afrikaanse instellings daaronder gaan ly.

Ons verdedig nie die onverdedigbare nie, maar voel dat die roekelose joernalistiek nie geregverdig kan word nie. Die minister se stappe wat gister afgekondig is, is vir die *Beeld*-redakteur se rekening, maar dit gaan deur die hele Afrikaanse gemeenskap betaal word.

Die rol van die Beeld-redakteur se persoonlike agenda

Die *Beeld*-redakteur het skynbaar 'n weersin in ontgroening. Talle van ons deel daardie siening, en het veral begrip vir die veroordeling van praktyke wat jongmense se menswaardigheid aantas. Ons verwerp ook enige vorm van "boelie" onder die dekmantel van ontgroening.

Maar terselfdertyd maak die redakteur homself en sy koerant skuldig aan die ergste vorm van boelie denkbaar, deur 'n hele kampus met duisende studente as Nazi's uit te kryt! Die gemiddelde leser sal uit die nuusdekking waarskynlik die afleiding maak dat die kampus Nazi-praktyke bedryf, dat die kampusowerhede dit goedkeur en toelaat, en dat dit steeds voortduur, ten minste tot en met die "moedige" publikasie daarvan deur *Beeld*.

Ons inligting is ook dat die *Beeld*-redakteur nie sy persoonlike belange in die gebeure verklaar nie, en/of waarskynlik selfs daardeur gedryf word. Dit handel oor 'n persoonlike vriendin van hom wat net voor hierdie gebeure op 'n betreklik onsmaaklike wyse gevra is om die kampus se diens te verlaat ná 'n skikking. Ons is bekommerd dat dit moontlik kon bydra tot die swak oordeel wat hy in die hele saak aan die dag lê, soos om nog 'n ou huisvriend se brief so prominent in gister se *Beeld* te publiseer.

Simpatie vir Beeld se lesersgemeenskap

N.P. van Wyk Louw het daarop gewys dat die skerpste kritiek van hom af kom wat wys op "ons" foute, eerder as "hulle" foute.

So 'n benadering verg 'n simpatieke kritikus, en nie 'n minagtende en afbrekende benadering onder die vaandel van mediavryheid nie.

Die Afrikaanse gemeenskap verwag dat *Beeld* sy waghondrol moet vervul, en nie die "skoothondjie" van Afrikaanse instellings sal wees nie.

Aan die ander kant verwerp ons die hartelose optrede van die redakteur, wat soos 'n verskeurende wolf op die Puk as laaste Afrikaanse kampus toegesak het.

Tim, ek het nog altyd die grootste respek vir jou professionele integriteit, en vertrou dat jy as hoof van Afrikaanse koerante by Media24 begrip daarvoor sal hê dat ons die Afrikaanse gemeenskap gaan versoek om *Beeld* nie te koop totdat hierdie dispuut opgelos is nie. Afrikaanssprekendes kan tog nie hul eie benadeling ondersteun nie.

Ons sal dit waardeer as jy sal insien om *Beeld* se geloofwaardigheid te herstel.

Flip Buys

■ *Buys was tot einde verlede jaar in die uitvoerende komitee van die Noordwes-Universiteitsraad.*

Tim du Plessis antwoord

Tim Du Plessis, uitvoerende redakteur van Afrikaanse nuus in Media24.

Beste Flip

Dankie vir jou brief. Dis duidelik dat jy baie sterk veel oor die kwessies ter sprake. Wees verseker dat ek jou standpunte met erns bejeën.

Ek is bly ons stem saam dat ontgroening, selfs die versuikerde weergawes daarvan, 'n onding is. *Beeld* het dus sy plig gedoen deur die soeklig daarop te laat val, al stem almal nie saam oor die wyse waarop hy dit gedoen het nie.

Jy laat jou skerp en ondubbelsinnig uit oor Adriaan Basson, *Beeld* se redakteur. My belewenis van Adriaan is dat hy 'n toegewyde en hardwerkende redakteur is wat sy werk baie ernstig opneem. *Beeld* is 'n energieke, lewendige koerant op sy wagbeurt. Dis heel dapper van hom om dié brief van jou te plaas.

Adriaan, soos elke ander redakteur in die land, het sterk oortuigings en dis reg so. Media24 het nog nooit geskroom om sulke redakteurs aan te stel nie. Die direksie verwag van redakteurs om hul titels eties, verantwoordbaar en in goeie trou te lei.

Wat dit betref, het die direksie van Media24 en die topbestuur volle vertroue in Adriaan as redakteur. Maar, en dit geld vir alle redakteurs in die groep, daar is geen onbeperkte, onvoorwaardelike mandaat nie. Hulle is selfstandig. As 'n redakteur die belange van 'n titel skaad of verwaarloos, sal daar reperkussies wees, soos oral in sakeondernemings die geval is.

Dis jammer dat jy dit nodig gevind het om 'n beroep te doen op lesers om op te hou om *Beeld* te koop. Dis sekerlik jou reg. Maar ek wonder tog of dit nie 'n wedersydse verharding gaan afgee nie. 'n Indringende gesprek met Adriaan en sy span sou dalk 'n gunstiger uitkoms kon verseker.

Wat betref die dispuut met *Beeld*: soos ek dié dinge verstaan, is daar implisiet in die verklaring van 'n dispuut 'n verwagting dat die dispuut die een of ander tyd opgeklaar sal word. Ek hoop opreg behoorlike dialoog kan tot stand kom wat daartoe sal lei dat die dispuut opgelos word.

Vriendelike groete

Tim

Bestuur op Puk se idees is pre-1994

Anoniem skryf per e-pos:

Beeld se berig "Pukke saluteer: 'Heil!' " dui volgens my nie net op probleme met die Potchefstroom-kampus se ontgroeningspraktyke nie, maar ook op 'n dieperliggende bestuurskultuur wat gryp na pre-1994-konserwatiewe idees.

Gedurende 'n openbare gespreksforum – "Managing religion at universities: a South African case study" – is die handhawing van 'n konserwatiewe kultuur op kampus oënskynlik as 'n belangrike agenda vir die Puk geïdentifiseer. Kan dit lei tot heksejagte van personeel in minderheidsgroepe – spesifiek in terme van geloofsoortuigings en seksuele oriëntasie? Volgens my het dié personeellede min tot geen aanvaarding of beskerming op die Potchefstroom-kampus nie. Daar is byvoorbeeld geen manier vir personeellede om hulself teen viktimisering te beskerm as die "kultuur" teen hulle draai nie, wat dan ook akademiese vryheid imperk.

Dit was dus nie onverwags dat die kampuskoerant *Wapad* vir 'n tyd geskuit is kort ná die plasing van 'n voorbladberig waarin homofobiese uitsprake van 'n dosent in klastyd onthul is nie. In hierdie konteks is dit ook nie verbasend dat 'n praktyk soos ontgroening, wat geleentheid skep vir die viktimisering van eerstejaarstudente deur seniors, nog kan voortbestaan nie. My hoop is dat Dan Kgwadi nie net die ontgroeningskultuur sal pak nie, maar ook die kultuur wat sommige personeel en studente moontlik tans ervaar – een van onderdrukking van basiese akademiese regte en vryheid vir daardie individue wat nie konformeer nie.

NWU moet optree, staat moet wegbly

Sarel Myburgh van Montana skryf:

Die berig "Pukke saluteer: 'Heil!' " en die uitspraak van Blade Nzimande oor die opstel van 'n "aksieplan" vir die Puk, laat my wit om die boordjie.

Intussen het Thandi Modise, premier van Noordwes, haar straaltjie bygevoeg deur die rassekaart te speel.

Wat de joos weet twee agbare ministers in elk geval wat by die Puk aangaan? Dit wil voorkom asof die regering nie kan wag om hul naels in die doen en late van die Puk (en ander sogenaamde Afrikaanse universiteite) in te slaan nie.

Wat op sogenaamde "swart" universiteite en universiteite van tegnologie gebeur (waar grootskaalse vandalisme en ander ongeryndhede gereeld voorkom), gaan ongesiens by die agbare ministers verby. Dit is mos altyd "aanvaarbare gedrag" in die naam van die agtergeblewenes.

Ongelukkig is daar jeugdige en voortvarende studenteleiers wat altyd in die hande van die regering en sy amptenary speel. En wat nie weet hoe om groepe te hanteer nie. Hierdie studente moet volgens die dissiplinêre kode van die Puk mes gehandel word. En hoe gepas sal dit nie wees as die ouers van hierdie studente hierdie "kinders" ordentlik vasvat vir hul optrede nie. In die verlede sou ouers van oortreders liewers die universiteit hof toe neem vir die "onredelike" optrede teenoor hul "bloetjies".

Dit is oor die jare bewys dat daar 'n besliste plek vir 'n goed georganiseerde oriëntasieprogram by universiteite is. Baie alumni en studente by die Puk het hul stemme luidkeels in die afgelope week in hierdie verband laat hoor.

Die hele gedoente is volgens my 'n storm in 'n teekoppie! Die universiteit moet volgens hul dissiplinêre kode daarmee handel. Die regering moet liefs wegbly van iets waarvan hulle nie die vaagste benul het nie!

Wat sê jy? Stuur 'n SMS na 45571

Aarde, maar TV-aanbieder Elma Smit is darem 'n pragtige meisiekindi! Altyd netjies aangetrek en besils slim ook! Sy was seker haar universiteit se joolkoningin 'n paar jaar gelede? – **Hans O**

Helen Zille hoort in die parlement. Sy moet afstand doen van haar provinsiale gemaksone of bedank. – **Herman**

Wanneer gaan mense leer om Facebook, Twitter of net die tegnologie verantwoordelik te gebruik? Helen Zille en twee van die Waterkloof-vier verstaan nie dat as jy "send" gedruk het, is die skade gedoen. – **Johan, Potch**

Antie Helen skarrel nou rond soos 'n rot op 'n sinkende skip. – **Dries, Kidp**

Vandat Spies kaptein is van die Bulle is sy spel swak. Vat sy kapteinskap weg, dan sal hy weer spel soos vier jaar terug. Dan sal hy weer die beste wees. Sterkte, Pierre. – **Pieter**

Ja, Louw, dis tipies van "ondersteuners" soos jy. Sodra jou span swaar trek, hol jy na 'n ander span. Totdat hulle begin verloor. Swak. – **Callie**

Ons het die boere so nodig om voedsel te voorsien! Moenie moed opgee nie – God sal julle nie versaak nie! – **Leser**

Julle wat so vir Oscar opkom, wat sou jy sê as dit jou dogter was? – **Anoniem**

Word die Bulle-spelers betaal om so te speel of is daar 'n sloerstaking aan die gang? – **Daan**

Sonder die wind wat waai, sal geen Afrikaanse sanger kan sing. – **Laney**

Dis baie onregverdig om Oscar Pistorius se hofsaak uit te saal! Die arme ou het dan nie 'n kans nie! – **Yolanda**

Die kundiges wat die Nazi-saluut ontleed, laat my lag. Dit laat my dink aan die siele wat versteekte boodskappe op plate kon hoor as dit teruggespeel word. – **Danie Ains**

Puk, gaan leer by UK-universiteite wat is "Freshers" vir een, twee weke vir die eerstejaars. Jul kinderagtigheid, engheid en argalese maniere is lagwekkend. Dis net "gister" se Afrikaners wat dink dis oulik. – **Oud-Puk**

Porsche Cayman is Motor van die Jaar. Is die joernaliste wat vir Porsche gestem het Nazi's? Porsche het tenks gebou vir SS gedurende WO2! – **Charl**

Moenie dink mense wat anders as jy is, is buite die bereik van God se genade én jou respek-sone nie. Ons almal maak die fout om mense te kategoriseer. Ons word nie so gebore nie. God het ons almal gelyk gemaak. Ons leer wantroue aan. Ons familie, vriende en die omgewings waar ons grootword, maak ons bevooroordeeld. Vooroordeel is gelyk aan agterdog joense diegene wat anders as ons is. Mense met 'n ander velkleur, seksuele voorkeur of geloof as ons is dikwels die teiken van stereotipes en binnegrappies as ons tussen "ons mense" is. Later verander dit in wantroue en haat. Dan glo en verwag ons net die slegste van buitestanders. Kort voor lank sien ons niks meer raak van sy mooi werke in mense wat anders as ons is nie. Tog bely ons ons glo in die God wat verwag ons moet ons naaste soos onsself liefhê.

Goeie Nuus

Stephan Joubert

Uit die Woord

Dit maak nie saak of iemand Jood of Griek, slaaf of vry, man of vrou is nie: in Christus Jesus is julle almal één. En as julle aan Christus behoort, is julle ook nakomelinge van Abraham en erfgename kragtens die belofte van God. – Gal. 3:28-29

Puk: Broken Trust

The executive head of Solidarity, Flip Buys, explains in this letter to Tim du Plessis, executive editor of Afrikaans news at Media24, why the union declared a dispute with *Beeld* about the Puk debacle.

Dear Tim

I regret having to inform you that I declare a dispute with *Beeld* after receiving a flood of requests from the Afrikaans community due to the breach of trust between the newspaper and a substantial part of its readership.

I do this in the form of an open letter because *Beeld* has put the future of the last Afrikaans campus and the last Afrikaans newspaper in the North in jeopardy because of the bad judgement of its editor.

I base this dispute and reasons for the breach of trust, as well as my statement about his error of judgement, on the following:

The untruthful Nazi link to the Potch Campus

It is ludicrous to link the Potchefstroom Campus to Nazism as *Beeld* did on 21 February. There is no trace of Nazi practices, culture or influence…

To rename a student greeting a "Sieg Heil!" salute is just as despicable as the Nazis themselves. It is never mentioned the offending "salute" is but a second out of a combined series of songs. An unthinking half second is a long way from an intended Nazi salute….

***Beeld*'s anti-Puk campaign**

The purpose of a newspaper is to publish news and to act as a public watchdog. It is therefor understandable that *Beeld* would report news, but to drive your own agenda is something completely different. Malpractices relating to initiation are not justifiable and *Beeld* would have been right to expose them.

However, a lot depends on how it is published. The problem is that *Beeld* went further than coverage and blew the news out of proportion and exaggerated. For example on 21 February eight reports and a cartoon were published which contained 18 references to Hitler or the Nazis...

The manner of the investigation strengthens the impression of an anti-Puk campaign because a whole team of journalists visited the campus pretending to be normal students. Apparently they colluded with a few aggrieved staff members.

Consequences of interference for Afrikaans

The results of *Beeld*'s handling of the events could have huge implications for Potchefstroom as the last remaining Afrikaans campus…

The editor did not weigh the news value of his stories against the easily predictable consequences of publishing it. It is a well-known fact that the Minister is not in favour of an overwhelmingly Afrikaans campus and it is not surprising that he has already announced steps will be taken against the campus.

The consequences of government interference for Afrikaans higher education, for Afrikaans as an academic language and for the access to higher education for Afrikaans students is by now well-known…

The Minister's steps announced yesterday is for the *Beeld* editor's account, but the whole Afrikaans community will have to pay.

The role of the *Beeld* editor's personal agendas

…Our information is that the *Beeld* editor did not declare his own interest in the events and that he was possibly motivated by personal interests. It concerns a personal friend who, shortly before this incident was asked in a rather unsavoury way to leave the campus after a settlement. We are worried that it could have contributed to the poor judgement he displayed concerning this case…

Sympathy for *Beeld*'s readers

…The Afrikaans community expects *Beeld* to fulfill its function as a watchdog and they don't expect it to be a "lapdog" to Afrikaans institutions.

On the other hand we reject such heartless actions of the editor who has pounced on the Puk as the last Afrikaans campus like a ravenous wolf…

Tim, I have always had the greatest respect for your professional integrity and trust that as head of Afrikaans newspapers at Media24 you will understand that we will request the Afrikaans community not to buy *Beeld* until this dispute is settled. Afrikaans people cannot be expected to support their own demise.

We will appreciate it if you can intervene to restore *Beeld*'s credibility.

Flip Buys

(This translation is a shortened version of the original letter).

Autonomy in danger

The year 2014 cast a pall over the NWU because of the goings-on in Potchefstroom. Not only did the salute fiasco damage the NWU's reputation, it also raised pertinent questions about the merger and its three-campus layout. Despite the damage done to the NWU and some changes in traditions on the Potchefstroom Campus,[58] more unfortunate incidents occurred at the start of 2015. In one of these a senior staff member was injured when he tried to pass through a group of first years from the Hombré male residence. Members of the house committee were present during the incident.[59]

These incidents confirm that the belief system of some students and their parents on the Potchefstroom Campus refused to accept that initiation was not only wrong but had the potential to harm and even kill. Moreover some of these traditions were rooted in a belief system that was out of sync with South Africa's democratic and Constitutional values and potentially in conflict with the intellectual space a university was expected to create for its students. Unless these challenges were addressed, the institution's autonomy and even existence could be in grave danger.

Moreover, it was as if the university, which was doing so well on so many fronts, was struggling with its value system. It deserved an honest conversation across campuses, but efforts to bring this about were not successful.[60]

Responding to crises

The manner in which some sections of the Potchefstroom Campus community responded to the Sieg Heil crisis and the Wessels report followed a long-established pattern that could even stem from the days of the PU for CHE.

For starters any wrongdoing would be denied. Next the messenger would be discredited. Thereafter the methods would be questioned. Lastly the recommendations would be underplayed, even rejected.

This is how the NWU responded to the 2009 Phaahla report, a probe commissioned by former Education Minister Naledi Pandor into the merger, the quality audit of the CHE's Higher Education Quality Committee and the 2014 international audit of the merger.

Following his report Wessels was fiercely attacked. An alumnus of the former PU for CHE, a lobbyist for the return of Eloff to the PU for CHE, a chair of the former PU for CHE Council and a merger negotiator, Wessels was derided as a sellout for his findings in the salute investigation. He was depicted as malicious and set on destroying the Potchefstroom Campus, its culture and Afrikaans. He was seen as leading the attack to bring about the final demise of the PU for CHE. And this was the essence of the Potchefstroom Campus's fight-back campaign: to save the PU for CHE.

Notwithstanding the undeniable political complications influencing each of these reports, the NWU had battled greatly with absorbing criticism, in particular if it dealt with transformation and institutional culture.

But the former PU for CHE's history showed that whenever it was under attack, it would counter attack together with any possible allies, in an organised and fierce manner – mostly successfully.

In this instance the most prominent allies of the Potchefstroom Campus in its counter-attack on *Beeld*, Basson and Wessels were Afriforum and Solidarity, organisations that campaign and litigate virtually exclusively on behalf of white Afrikaans-speakers. With their impressive media machinery they could provide support to the campus. Their answer was to reinterpret the salute and present the reaction to it as an attack on Afrikaans as the medium of instruction on the Potchefstroom Campus.[61]

Afrikaans became the proxy for the salute.

At the same time the salute was downplayed as an isolated, innocent incident, which was misunderstood and had no deeper meaning.

But whereas the latter succeeded, Solidarity and Afriforum perhaps made a strategic mistake to shift the focus on Afrikaans.

Eloff's strategy had always been to keep the Potchefstroom Campus below the radar to allow some level of protection for Afrikaans as the medium of instruction.

This worked well when the Minister of Higher Education had his hands full with other troubles – a failing technical and vocational educational college system, ongoing student protests and an apparently growing number of universities

► The Potchefstrcoom Campus branch of the pro-Afrikaans civil liberties organisation Afriforum placed this advertisement in the *Wapad*: "Talk back! Protect the traditions in your res." This followed shortly after the assault on the editor allegedly because he does not respect these traditions.

20 November 2013
Beeld newspaper asks rhetorically if the NWU could "cross its Rubicon" by appointing a black Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dan Kgwadi.

22 November 2013
The NWU Council approves the appointment of Kgwadi as Vice-Chancellor as from 1 June 2014.

PRAAT TERUG!

BESKERM JOU KOSHUIS-TRADISIES

RAAK BETROKKE SMS JOU NAAM NA 083 280 2470

AfriForum

Jeug

with management difficulties. Not to mention his work as secretary-general of the South African Communist Party and its challenges on the political front.

But when the Nazi salute catapulted the NWU onto the front page of *Beeld* newspaper and it was promptly distorted into a language issue, Nzimande had to take note.

By the time the NWU Council tried to shift the focus and said that "Afrikaans as academic language is not the scapegoat and that the investigation in fact had very little to do with the preservation and development of the language", it was too late.[62]

Afrikaans had been placed in the spotlight.

Although Kgwadi tried to allay fears on the Potchefstroom Campus about Afrikaans and that he would be its defender, he was attacked as an enemy of the taal, in particular because he dared to put the organisational structure on the table for review.[63]

The management model in the line of fire

The Nazi salute coupled with the appointment of Kgwadi as Eloff's successor had a profound effect on the NWU as a merged institution.

Once again it thrust the institution's management model to the fore.

The NWU's unusual three-campus structure had been a bone of contention as far back as the days when the late Education Minister Kader Asmal resisted it and his successor Naledi Pandor nearly refused to sign its statute. In calling the Potchefstroom Campus an apartheid enclave in 2014, the Minister of Higher Education and Training based his statement largely on the manner in which the NWU is organised: three diverse campuses with their own identities.

The fact remains that the management model of the NWU has been criticised for 10 years, both for undermining transformation and the ability of the NWU to become one of the big five research institutions.

By the time the Wessels report reminded the NWU of the model's inherent transformation shortcomings and Nzimande had pounced on it, Kgwadi had long been making noises about the real problems posed by the model. In the drafting of a new strategic plan for the NWU, which could see a change to the model, Kgwadi clashed with his opponents who believed the model was successful and should therefore be maintained.

But the success of the model in 2014 should be put into context.

There were specific reasons why the three-campus model was adopted at the birth of the NWU in 2004. One was a practical consideration, geographic distance, which would remain a reality unless technology could create a single virtual lecture hall connecting students across campuses. Until then, the reality of the significant distances between the campuses necessitated a different approach and therefore a multi-campus business model was applied.[64]

Another consideration was political. The three-campus system took the high levels of tension out of the merger talks. [64] Three campuses would allow each one to retain its diverse character – perhaps even to stay as it was – but over time grow into the NWU. This approach meant the opposition against the merger from both the PU for CHE and the UNW could be managed better. Without this compromise, the merger might not have happened at all and even the education officials at the time acknowledged this.

Eloff asked Stumpf to investigate the model in 2008. At the time he found the model was working, but he also recommended interventions.[66] Furthermore, Stumpf said in an interview at the end of 2012 that he believed it was time for the model to change.

"From an academic point of view I don't think the model can continue ad infinitum. Secondly I don't think the NWU will succeed in transforming in terms of race and gender and keep the model unchanged. It won't work."

He said academically speaking the model could work on an undergraduate level, but not necessarily on a postgraduate level: "It has to be replaced by something else – in particular on postgraduate level…I would tell Theuns, 'North-West will never be one of the top four or five in South Africa with this model'."

Watershed moments

There are some similarities between the 2008 crisis on the Mafikeng Campus and the 2014 crisis on the Potchefstroom Campus. Some members of NWU management challenged the findings of both investigations, which raised pertinent questions about the merger, in particular the three-campus structure and three cultures. One of the task teams was targeted and the other succeeded in ousting Theuns Eloff. In both instances Eloff became embroiled in a public spat

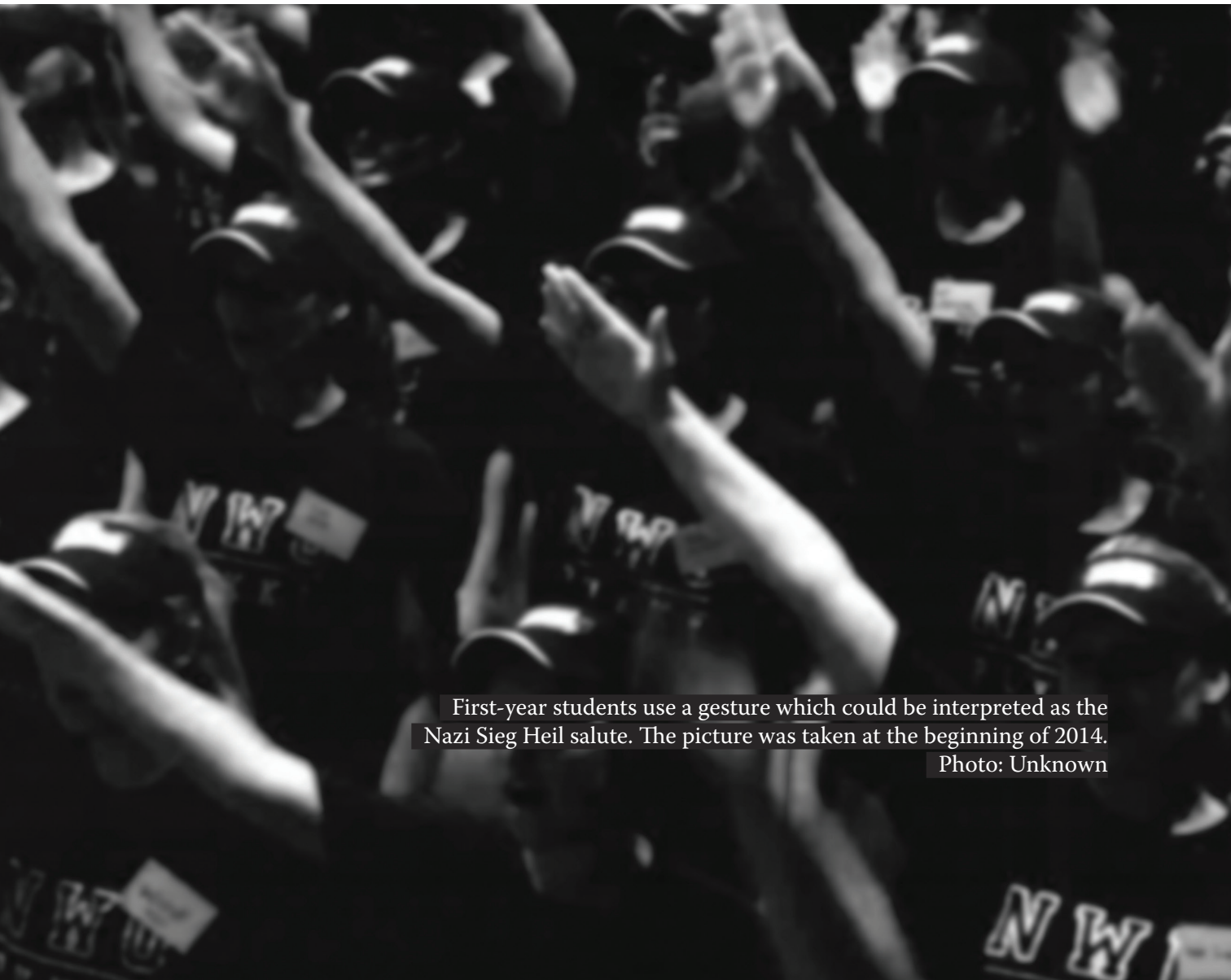
22 November 2013
Journalism lecturer Hannelie Booyens receives notification of a disciplinary hearing because of critical statements she made on social media about initiation practices at the Potchefstroom Campus.

9 December 2013
In a column for the newspaper *Beeld*, Booyens refers to the "Sieg Heil" Nazi salute made by several student residences on the Potchefstroom Campus.

with the Minister in question. And in both instances Prof Kgwadi, first as Mafikeng Campus Rector and later as Vice-Chancellor, had to deal with the crisis and face fierce opposition.

Perhaps 2008 was the cataclysmic moment Mafikeng needed to accept the merger. It represented a break with the past, enabling the campus to cross a psychological threshold so that a new campus could emerge.

Potchefstroom has not had to face a similar moment, but a series of overlapping events had perhaps finally triggered a comparable watershed moment. One of these was the selection of Kgwadi as the successor to Eloff. Those who felt they still worked and studied at the PU for CHE felt comfortable while Eloff was leading the NWU. But when Kgwadi came their worlds were shaken. A black Vice-Chancellor represented uncertainty, in particular about the one distinguishable cultural feature of the Potchefstroom Campus: Afrikaans. When the salute controversy was turned into an issue about Afrikaans and it intersected with the fears about Kgwadi, the Potchefstroom Campus finally had to face the fact that a merger had happened – 10 years before. Like the Mafikeng Campus in 2008 it had the opportunity to finally shake off a spent skin. But whether it had succeeded was not yet clear.



First-year students use a gesture which could be interpreted as the Nazi Sieg Heil salute. The picture was taken at the beginning of 2014.
Photo: Unknown

CHAPTER 22
AT ITS CORE

"A university should mainly be judged on how it performs in its core activities. And this we achieved."
— Dr Theuns Eloff[1], farewell speech, May 2014

The NWU's formative period was a baptism of fire – student protests, staff discord and an institutional culture caught between fear of change and despair that it might remain the same.

Despite the outbreaks of often public conflict at the NWU, the institution and its campuses still managed to build a culture of achievement in their academic activities: teaching-learning and research.

The statistics of the core activities on all three campuses tell the story of an institution that has been driving the curves on key performance graphs steadily upward. Despite having gone through a merger, the NWU is now in sixth position in terms of research productivity among South Africa's 26 universities.[2]

Internationally, too, the NWU has been making its mark. According to the QS University World Rankings for 2015/16, the NWU is among the world's 800 top universities and lies between the top 150-200 universities in the five BRICS[3] countries.[4]

The figures for teaching and learning as well as research show that the merger has benefited all three campuses. Perhaps the most profound of these improvements, though, has been on the research front on the Mafikeng Campus.

The turnaround in its research fortunes has been dramatic. Indeed, the international review panel that evaluated the NWU's first 10 years stated that the journal article growth of 600% on the Mafikeng Campus – from 26 articles in 2008 to 172 in 2012 – required some explanation from the NWU to put it into context. What's more, so fired up have Mafikeng Campus researchers become that, based on research output per academic staff member, they are outperforming Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle.

Kgwadi, former Mafikeng Campus Rector and now Vice-Chancellor, said he was surprised to learn that Mafikeng was the front runner at 1,16 articles per academic staff member, with Potchefstroom at 0,93 and the Vaal Triangle at 0,83."[5]

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.[6]

"These are very good stats that show that the core business was at an upward incline…for all the campuses."

However, he said more was expected from Mafikeng as a historically black campus. "I used to say when I was there, 'Guys you know what, for you to do anything good and for anybody to believe it, you have to do it 10 times better because it is a historically black campus. In a religious sense I always talk about what good can come out of Nazareth. That's always there. Can there be anything good coming out of Nazareth? You have got to work against stereotypes to prove that indeed there is quality in what you do."[7]

The NWU has benefited from a management team that stuck to the merger blueprint, which was to encourage "business as usual" while the bosses negotiated and tussled, but at the same time create a strong scaffolding of policies, finances and infrastructure for optimal academic activity. Managerialism has contributed to the beginnings of a research culture.

It is within this framework that Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele arrived on the Mafikeng Campus at the end of 2007. She was initially appointed as an associate professor, but has been credited as one of the people who led the research turnaround.[8]

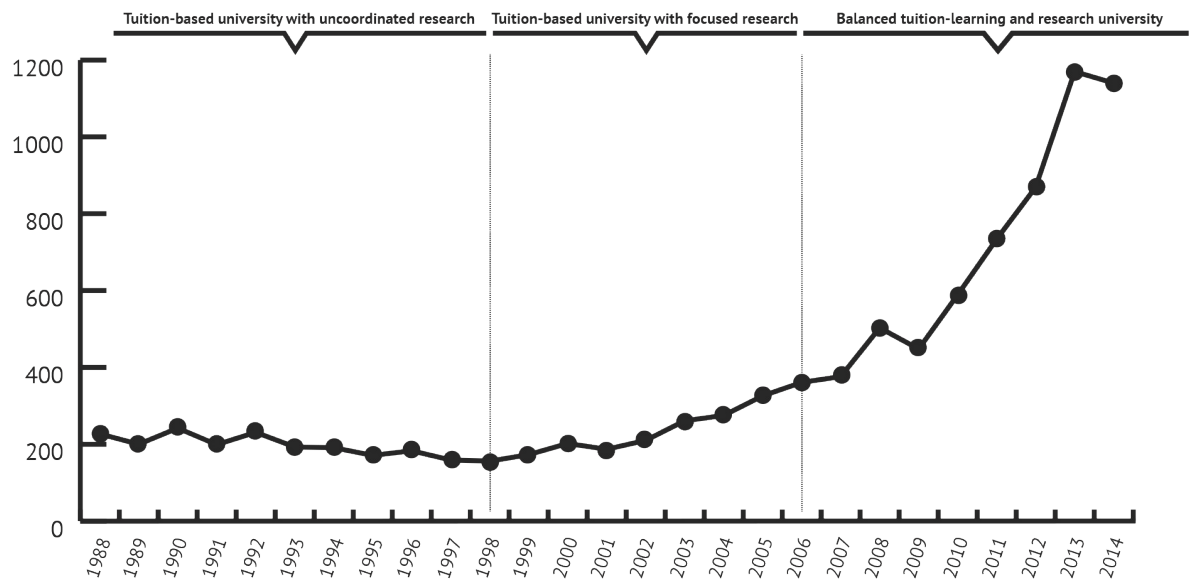
The question is whether being an outsider enabled Davhana-Maselesele to do more. She did not carry the burden of merger decisions. She did not make merger promises that she could not keep. She could, by and large, start over, be the academic and the manager she wanted to be and chase the priorities and goals she had identified.

9 December 2013
In a contextual framework for the internationally led review panel, the Vice-Chancellor develops a 104-page document on the achievements of the merger.

10 February 2014
Thabang Makhoang's family officially receive the house the NWU built for them.

Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele, former Vice-Rector of research on the Mafikeng Campus, helped to establish a research-focused culture on the campus. She was appointed Campus Rector of Mafikeng in 2014.
Photo: NWU Institutional Office

EVOLUTION OF NWU RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN TERMS OF ARTICLE EQUIVALENTS: 1988 - 2014



129,3%
Growth in total research output

From 2004 to 2014 the NWU's **total research output** units increased from 798 to 1 830.

2004
Article equivalents: 275

R10m The amount invested in expensive research infrastructure.

2006
Article equivalents: 361

In the **first** Institutional Plan, the emphasis was on the improvement of the research profile. The NWU become a balanced tuition-learning and research university.

2009
Article equivalents: 448

The goal to "improve the research profile of the NWU to become one of the top 5 universities in South Africa in terms of total research output, productivity and focused excellence" was adopted for the first time.

2012
Article equivalents: 869

R25m The amount invested in research infrastructure was more than double that of 2004. This included funds for the replacement of ageing equipment.

2014
Article equivalents: 1 140

190 The number of NRF-rated researchers at NWU.

Prof Mashudu: from the outside in

One of the weapons that Davhana-Maselesele used in her quest for improved research results was Vice-Chancellor Theuns Eloff.[9]

"Mafikeng, pull up your socks," he would say in every meeting. "Pull your weight," he would add. "You are not doing well in terms of your research…"

Davhana-Maselesele, known simply as "Prof Mashudu" on the Mafikeng Campus of the NWU, would go… to the faculty exco of school directors and professors and ask: "Tell me, why is the Vice-Chancellor always complaining about Mafikeng?"

Finally, she threw down the gauntlet: "Make the VC change his tune."

But Mafikeng's academics were not the only ones who heard repeatedly that they were underperforming on the research front. A few hundred kilometres away, a similar message reached staff in Potchefstroom and in the Vaal Triangle. A competition between the three in terms of their research performance was unfolding.

However , the situation at the Mafikeng Campus was very different from that of Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle. While still the PU for CHE under Rector Carools Reinecke, they had gradually begun to develop a sharper research focus. By contrast, research at the Mafikeng Campus had hit rock-bottom at the time of the merger. Its poor research performance probably contributed to a saying within some circles in higher education that it was the "university of last resort".

In 2004 the Mafikeng Campus started out with a paltry 1,3 articles for the entire year. Its research output did not change immediately after the merger because the campus culture could not change overnight. The powerful Staff Association, which had always called the shots on the campus, was objecting to the way the merger was unfolding under the new management and which was supposedly giving the Potchefstroom Campus the upper hand.

An official in the Department of Education recalls that "numerous letters and complaints" came from the Staff Association on matters ranging from the need for a unitary institution (so that a faculty such as science moves to Mafikeng) and the representation of Mafikeng staff in the institutional office to the NWU language policy and infrastructure.[10]

"My sense was that this was about the preservation of the status quo…that transformation-speak was veiling unproductivity [as academics]," the official said.

Be that as it may, when Davhana-Maselesele joined the Mafikeng Campus as an associate professor in the field of Nursing Science in December 2007, she quickly picked up that merger issues were still distracting staff.

"[T]hey were bitter because Potchefstroom has Potchefied the university. They talk about Potchefication… that was the buzz word…[They were] bitter about the offices that are in Potchefstroom, the institutional office. They are bitter about the language, Afrikaans, spoken everywhere…Meetings are called, [but] they don't go. Why? Because of that kind of environment. And I say to them I am happy that you are telling me all this… but tell me: Where were you when they decided on the offices? …Were you not fighting amongst each other? …They said yes. You see, that was the problem. So can we change? Can we move those offices to Coligny or to Mafikeng? It is impossible. Now let's take it as water under the bridge. And if you want peace of mind, let's do what you were appointed here to do."

From Venda to North West

Davhana-Maselesele, who has a master's degree in nursing science and a PhD in programme development for couples experiencing domestic violence, previously worked at the University of Venda. She also did postdoctoral work in partnership with the University of Limpopo at the University of California in Los Angeles in the United States.

But in 2007 she needed a change and started looking for a job. The NWU made her an offer and she accepted. Davhana-Maselesele was boarding a rollercoaster, which would take her from an associate professor position to the head of school and a deanship in less than a year. As the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology (FAST) and later the Vice-Rector of teaching, learning and research, Davhana-Maselesele was one of the people who were instrumental in rebuilding the Mafikeng Campus's research culture.

Over time the research output of academics on the campus leapt from only 1,3 articles in 2004 to 115,34 units in 2011. By 2013 the publication outputs had improved to 302,66 units.

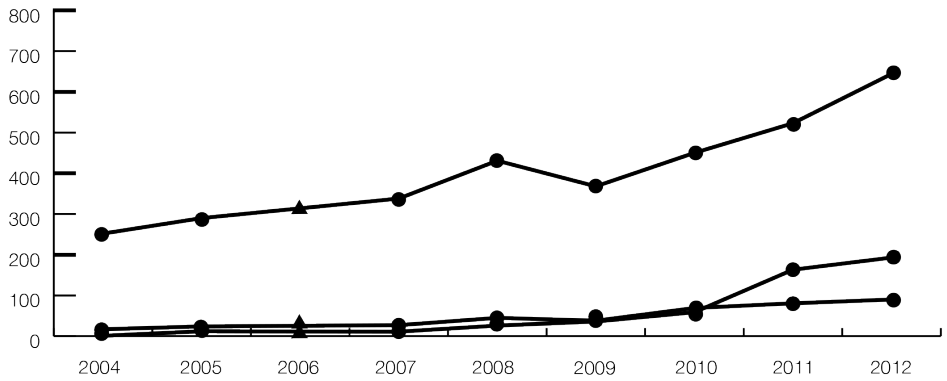
The no-nonsense Davhana-Maselesele describes herself

10 February 2014
During a one-on-one meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, Hannelie Booyens discusses her concerns over the problematic campus culture and initiation rituals on the Potchefstroom Campus.

11 February 2014
18 House Committee members from Over-de-Voor and Karlien residences are suspended for allegedly intimidating first-year students during initiation.

CAMPUS PERFORMANCE PROFILES: GROWTH IN RESEARCH

Total article equivalents 2004 – 2014



219%
Total article equivalents
2010: 60,45 articles
2012: 193

43%
Total article equivalents
2010: 450,22
2012: 644

30%
Total article equivalents
2010: 69,22
2012: 90

CAMPUS	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mafikeng	1	12	N/A	11	26	36	60,45	163,27	193	N/A	N/A
Potchefstroom	252	290	N/A	338	431	368	450,22	523,01	644	N/A	N/A
Vaal Triangle	17	24	N/A	27	45	38	69,22	80,72	90	N/A	N/A

NRF-rated researchers per campus 2004 - 2014

CAMPUS	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mafikeng	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	4	10	13	19	20
Potchefstroom	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	108	106	108	117	138	156
Vaal Triangle	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	7	7	10	12	14

21 February 2014
The newspaper ***Beeld*** publishes a four-page exposé about students on the Potchefstroom Campus using the "Sieg Heil" Nazi salute during initiation ceremonies.

21 February 2014
Potchefstroom Campus Rector Herman van Schalkwyk apologises "unconditionally" on ***Beeld***'s website for the offensive salute.

as a "hard worker:…every time whatever I do I always want to give it my best shot…" This is exactly what she did once she joined the NWU.

A simple strategy

When Davhana-Maselesele arrived at the School of Environmental and Health Sciences, she was not only one of the youngest staff members, she was the only one with a PhD. Not wanting her colleagues to feel bad, she tried to hide her age.

She attempted to provide some mentoring by suggesting to her immediate colleagues that they work in teams and support each other. She also started fundraising to create development opportunities for staff and nursing students and managed to obtain an R18,5 million injection from Atlantic Philanthropies.

Through hard work and mentoring, Davhana-Maselesele was gaining the trust and the respect of those who worked with her.

Within six months, while she was still learning the ropes, the Rector, Kgwadi, wanted her to move up. Next, he wanted her to act as the Dean because of difficulties in the faculty. She accepted on condition that it would only be for four months. At that stage she told the academics: "We work as a team…I will be learning and getting information from you because …I don't even know this university."

FAST consists of four schools and three centres ranging from agricultural to mathematical and physical sciences and from applied radiation, science and technology to indigenous knowledge systems. As the Dean, Davhana-Maselesele immediately started to turn the ship around. The faculty had a shortage of senior people and those who were there had to become more research oriented. As she started talking to them – informally – about their studies and publications, they spoke of their needs, equipment and financial support in particular. She soon also realised as the Dean she could make change happen faster. When the post was advertised she applied, was appointed and tried to continue to build the confidence of the researchers.

"We don't have equipment, we don't have this, we don't have that. That is when I started saying, 'You know you should understand that my office is just a support office to ensure that you succeed in doing what you want to do. And they will come in and say, 'We don't have equipment'. Then I will say. 'Please write'. And they will write and indicate what they want, and then that's where we started. Getting equipment and support them with whatever they needed."

Gradually the faculty's research output picked up. By 2010 FAST was the leading faculty in terms of research output when compared with the 14 other faculties of NWU.

The research achievements of the Mafikeng Campus were creating excitement. In the 2011 annual research report of the Mafikeng Campus, Deans spoke of ongoing challenges such as a lack of resources but acknowledged a supportive environment allowing for mentorship, capacity building and improved research structures and systems. There had been a definite change in the research culture.

Prof Sonia Swanepoel, Dean of Commerce and Administration, thanked colleagues for their enthusiasm after the research outputs showed a massive increase in research units, from 1,5 in 2010 to 21,83 in 2011. Prof Melvin Mbao, Dean of the Faculty of Law, wrote in the report: "What is particularly exciting about our research profile is that for the first time young and up-coming researchers, the so-called first-time publishers, are beginning to make their mark." Prof Eno Ebenso, who succeeded Davhana-Maselesele as the Dean of FAST, said it was "humbling to see the commitment of researchers who over and above the unusually heavy teaching workloads, still create time to conduct research".[11]

When named the most productive NWU researcher in 2013, Prof Abayomi Oyekale[12] of FAST, said: "I have everything I need: Electricity, the internet and a computer".

By 2014 – a decade after the merger – the Mafikeng Campus was unrecognisable in terms of its research output. Davhana-Maselesele was by no means the only person who had a hand in the turnaround but she walked in front. The research output picked up in all faculties as deans, school directors and professors bought into the research culture. The competition between the three campuses, Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and the Vaal Triangle, probably contributed to up the research output. So did a stable working environment in which academics felt that they were being supported in their academic endeavours.

On 18 March 2014 Davhana-Maselesele was appointed the Mafikeng Campus Rector.

She is bound to keep her eye on research on the Mafikeng Campus.

"…I am still aiming at getting A-rated scientists. And

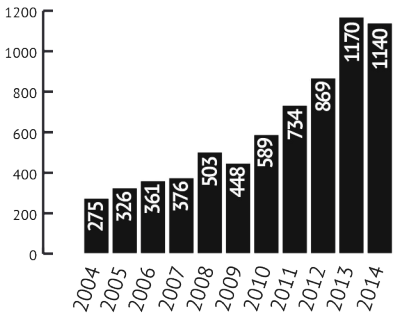
21 February 2014
The NWU says in a press statement the university will take strong action against any Nazi-related displays on the Potchefstroom Campus.

24 February 2014
The Vice-Chancellor sends a seven-page report to the Minister discussing the reception and introduction practices on the Potchefstroom Campus.

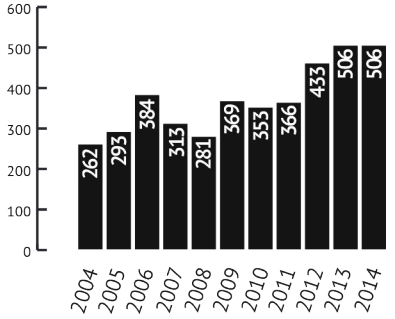
Prof Frik van Niekerk, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, has overseen the North-West University's improvements on the research front since 2004.
Photo: Maclez Studio

The statistics of the core activities on all three campuses tell the story of an institution that has been driving the curves on key performance graphs steadily upward.

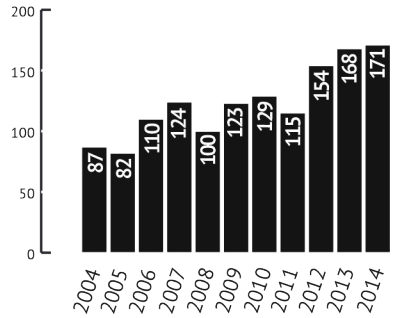
NWU: BREAKDOWN OF RESEARCH OUTPUT IN KEY CATEGORIES



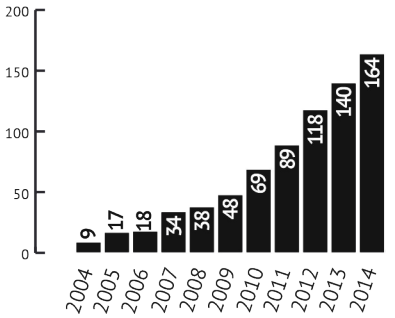
Total article equivalents published



Research Master's



Doctoral degrees conferred



Postdoctoral fellows

B-rated scientists. And that strategy should work for me and for this campus. That's my focus now. People getting the rating…"

A constant message

When Eloff paid a farewell visit to the Mafikeng Campus in May 2014, he said: "Mafikeng's research growth is the South African success story." But despite the success he still had advice for Davhana-Maselesele.

He told her that she should pay attention to the number of PhDs and Master's produced on the Mafikeng Campus as these were not of the same high standard as the article equivalents.[13]

Eloff wanted this book to share the story of the Mafikeng Campus in particular. Still, the research success of the NWU was a joint effort.

Eloff therefore also challenged the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses before his departure. He said although the Potchefstroom Campus had a "wonderful" research trajectory, its research productivity had to improve. In particular, the credentials of its staff left room for improvement as only 54% had PhDs. In general, more PhDs and Master's also remained a challenge on the campus.[14]

He said the Vaal Triangle Campus' research growth rate "has been impressive – but the research productivity remains lower than that of the other two campuses (at about 0,7). But with 42% of academic staff having PhDs, this should be better..." He also called for the number of PhDs and research Master's produced to receive attention.[15]

During his time in office, Eloff had keenly watched the NWU's performance in its core activities, benchmarking them, measuring them. The managerialism embedded in the 1980s at the PU for CHE had become part of the NWU. Although it took its toll on staff, it also powered the merger forward. Eloff thrived on improvements and made a significant contribution to boosting the teaching-learning and research activities of the university.

The former executive director of institutional advancement, Phumzile Mmope, said this was an important quality of Eloff: "And that is his legacy, honestly. I think all glory as far as the core business is concerned and he thrives on it…I think that kind of enthusiasm and energy it rubs off."[16]

Technology transfer and innovation support

The NWU received R2,1 million or 43% of the available subsidy from the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO) in 2014 for the commercialisation of its intellectual property (IP) during the previous year, making it the top earner among all state-funded research institutions.

The commercialisation of IP include patents, support to academics for the process of developing patents, licensing, royalties and product sales emanating from the institution's IP, as well as spin-off companies.

According to the 2014 report of the international panel that reviewed the NWU merger after 10 years, the NWU appears to be in the top four of South African universities as far as innovation in the form of patent applications and grants is concerned.

"Processes in technology transfer are strong," stated the report.

The NWU's 2014 annual report states that it has 53 patents registered in South Africa. A total of 21 of these patents are also registered across 47 countries, and 14 are registered in the USA.

Income of R2,3 million was earned based on the licensing agreements that flowed from IP, as well as from royalties.

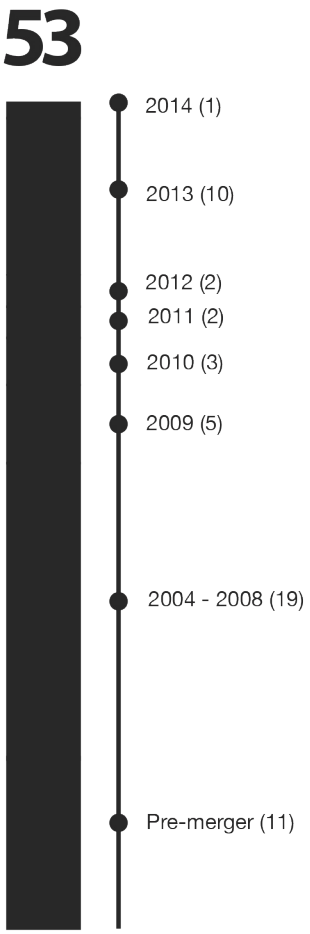
The NWU office for technology transfer and innovation support has helped various faculties to compile business plans for the commercialisation of IP. In 2014 alone, a total of 20 applications were developed to the value of R250 million, several of which were successful, according to the 2014 Annual Report.

Prof Deon de Beer, chief director of the office of technology transfer and innovation support, says some of the spin-off companies that have been set up have a significant impact in the region.

"The interaction shows our university is not an ivory tower. We make a contribution to the region and we help with job creation."

The NWU also received R40,1 million in funding from the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programm (Thrip) for 43 projects in 2014, many of them in engineering. Initiatives ranged from mine safety solutions to aviation research and preclinical drug development.

Granted patents:
South Africa



66,6%

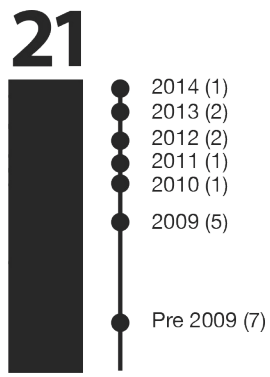
The **increase in South African-based patents** between 2004 and 2013.

47

Countries in portfolio: 2011

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.

Granted patents:
International



"The challenge that the university faces is therefore to continually benchmark itself against other institutions nationally and internationally." - Prof Martin Oosthuizen, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching-Learning. Photo: Maclez Studio

TEACHING-LEARNING IS ABOVE AVERAGE

The figures that serve as indicators for the NWU's achievements in teaching and learning, such as graduation and success rates, show that it tends to outperform the national averages.

This is in no small measure the result of the investments made in new and renovated buildings and laboratories, academic support services and information technology links and facilities on all the campuses.

However, the NWU's performance has also been questioned. The challenge that the university faces is therefore to continually benchmark itself against other institutions nationally and internationally.

Bringing in external experts to moderate examination papers and projects is one practice that could enhance quality in teaching and learning.

The alignment of modules, programmes and qualifications across the NWU's three campuses remains one of its biggest future challenges (see Chapter 16).

STUDENT ENROLMENT, 2008 - 2014

CAMPUS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mafikeng							
Contact	6 633	6 240	7 042	7 694	8 715	9 463	9 779
Distance	1 457	1 583	1 512	1 517	1 542	1 244	1246
Potchefstroom							
Contact	15 875	16 953	17 867	18 783	19 632	20 285	21 061
Distacne	19 299	21 307	24 098	23 111	22 706	23 465	24 472
Vaal Triangle							
Contact	3 232	3 660	4 334	5 186	6 040	6 440	6 353
Distance	512	846	879	350	117	71	224

63 135
Total student enrolment 2014

11 025 - Mafikeng Campus
45 533 - Potchefstroom Campus
6 577 - Vaal Triangle Campus

59,8%
Growth in student enrolment

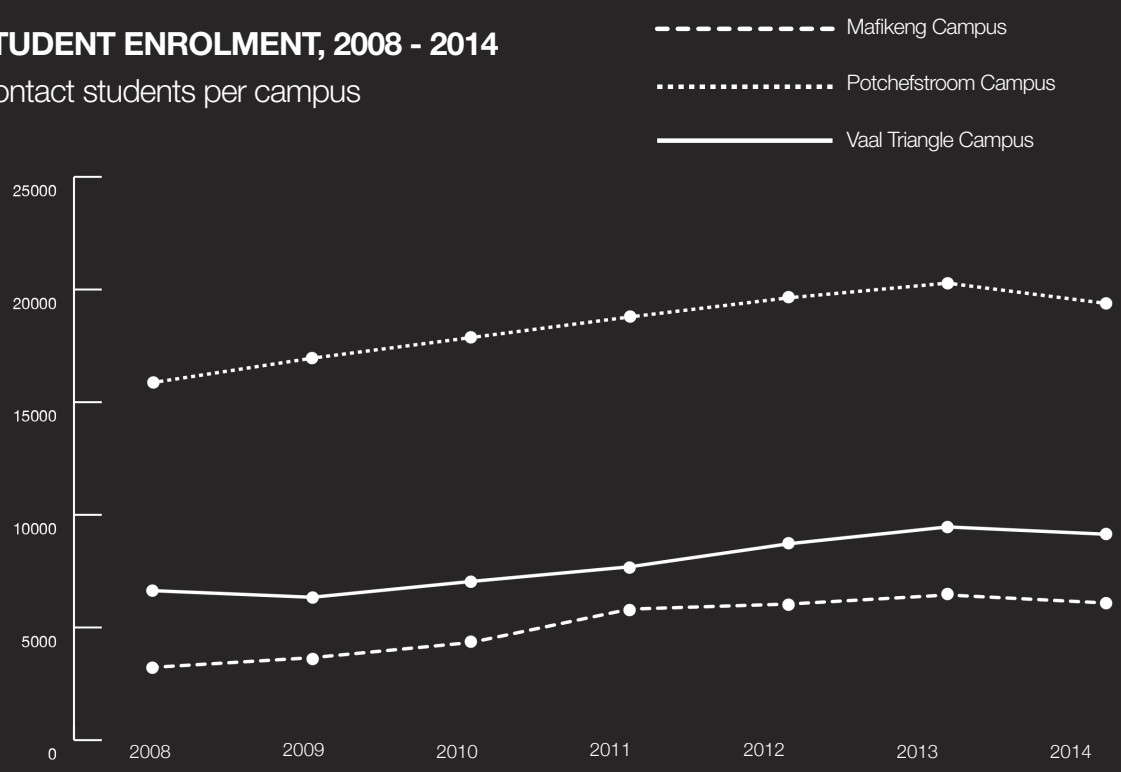
2004 - 40 145 students
2014 - 63 135 students

25 February 2014
Gwebs Qonde, director-general of the DHET, issues a press statement expressing concern about orientation activities on the Potchefstroom Campus.

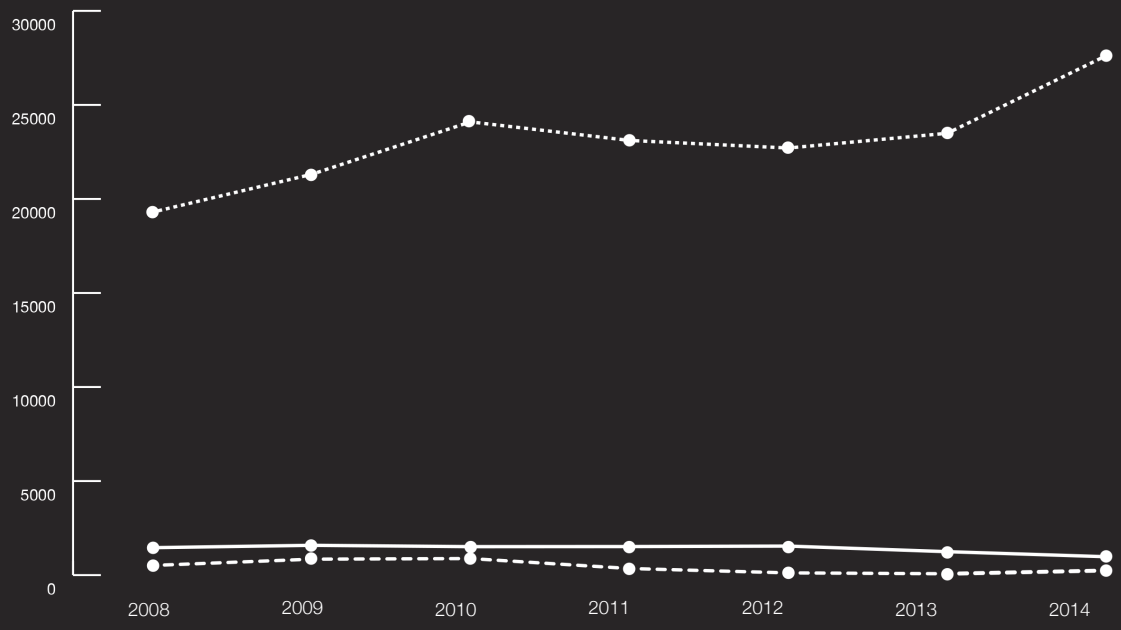
5 March 2014
After an extraordinary meeting, Council announces that it has accepted Eloff's offer to step down on 31 March, enabling Kgwadi to assume duties as Vice-Chancellor on 1 April 2014.

STUDENT ENROLMENT, 2008 - 2014

Contact students per campus



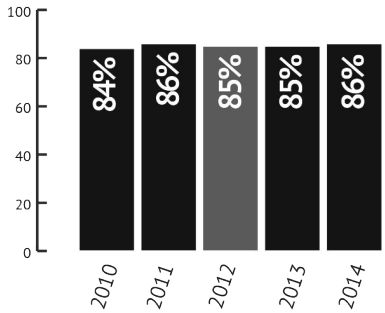
Distance students per campus



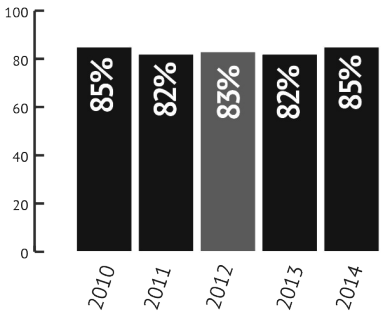
NWU SUCCESS RATE OVERVIEW: OVERALL SUCCESS

Breakdown of the overall success rate in the key categories

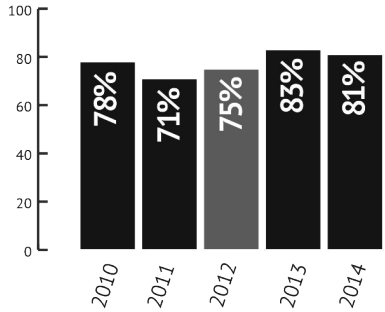
Student success rates: The success rate refers to the total number of courses passed by students in a given academic year relative to course enrolments. It is calculated by dividing the total number of FTE degree credits (courses completed) by FTE enrolments. These calculations, for a programme or for an institution as a whole, produce weighted average success rates.



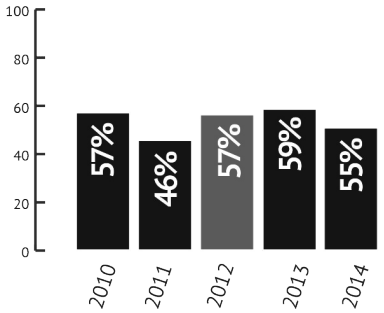
Undergraduate



Postgraduate below Master's degree



Master's degree



Doctoral degree

DHET 2012

Overall success rate

Total undergraduate

77%

Postgraduate below Master's

76%

Master's degree

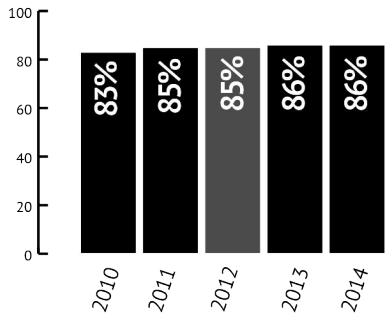
65%

Doctoral degree

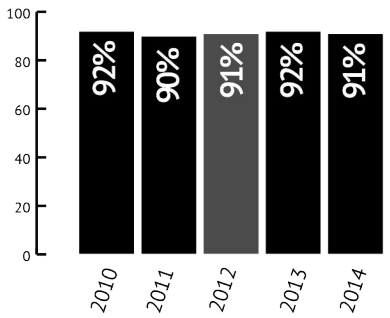
59%

NWU SUCCESS RATE OVERVIEW: CONTACT STUDENTS

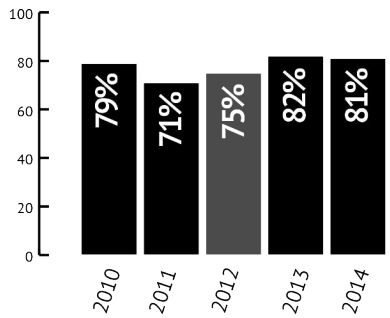
Breakdown of the overall success rate in the key categories: contact students



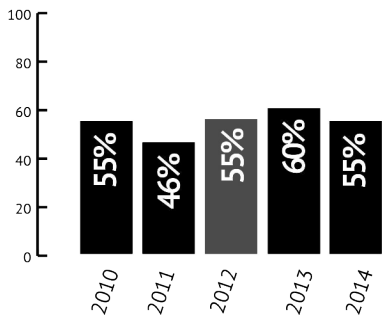
Undergraduate



Postgraduate below Master's degree



Master's degree



Doctoral degree

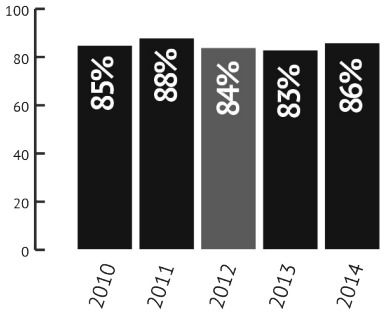
DHET 2012

Success rate: Contact students

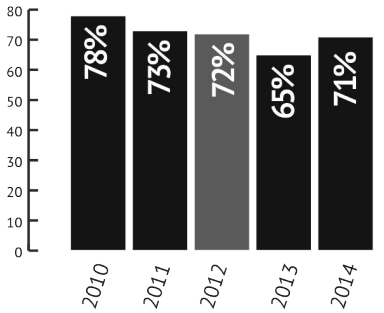
Total undergraduate	Postgraduate below Master's
80%	85%
Master's degree	**Doctoral degree**
67%	58%

NWU SUCCESS RATE OVERVIEW: DISTANCE STUDENTS

Breakdown of the overall success rate in the key categories



Total undergraduate



Postgraduate to Master's level

DHET 2012

Success rate: Distance students ***(refers only to 'active students')***

Total undergraduate	Postgraduate to Master's level
68%	66%

28 438 students

OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)

Top qualification types in which open distance learning students are enrolled

Distance education programmes are delivered through the Unit for Open Distance Learning (UODL), which broadcasts lectures to 58 distance learning centres in South Africa and Namibia. The number of students in formal open distance learning programmes in 2014 stood at 28 438, most of whom were enrolled in programmes offered by the Faculty of Education Science at the Potchefstroom Campus. The three dominant qualification types in which open distance learning students were enrolled in 2014 are:

7 179	15 593	4 838
One-year or two-year undergraduate certificates or diplomas	**Three-year undergraduate diplomas**	**Honours degrees**

**All the data in this chapter was provided, checked and verified by the NWU Institutional Office during the course of this study.*

CHAPTER 23
MONEY-WISE

In 2003 the estimated cost of the merger was a once-off R161 million - Joint Operational Committee, 6 June 2003

In 2003 the estimated cost of the merger was a once-off R161 million. The total cost was never calculated.

But the NWU managed to cover the cost with money from its own coffers and money from the Department of Education (later Higher Education and Training).

In 2014 the NWU, as the graphs show, was in a healthy financial state. According to the 2014 Annual Report the university's stable financial position was the result of a mix of tight and effective management systems and controls. According to the Van Vught international panel, which evaluated the merger in 2014, the NWU was "a financially stable institution", which displayed strong performances in financial management.

In 2011, for the fifth year in a row, the NWU was awarded first place in the PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Award for Corporate Governance, which included the manner in which the institution dealt with its finances. The award was later discontinued.

President Jacob Zuma's announcement that fees will not increase will have an impact on universities' expenditure. Photo: EWN

6 March 2014
Nzimande orders the NWU Council to stop all initiation practices with immediate effect. He asks for a report on the Nazi salute.

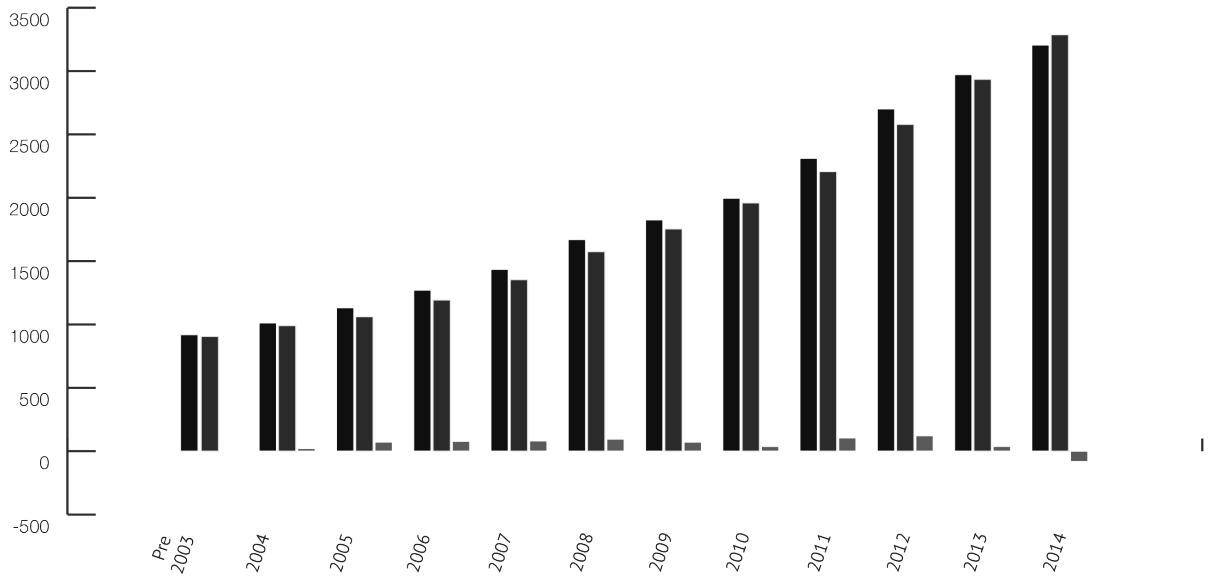
6 March 2014
The Higher Education Transformation Network calls on Nzimande to appoint an Administrator to take over the management of the university.

Prof Johan Rost, former Executive Director: Finance and Facilities, played an important role in ensuring the NWU is a financially stable institution. Photo: Maclez Studio

Total profitability and growth

For 2014 an IAS19 valuation relating to benefit enhancement arose due to the NWU Pension Fund Pension Increase Policy which was changed by adjusting the threshold rate (the extent to which the investment return on the actuarial value of the assets should be exceeded) from 5,5% to 4,5% per annum in order to increase the CPI target for pension increases from 65% to 90%.

The benefit enhancement was valued at R166,8 million and interest of R23,3 million – in total an amount of R190,1 million was included in non-recurrent expenditure and resulted in a net deficit for 2014.



	PRE 2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
TOTAL INCOME	911,7	1 012,2	1 132,7	1 271,5	1 434,8	1 670,6	1 826,1	1 996,5	2 311,4	2 701,5	2 972.5	3 206.0
TOTAL EXPENSES	905,7	991,2	1 061,0	1 193,4	1 354,2	1 575,3	1 754,7	1 959,3	2 206,5	2 579,0	2 935.0	3 287.2
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	6,0	21,0	71,6	78,1	80,6	95,2	71,4	37,2	104,9	122,5	37.5	(81.2)

R = million

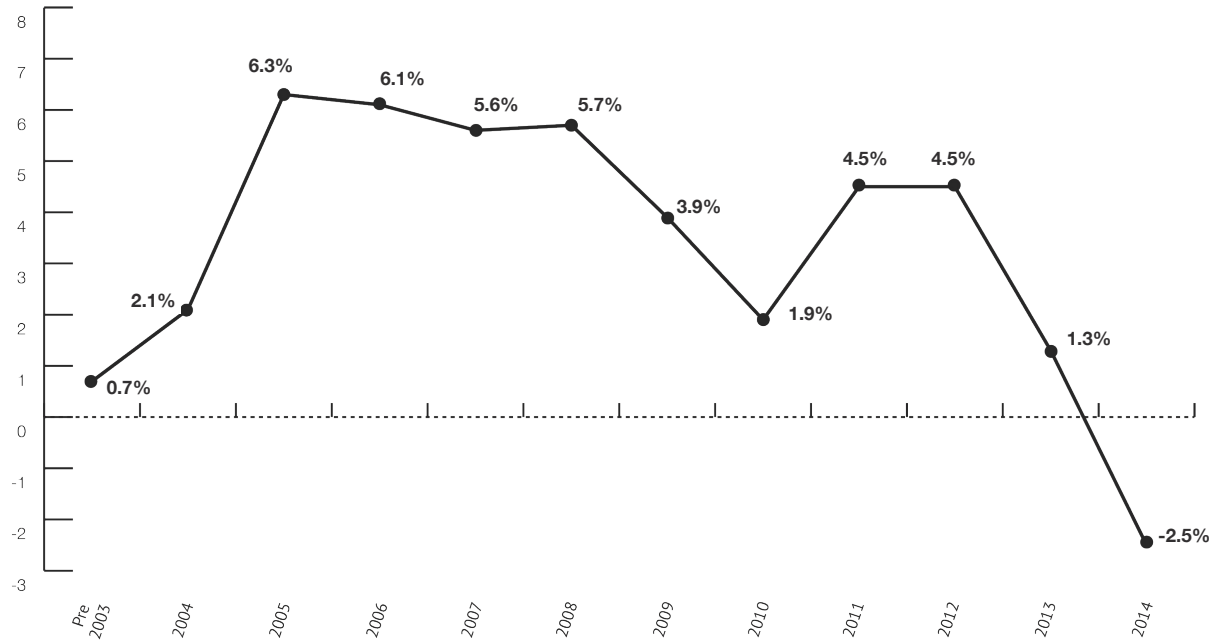
251,6%
Increase in total income

The total income of the university increased from R911,7 million to R3 206 million

262,9%
Increase in total expenses

The total expenditure increased from R905,7 million to a total of R3 287,2 million for the period ending 31 December 2014.

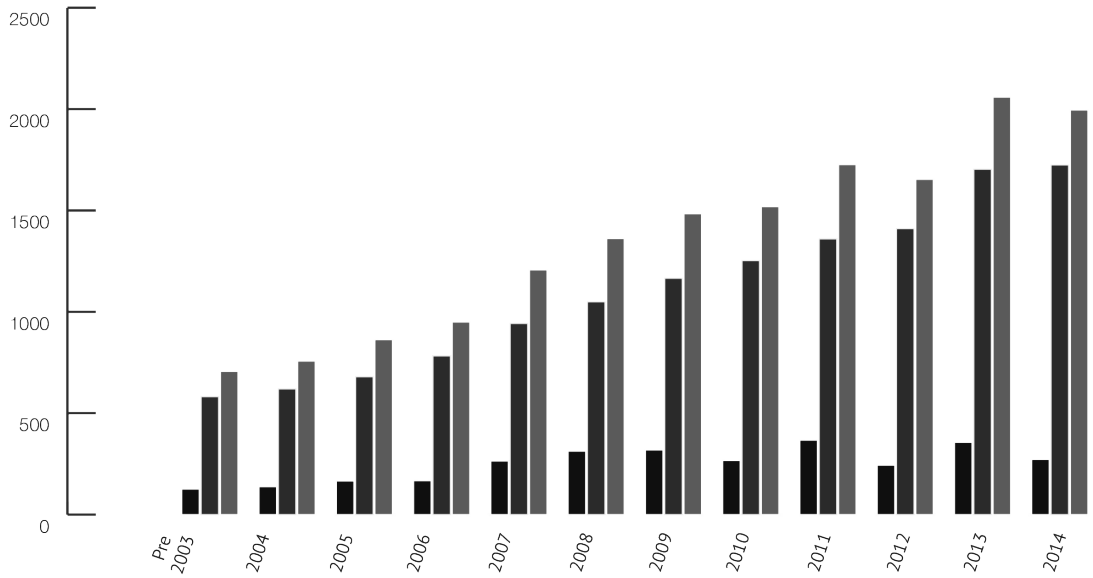
Total profitability and growth: Net surplus as % of total income *(see total profitability and growth on page 214)*



182,6%
Increase in accumulated reserves

The NWU's accumulated reserves increased over the period ending 31 December 2014 due to a net surplus of on average 3,3% of the total income.

Profitability and growth - Available funds: Earmarked funds



	PRE 2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
AVAILABLE FUNDS	124,8	137,0	164,8	166,8	263,7	312,0	318,4	266,1	366,3	242,9	355,7	271,0
EARMARKED FUNDS	581,2	619,3	697,4	782,2	942,3	1 048,8	1 165,1	1 252,1	1 359,4	1 410,0	1 703,0	1 723,9
TOTAL EQUITY	706,0	756,3	862,2	949,1	1 206,0	1 360,7	1 483,6	1 518,3	1 725,8	1 652,9	2 058,7	1 994,9

R = million

117,2%
Increase in available funds

The available funds increased from R124,8 million to R271 million for the period ending 31 December 2014 due to the increase in the surplus and comprehensive income, as well as an increase in funds available for additions to and renewals of property, plant and equipment.

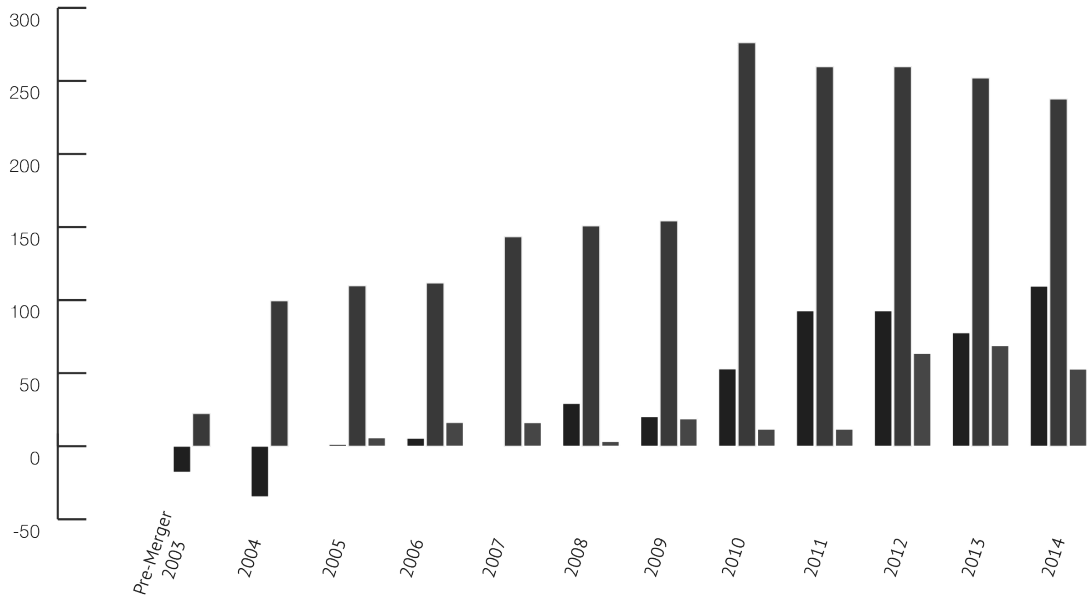
196,6%
Increase in earmarked funds

Earmarked funds increased from R581,2 million to R1 723,9 million.

182,6%
Increase in total equity

Total equity increased from R706 million to R1 994,9 million.

The contribution of each campus towards the centralised cost can be summarised as follows.



CAMPUS	PRE 2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
MAFIKENG	(17,8)	(7,1)	(34,6)	1,3	5,5	0,3	29,3	20,3	53,0	92,7	77,7	109,6
POTCHEFSTROOM	22,4	29,2	99,5	109,8	111,7	143,4	150,8	154,2	276,2	259,7	252,0	237,6
VAAL TRIANGLE				5,8	16,3	16,2	3,3	18,8	11,7	63,6	68,9	52,8

R = million

R109,6 m
Mafikeng Campus contribution

Deficit of Mafikeng Campus was reversed to a very positive contribution towards centralised costs.

Investment in infrastructure

R398,8 m
Mafikeng Campus

R958,3 m
Potchefstroom Campus

R236,3 m
Vaal Triangle Campus

11,6%
Student debt ratio in 2014

The student debt ratio improved from a high of 17,1% in 2004 to 11,6% in 2004.

265,4%
from NWU funds increased

Bursaries increased from R49,4 million in 2006 to R180,5 million in 2014 which represents an increase of 265,1%.

Recurrent income per category

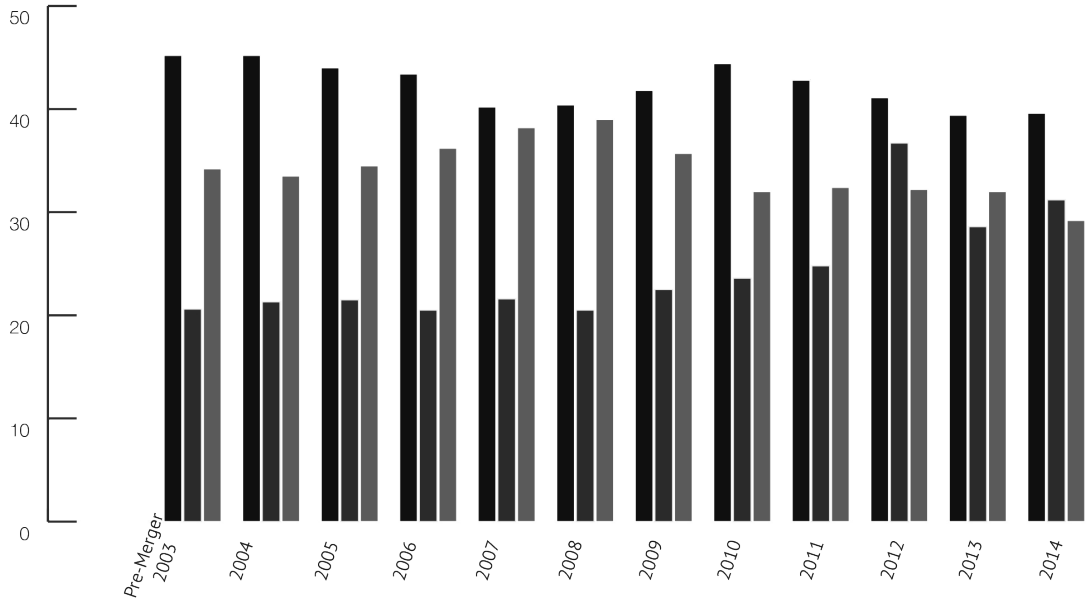
The university's income from state subsidy expressed over total income decreased from 45,2% in 2003 to 39,6% in 2014. The reason for the decrease in this percentage is attributable to an on average higher increase in all the other main sources of income. The goal is to stabilise this percentage at 40%.

The student-related income expressed over total income increased from 20,6% in 2003 to 31,2% for the 2014 financial year. This can be attributed to the annual increase in tuition fees, the increase in student numbers, as well as an increase in modules enrolled for. The goal is to stabilise this percentage at 30%.

The NWU's mission to become more innovative is proven by the increase in entrepreneurial income from R312,4 million to R933,2 million during the period under review.

55,4%
Increase in subsidy income

The university's subsidy income is generated by full-time equivalents (FTEs) which increased from 2004 (27 275) to 2014 (42 383).



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
STATE APPROPRIATION	45,2%	45,2%	44%	43,4%	40,2%	40,4%	41,8%	44,4%	42,8%	41,1%	39,4%	39,6%
STUDENT INCOME	20,6%	21,3%	21,5%	20,5%	21,6%	20,5%	22,5%	23,6%	24,8%	26,7%	28,6%	31,2%
OTHER INCOME	34,2%	33,5%	34,5%	36,2%	38,2%	39%	35,7%	32,0%	32,4%	32,2%	32,0%	29,2%

R = million

**All the data in this chapter was provided, checked and verified by the NWU Institutional Office during the course of this study.*

The Vaal Triangle Campus has benefited from millions of rands in infrastructural development.
Photo: Tienie van der Walt

CHAPTER 24
METAMORPHOSIS

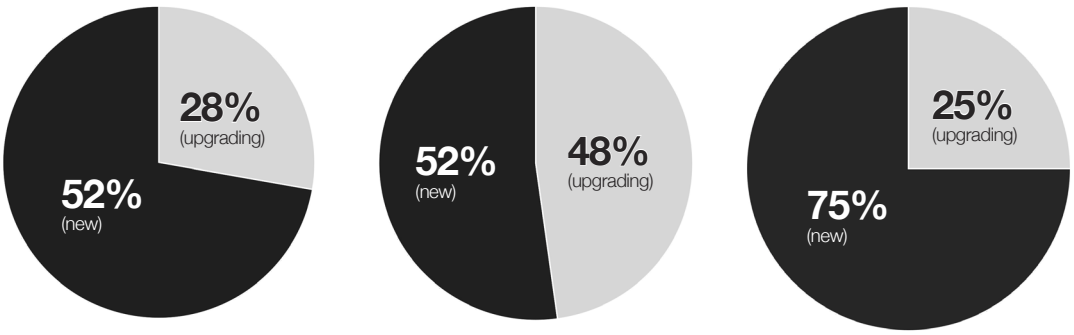
"Everyone who comes from elsewhere says: 'Wow the Campus has grown!'." — Prof Linda du Plessis, acting Vice-Chancellor, Vaal Triangle Campus

The NWU has invested millions of rands in its physical infrastructure during the last decade.

All three campuses have benefited from new buildings and the extensive upgrading and remodelling of existing buildings from money coming from the institution's own purse, but also from the Department of Higher Education and Training. The allocation of funds to these strategic priorities has enabled the NWU to develop to become a balanced teaching-learning and research university and to implement its expertise in an innovative way.

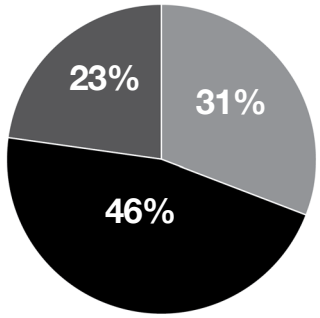
In the first year of the merger (2004) the Institutional Office made an assessment of the requirements for maintenance and upgrading on the Mafikeng Campus. Projects planned for 2004 continued on the other campuses. The comparison between the campuses is therefore only made from 2005.

Infrastructure expenditure on each campus: New vs upgrading 2005 - 2014



7 March 2014
Theuns Eloff issues a strongly worded message to all students and staff to heed the request of the Minister.

March 2014
Council appoints a task team comprising Dr Leon Wessels, Dr Bismarck Tyobeka, Prof Somododa Fikeni and Advocate Rehana Rawat to investigate initiation practices and alleged human rights violations.



31%
Mafikeng Campus

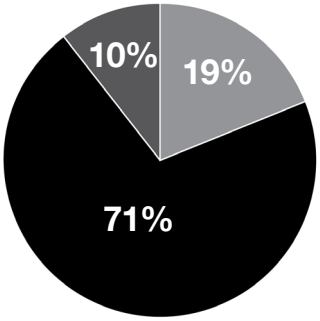
Renovations worth **R237 520 066** on the Mafikeng Campus from 2005 to 2011

46%
Potchefstroom Campus

Renovations worth **R352 731 899** on the Potchefstroom Campus from 2005 to 2011

23%
Vaal Triangle Campus

Renovations worth **R174 067 358** on the Vaal Triangle Campus from 2005 to 2011



19%
Mafikeng Campus

R100 721 567 spent on the Mafikeng Campus from 2005 to 2011

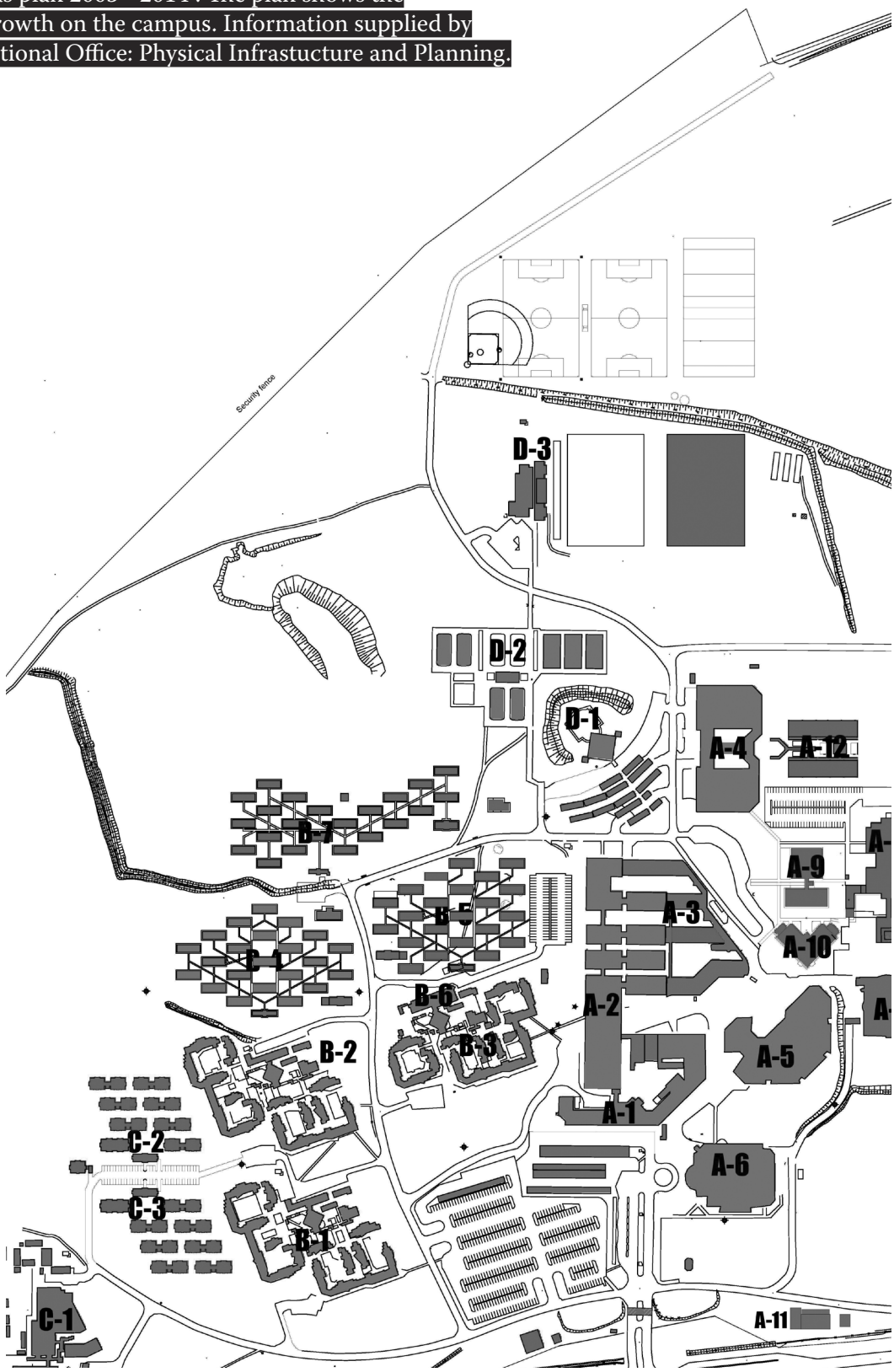
71%
Potchefstroom Campus

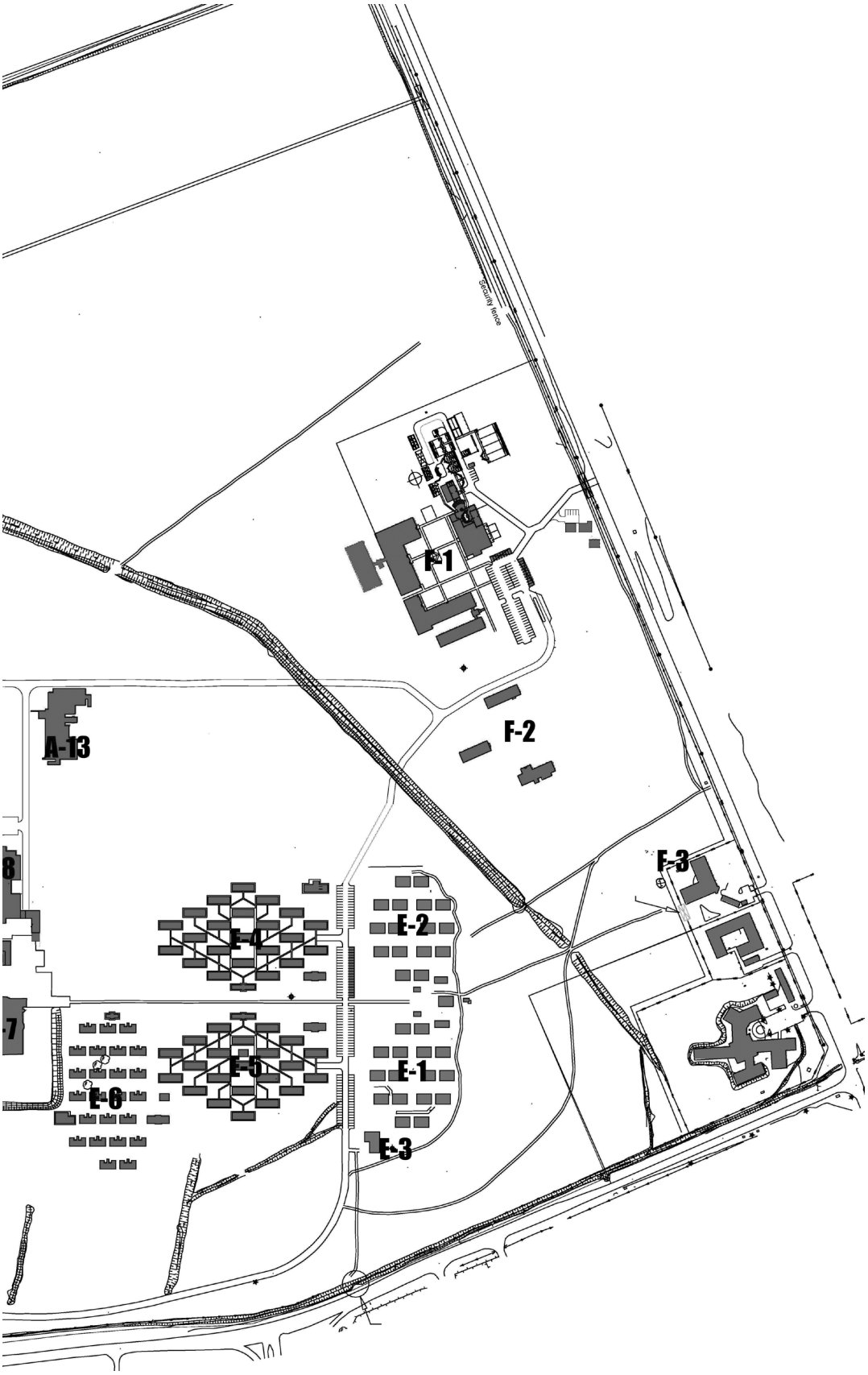
R375 900 749 spent on the Potchefstroom Campus campus from 2005 to 2011

10%
Vaal Triangle Campus

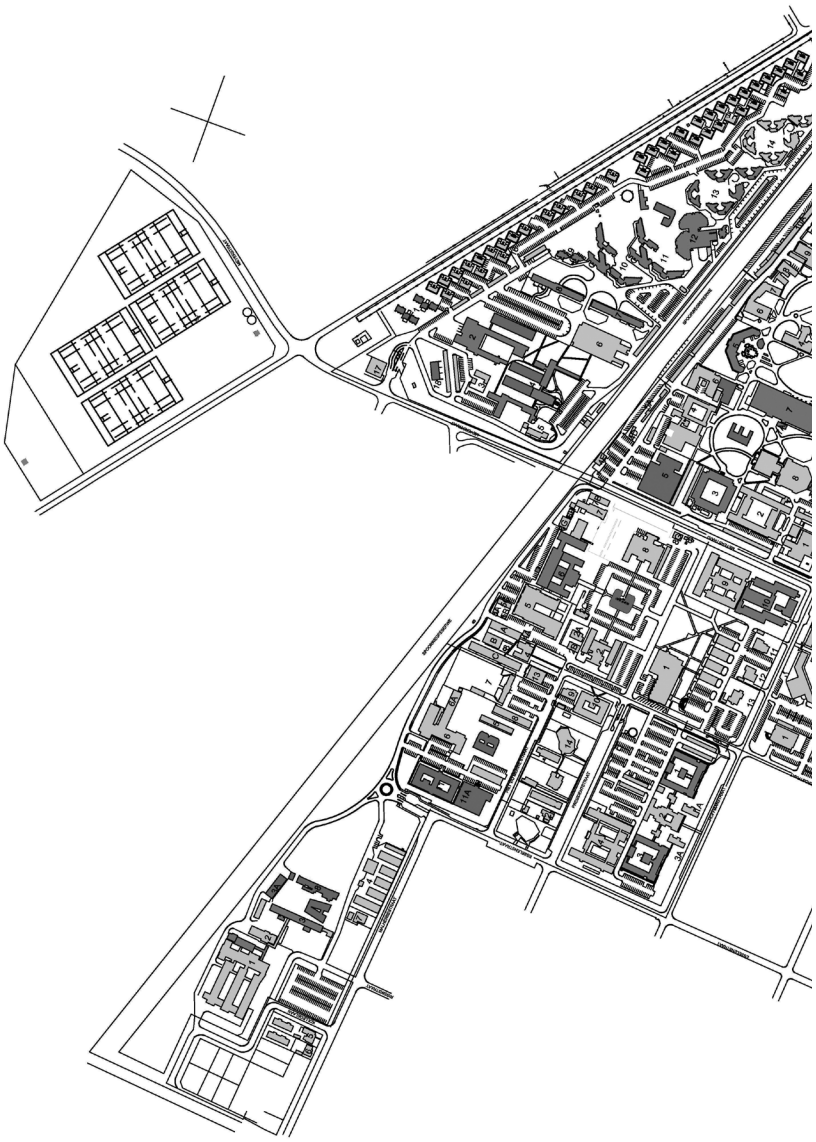
R56 044 630 spent on the Vaal Triangle Campus from 2005 to 2011

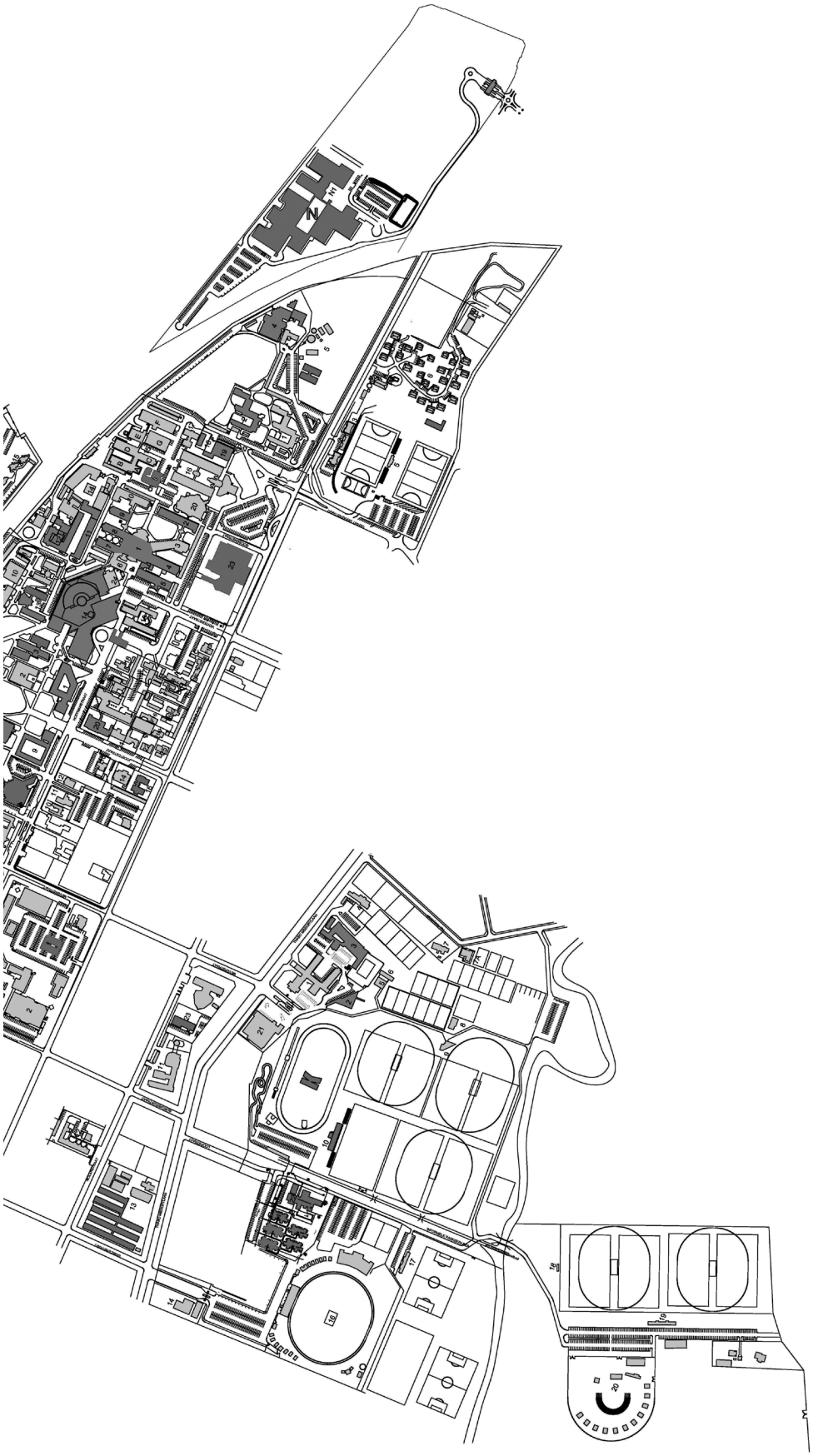
Mafikeng Campus plan 2005 - 2014 . The plan shows the infrastructural growth on the campus. Information supplied by the NWU Institutional Office: Physical Infrastucture and Planning.



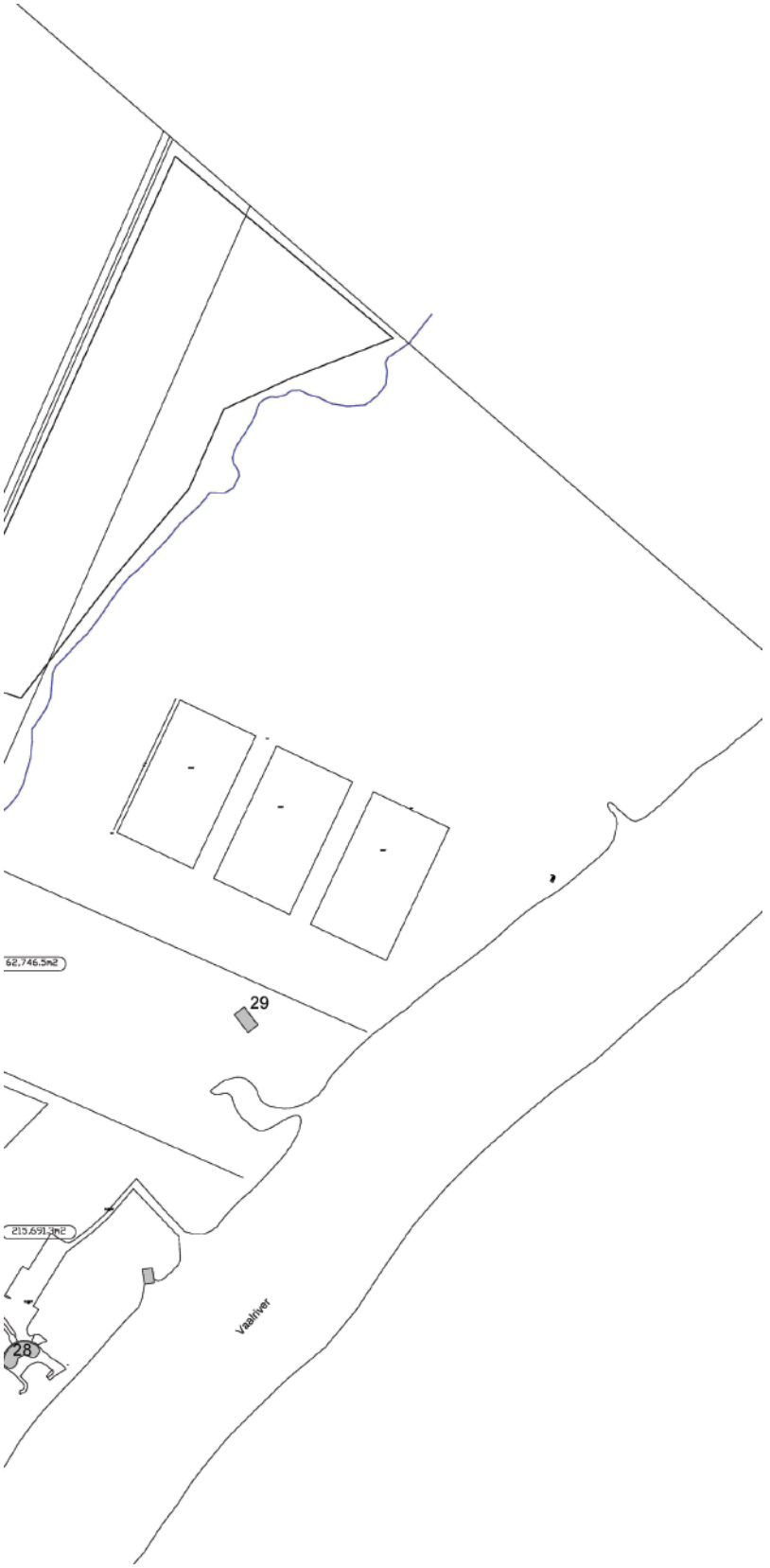

Security fence
F-1
F-2
F-3
A-13
E-2
E-4
E-5
E-1
E-6
E-3

Potchefstroom Campus plan 2005 - 2014 . The plan shows the infrastructural growth on the campus. Information supplied by the NWU Institutional Office: Physical Infrastucture and Planning.





Vaal Triangle Campus plan 2005 - 2014. The plan shows the infrastructural growth on the campus. Information supplied by the NWU Institutional Office: Physical Infrastucture and Planning.


62,746.5m2
29
213,691.3m2
Vaalhver
28

CHAPTER 25
DR THEUNS

"Theuns Eloff is a special guy. He did a good job. Then the salute happens and he goes into denial."
— Max du Preez, writer, political commentator and extraordinary professor at the NWU School of Communication Studies, 2015[1]

On a Friday morning in February 2014 a Nazi salute cut short the career of Theuns Eloff.[2]

Abruptly, an era ended.

Eloff, who had survived several attempts to oust him during his 10 years as the NWU Vice-Chancellor, opted for a premature departure from the institution. It was two months before his term expired. He had envisaged his last 60 days in the 10th year of the NWU's existence as a period of consolidation and celebration. In a cruel anticlimax he became a casualty in one of the young university's worst crises.

The history of Eloff's leadership, first at the PU for CHE and later at the NWU, provided some insight into his last days and his legacy as one of the primary architects of the NWU. At face value there are notable similarities between his first days as the Rector of the PU for CHE and those of his successor at the helm of the NWU, Prof Dan Kgwadi.

The search for a progressive Afrikaner

The Eloff era started when Prof Carools Reinecke's term as the fifth Vice-Chancellor of the PU for CHE was approaching its end after 13 years. Various factions from the university set off headhunting in pursuit of the "right person". There were two groups. One could call them the old guard and the reformists and they had very different ideas about what type of leader Reinecke's successor had to be.

To complicate matters further, Pretoria was not only watching developments keenly, but was getting involved. The Education Minister Kader Asmal asked the ministerial representatives on the Council of the PU for CHE to be part of the search. They had to help identify suitable candidates who could take over from Reinecke, and report back to Asmal. Potchefstroom mayor Satish Roopa and Adv Solly Sithole (now Judge Sithole) were the two ministerial representatives who went to Pretoria when Asmal asked for feedback. He was adamant that it should be a progressive Afrikaans person (see page 232).

Institutional autonomy aside, the manner in which Asmal dealt with the search for a Vice-Chancellor of the PU for CHE revealed that he perhaps had a much better understanding of the peculiarities of its institutional culture than he had been given credit for. He wanted neither the institution nor its Vice-Chancellor to fail. But Asmal would never admit his insights publicly given the transformation pressures which existed at the time and which were applied from the highest political level on him and his department.

Another fact that should perhaps not simply be glossed over is that Eloff and Asmal were not strangers. They met in Dakar, Senegal in 1987 when the ANC was still a banned organisation and subsequently repeatedly as South Africa's democracy emerged from goodwill and perseverance.

This could explain Asmal's willingness to give Eloff's some leeway in the creation of a new university. The NWU looked different from the one Asmal and his people had in mind. With its three campuses it was a federal institution and not the kind of unitary institution that he had envisaged. But, at the time of the merger, the model appeared to Pretoria to be the best solution, not only to manage the distances between the merging entities, but to neutralise the resistance against the merger.

April 2014
The new Vice-Chancellor Kgwadi visits the family of Thabang Makhoang, the student who drowned in 2012.

1 April 2014
The first woman Rector is appointed at the Mafikeng Campus – Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele.

"There are three things that I really regret. Only three. The one is what happened around the Potch [salute] thing, without saying who is to blame. The second is the international panel and the result, which I initiated in good faith and I think the third thing, in a lighter vein, is that we lost the Varsity Cup rugby final [in 2014 when Ikeys beat the NWU-Puk in the dying minutes]." – Dr Theuns Eloff, inaugural Vice-Chancellor of the NWU. Photo: Nico Blignaut

‘Give me the name of an Afrikaans person’

Satish Roopa, a ministerial representative on the PU for CHE Council, recalls a meeting with Asmal about finding a new Rector for the institution:

“So we walk in there and the old man is still unconcerned about smoking laws. There is a small cloud under the table… So he says after all the pleasantries: ‘Give me the names [of people who can take over from Reinecke]. I can’t even remember the names.’

We give the first one.

‘Yes,’ he says.

We give him the second one.

‘Yes.’

The third one.

‘Yes.’

And he says, ‘More.’

We say, ‘That is all we have.’

He says: ‘That is not good enough for me.’

We say: ‘Now what?’

And he was very open with us…:‘If you take an institution such as the Puk and you take its culture and its historical linkages – how do you put a black person there in a sea of people that are going to resist. You are setting him up for failure.

So you guys go back and you come to me with the name of an Afrikaans person and that Afrikaans person must be a progressive person.’

So then we go back to the drawing board and in consultation with Theo [Venter] and a number of the other people we have been talking to. We then reached a conclusion that Theuns would be a good choice. So I bounced it off Nasima and she says, ‘Let me bounce it off the old man and I will come back to you.’

So she comes back to me and said, ‘Kader is happy to make the appointment. Can you lobby?’

I said, ‘Fine let me start lobbying.’

And that became a nightmare amongst my Council members.”[3]

In pursuit of Eloff

In April 2001 Eloff received an unexpected phone call from Theo Venter. At the time Eloff was in his car, driving to an appointment.

Venter, known for incisive political commentary, in particular with regards to ANC politics in the North West Province, was a political science lecturer, chair of the PU for CHE's Institutional Forum and a member of the Council at the time.

Venter asked Eloff: "Did you hear Prof Carools Reinecke will retire?"

"Yes, I hope you find someone competent," was Eloff's response.

When Venter asked Eloff if he wouldn't consider applying, he started laughing. He thought it was an April fool's joke.[4]

Eloff knew he was no academic.

More importantly his departure from the PU for CHE years earlier had not been on friendly terms. He just did not think Potch would want him back.[5]

As a young undergraduate – he started his studies aged 17 – he pleased the institution's establishment, at least initially. He was a gifted all-rounder whose talents included acting and playing provincial rugby. As a student leader he was elected as the SRC president for three terms.

On the political front his SRC presidency opened the door for him to become the President of the Afrikaanse Studentebond, a national body of Afrikaans students established in 1916. It was in his role as student leader that he became one of several "verligte" voices from the PU for CHE who made strong anti-apartheid statements.

Eloff completed his law degree (1974) before switching to theology (1980 cum laude) to train as a dominee (minister) for the Gereformeerde Kerk (Reformed Church). Later he also completed an MA (cum laude) at the PU for CHE and a PhD at the University of Pretoria, both probing racial issues. He was subsequently confirmed as minister at the Brooklyn Student Congregation in Pretoria.

But it was the1987 meeting between a group of 60 liberal South Africans and ANC leaders in Dakar, Senegal, which perhaps most decisively steered Eloff's life in a new direction. After the visit he was forced to leave the Reformed Church as a minister. Being rejected and banished from a powerful section of the Afrikaner community must have been a source of deep anguish for the devout Eloff.

After his career in the church ended, another opportunity, some distance removed from the pulpit, soon emerged. The Consultative Business Movement, a voluntary grouping of senior South African business leaders who worked to bring business and the UDF-ANC-Cosatu alliance together, found Eloff. It was in this capacity that he was pulled into a much larger venture, which eventually culminated in the signing of the National Peace Accord in September 1991.

He headed the Process and Secretarial Service in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa), which laid the foundation for the political transition in South Africa, and headed the Administration of the Multi-Party Negotiating Process after Codesa. By 1995 he was the Chief Executive Officer of the National Business Initiative, a business-based Section 21 organisation, to help business contribute to the new South Africa.

From the time he was a student at the PU for CHE, Eloff had been extending his networks and sharpening his abilities as a negotiator and peacemaker. He easily impressed people. The journalist and political analyst Max du Preez said once when former South African President Thabo Mbeki was still the head of the ANC's foreign desk, he joked that an ANC government would change all the names in Johannesburg, but that Eloff Street could stay.[6]

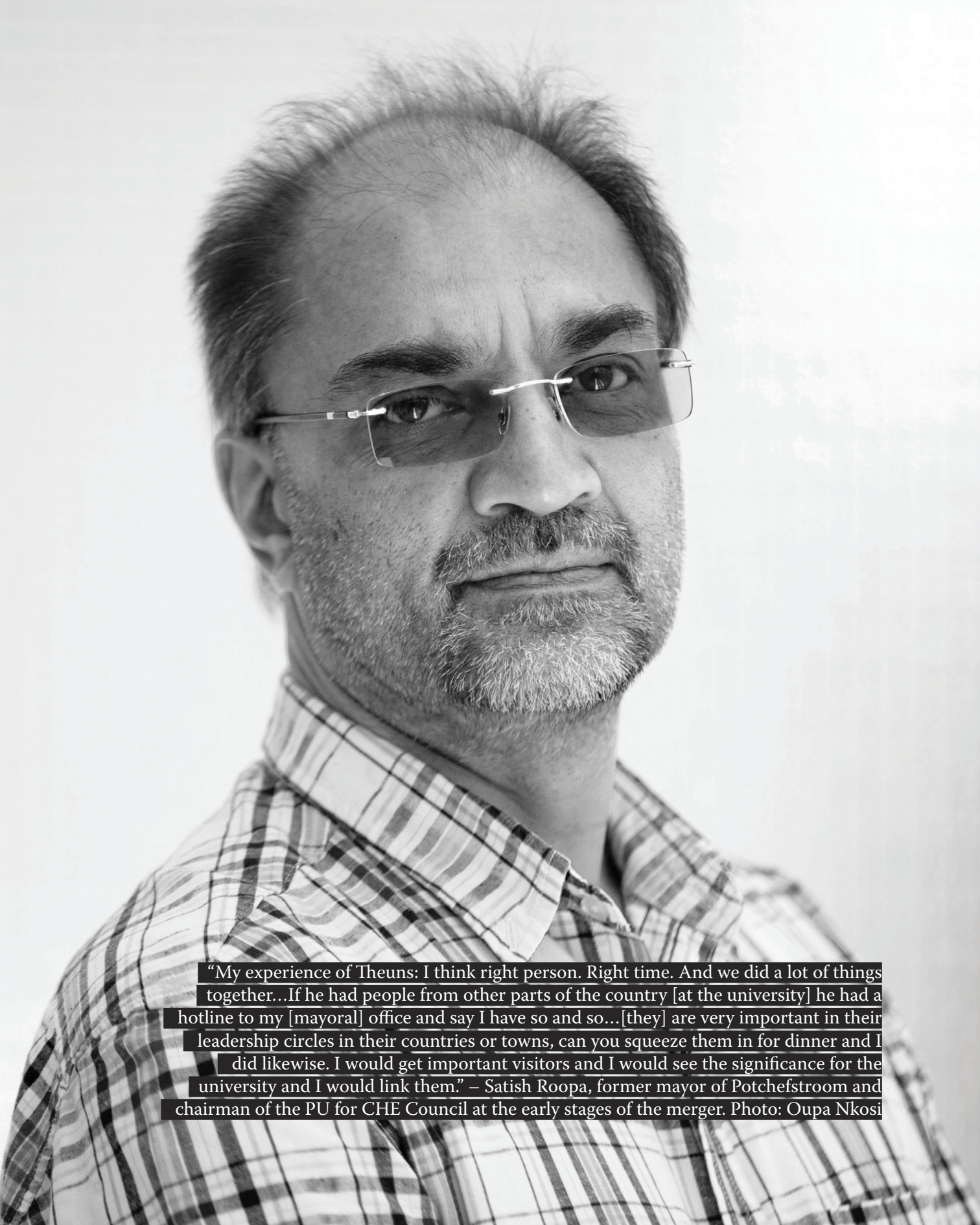
Eloff's political credibility, an indispensable post-democracy trait, was therefore intact at the time Asmal ventured into his project to reform South African higher education. Asmal accepted Eloff as Vice-Chancellor of the PU for CHE, an institution he [Asmal] considered in urgent need of reform.

But Eloff needed some persuasion to move to Potchefstroom. The lobby that spearheaded efforts to bring Eloff back to the PU for CHE included the political commentator Venter, English Professor Annette Combrink, and Professor Pieter "Pottie" Potgieter, an influential senior staffer who was a signatory of the Koinonia declaration[7], the former head of the political science department and at the time the Dean of students. Each of them had some influence in a different sphere of the university. They had to convince people Eloff was the right candidate because "Eloff" and "Dakar" and "Eloff" and "ANC" were still synonymous for many of the locals.

Despite the emergence from the PU for CHE of visionary political thinkers such as Eloff, Willem de Klerk and his

15 April 2014
The international review panel's report on the success of the NWU merger is received and published.

May 2014
The Vaal Triangle Campus opens its Learning and Research Commons, representing a multi-year investment of R70 million.



"My experience of Theuns: I think right person. Right time. And we did a lot of things together…If he had people from other parts of the country [at the university] he had a hotline to my [mayoral] office and say I have so and so…[they] are very important in their leadership circles in their countries or towns, can you squeeze them in for dinner and I did likewise. I would get important visitors and I would see the significance for the university and I would link them." – Satish Roopa, former mayor of Potchefstroom and chairman of the PU for CHE Council at the early stages of the merger. Photo: Oupa Nkosi

brother, former president FW de Klerk, the general perception of the university in the public domain was negative. In a 2002 study based on feedback from employees, the barrier facing the institution was its image as "an apartheid, backward, religiously exclusive rural university for verkrampte Boere". No wonder Eloff had serious doubts about the job.

Resistance was to be expected from the powerful grouping from the Faculty of Theology. As the founders of the university, the church still had a say in Council decisions. But Eloff was overwhelmingly acceptable to the education authorities who wanted to see transformation at the PU for CHE.

On 1 May 2001 – the PU for CHE's annual Open Day for prospective students – Eloff met the group who was trying to bring him to Potchefstroom.

"I wanted to be sure I am not dealing with the left lunatic fringe," he recalled.[8]

On the day, the group consisted of Combrink, Potgieter, the Ministerial appointees on the Council – Roopa, Adv Leon Wessels and Malusi Gigaba– as well as Louw van Wyk and Willemien du Plessis. He agreed to make himself available for the position of Vice-Chancellor.

In the end there were three candidates for the job: Eloff, Prof Annél Van Aswegen, an acting registrar: professional services of Unisa, and Francois Venter, Dean of the faculty of law at the PU for CHE who was involved in the drafting of the South African Constitution, as well as chair of the Afrikanerbond (Broederbond). A Council commission conducted interviews with the three candidates and an external firm evaluated their management skills.

Behind the scenes Council members Wessels and Roopa were lobbying. But there was no need to vote. The decision was unanimous.

Remarkably, the PU for CHE establishment appointed Eloff. It welcomed back the son they had previously shunned – a move which later would have a major influence on Eloff's leadership at the NWU.

At the time the Puk realised they would need a manager for the changes in the air. They needed a politically acceptable appointment when the government's pressure on higher education institutions to transform was mounting.

In Eloff, the PU for CHE would have someone who understood the university, who could absorb the external pressures, but also who could take the institution forward.

In June 2001 at 4am, while on a trip to New York, Eloff got the call that he was the new Rector of the PU for CHE.[9]

A new challenge

But Eloff had barely unpacked his boxes in the Joon van Rooy building on the PU for CHE campus in January 2002 when the National Working Group led by Saki Macozoma handed its findings to Asmal.

Informally his job description changed dramatically. He had to be much more than the Rector of the PU for CHE. He had to become a strategist as he led the university into a merger. The pressure was significant, in particular since the expectation from many on the Potchefstroom Campus of the PU for CHE was that he had to try and save the institution from its arranged marriage with the UNW. And many staff members did not trust him. They felt he was too close to the ANC. Even within his management committee, which he took over from Reinecke for the sake of continuity, he initially felt isolated.

"At one stage someone asked me: 'Of your management committee, how many do you trust?' I said one and a half – Piet Prinsloo (one) and Zibi (half).[10] But it was at the very beginning. So there were differences. But eventually you worked through them…"[11]

Eloff did not rush into the merger. Progressive as he was, he was also an alumnus who understood that the PU for CHE, for more than a century, had gone through too many struggles to survive to simply be dismantled at the whim of an impetuous Minister of Education. He knew a merger was a future that few at the PU for CHE wanted. He accepted that he had not yet won over the PU for CHE constituency to convince them of a decision he was perhaps not convinced of himself.

Eloff lobbied in an effort to find an escape route for the PU for CHE, but he soon realised the futility of this and as a result changed the strategy. The merger was inevitable. There was no way out. His message to the Potch community was to carry on with their work and leave the talks to him and the team he had assembled around him.

In Eloff's blueprint for the merger (see Chapter 7) he speaks of how uncertainty should be limited. In practical terms: Staff should not fear that they would be fired and students should not fear that their qualifications would be worthless. It should be business as usual on all the affected campuses. The new institution should therefore set up permanent structures and appoint people permanently to ensure that uncertainty could be contained. In essence this

26 May 2014
The Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Centre on the Mafikeng Campus holds the first stakeholders' workshop on ethno-medicine.

27 May 2014
The Wessels Report is handed to the chairperson of the Council Peet van der Walt.

Without integrity?

An email exchange between Prof Fika van Rensburg (23 August 2002) and Dr Theuns Eloff (27 August 2002) shortly after the PU for CHE's Council accepted the merger.

Van Rensburg: Concurrent with that: I say it exactly as I experience it – every time we have a discussion (like at the strategic discussion and now again with the Senate of ten days ago) you do what I experience as being without integrity: as soon as the meeting takes a course that is not to your liking, you pretend to accept the inevitability of it. In fact you just park the matter there, only to continue on your set course later. In this regard your letter to the alumni is an example. I cannot view this as anything other that disinformation.

How does it help (our university and) you if the minister thinks you are on the right track, but you have your senate as opponents and have alienated a big part of your support community[?].

Eloff: That you experience me as 'without integrity' is both amazing and regrettable to me …I thought you knew me better by now. From the days of Koinonia I tried to walk the high road and my integrity was (and is) precious to me…even if people did not always agree with me…, but yes, it seems to me that (at least in your estimation) it is gone…

was to keep the momentum of the merger going.

Despite efforts to communicate regularly with staff he had to endure attacks and rejection as someone without integrity, who alienated his supporters and who would pursue his own plans no matter what (see Without integrity). Prof Fika van Rensburg was not wrong about Eloff's ability to stick to an agenda. He would rather try and sway people – and more often than not succeeded in doing so – than deviate from an idea he believed in.

But Eloff did not only have to work hard at managing the fears of the PU for CHE community. He also had to work with the people from Mafikeng who believed that they were being swallowed by a much bigger and stronger entity. In addition Eloff had to please the decision-makers in Pretoria and convince them that his overriding agenda was not to protect the interest of the Potchefstromers. According to most of the people he dealt with, he succeeded.

Lydia Sebego, NWU Council member and later Council chairperson, described Eloff's role in the merger as "quite influential". She says: "He was instrumental and in my personal view he played a very interesting role in that there were times when he was on the side of the one team and there were times when he will be on the side of the other team whereas he would have been expected to be just in the middle. But I think he also got engaged in a lot of lobbying."

Ten years into the merger, with the advantage of hindsight, former Dean of law Prof Francois Venter, who had competed with Eloff for the position of Vice-Chancellor of the PU for CHE a few years earlier, said Eloff had not been given the credit he deserved for his work during the merger. He said Eloff ensured the "functionality of the merged university remained intact and was promoted, while the demands from the bureaucracy and politics were also met". Venter continued to be an influential member of the Potchefstroom university establishment.

Indeed, there were many of those who were part of the process who would go so far as to say if there had been no Theuns Eloff there would have been no merger. Wessels, a pre-merger negotiator and the chairman of Council as the merger happened, is one of them. He explained how he would attend meetings, but thereafter the management teams had to take the decisions forward, even though these decisions were often wanting or without detail. Those who were not part of the talks in these pressure cooker-like

18 June 2014
AfriForum Youth demands that the NWU Council rejects the Wessels Report.

26 June 2014
The Council submits a report to Nzimande about initiation and the Nazi salute.

situations often knew better. "The art to overcome criticism was simply to negotiate transparently and to be open with those on whose behalf you negotiated. Against this backdrop I once made the statement in *Rapport*[12]: 'This thing could only happen because Theuns Eloff was at the centre of the negotiations.' "

Of the two rectors involved in the unfolding merger Eloff, who had been described as a "super diplomat" and "super strategist" for his earlier work in the political and business spheres, was probably the dominant one. Dr Ngoako Takalo, Rector of UNW, was, by her own admission, not a smooth operator or much of a lobbyist. On 5 December 2003, a month before the merger date, Eloff became the interim Vice-Chancellor of the new institution.

A Vice-Chancellor for the NWU

Eloff was clear about what needed to be done when the merger happened: "First, the university had to get a statute; next a functioning Council with a majority that is constructive."

The new university also needed a permanent Vice-Chancellor. Hence the permanent Council announced in March 2004 that it had approved the process to fill the vacancy. The NWU was the first of Asmal's new institutions that were created in 2004 to name a new head.

It did not happen without drama, which played out over several hours at a Council meeting on 7 May 2004. This was still the period of the coalition Council. When the search committee, led by business leader Johan van Zyl as the chair, recommended Eloff be appointed, seven or eight of the "Mafikeng side" of the Council walked out. This was despite their involvement in the selection committee. But a quorum remained, including the chair, Litha Nyhonyha, and the deputy chair, Lydia Sebego. Both of them voted for Eloff. Mickey Gordon, the former president of North West Cricket, a networker and fundraiser for the former PU for CHE who had contacts within the ANC, lobbied and so played a role in getting Eloff elected as the first post-merger Vice-Chancellor. Later on, Sebego was also instrumental in the appointment of Prof Annette Combrink as the first Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus.

Eloff would serve two terms, but this was not the way it should have been, according to a number of sources. They suggested that during the pre-merger talks when decisions had to be taken about the how-what-when-who of the new institution, there appeared to have been a suggestion that Eloff would step down in favour of Takalo at some point during his first term. This could have been at an informal meeting and with only a few people present because there was nothing in writing to suggest a formal decision was taken.

Sebego believed this was supposed to have happened at the end of Eloff's first term.

"[When his contract was extended] it took a lot of people by shock, by surprise. He knew it was part of the deal…and in the interim I personally think that either Theuns himself or through other people made sure Takalo moved, they made her uncomfortable because she was supposed to be the successor. So, I think he managed his day by managing her out."

OJJ Tabane, another Council member, agrees: "…it was not even a secret. It was part of the discussion to say while we appoint him, he must [leave] so that there can be a new person. But that never happened."

Takalo herself certainly had expectations, but once she was appointed as Eloff's deputy she encountered many stumbling blocks. She was a woman in an environment that was still male dominated. She was black in an institutional culture that was still overwhelmingly white. She was an introvert compared to a charismatic Eloff. Her political network was perhaps less obvious than that of Eloff's and she had to convince people that she could be a better Vice-Chancellor than Eloff when he had already had time to prove himself and build a support base.

So there appeared to have been some contestation about the length of Eloff's time in office. After Takalo's first term as Vice-principal, her contract was not renewed for a second term.

First crisis at the NWU

Eloff's appointment also set off the first public crisis for the NWU. The appointment of a white Afrikaans male who had been "parachuted" into higher education two years earlier with only a PhD and barely any experience of running a university was arguably misaligned with the government's robust transformation agenda.

On 10 May 2004 the *Sowetan* reported that some of the academics who had been in the running for the NWU's

17 July 2014
AfriForum Youth submits a complaint against the Afrikaans daily newspaper, ***Beeld*** to the Press Ombudsman for "inaccurate" and "sensationalist" reporting on the "Nazi salute".

21 July 2014
Dr Blade Nzimande expresses concern about the orientation of first-year students at the Potchefstroom Campus and comments on the "authoritarian" and "semi-militaristic" nature of these practices.

Vice-Chancellorship were infuriated by his selection.

Four of them subsequently publicly and legally challenged the process and requested the NWU to provide more information about it. They were Professors Thandwa Mthembu, at the time the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, Sipho Seepe, acting Vice-Chancellor of Vista University, Simon Maimela, former Unisa vice-principal and at the time the executive director of the Institute for Management and Business in SA, and Ad Akande, director for the Institute of Research and Consultancy.

Seepe, who was shortlisted, said Eloff was not a professor and lacked experience in higher education transformation. "What we are seemingly being told is that quality does not matter as long as you are white. You can be mediocre white but you will still be better than the most qualified blacks in the country."

Later on the National Tertiary Education Staff Union (Ntesu) also objected, saying it was not consulted.

But the chairman of the NWU at the time, Litha Nyhonyha, insisted that a transparent process was followed and that Eloff's appointment was important to ensure the merger moved forward. The backing from Nyhonyha at the time confirmed that Eloff had been able to build support within the Council. This would help him later to get things done, but would also land him in trouble.

Despite the controversy over Eloff's selection he now had space to do things, most notably to forge the merger as quickly as possible, which was critical. A defining quality of Eloff's leadership, perhaps emanating from his stint in the business community: the drive to see results, to get things done as soon as possible. Unfortunately, in his last days in office this haste could be blamed for tainting his legacy.

Theuns Consensus

Eloff was dedicated to the success of the NWU. His days started early. On occasion he would have played golf or gone for a ride on Omet, Jafar or Dakar – one of his three Arabian horses – before work. Judging from emails sent to colleagues, he frequently laboured deep into the night. He was arguably one of the hardest workers in the institution and expected the same commitment from co-workers. He did not like mistakes or missed deadlines. As the merger was unfolding, Saturdays and public holidays sometimes became his workdays. Eloff, who had been described as a "flipchart guy", would graphically plan the way ahead. On Mondays his ideas would be incorporated into documents, which were sent to and fro between the NWU's senior decision-makers.

Amid opposition on many fronts – from within the Council, the Senate, from staff and students, even from the education authorities – he had clarity of mind on what he wanted to achieve and how. He knew who the enemy was and in Eloff's own words: "I never run away from any good fight."

Eloff "fought" in a particular manner. He facilitated. He persuaded. He sought consensus. He had an uncanny knack of being able to win people over. Gulam Mayet, a former Council member, derisively referred to how the Vice-Chancellor "seduced" people. In this way he often swayed decisions, in particular within the Council. In fact, based on interviews with various Council members and colleagues, Eloff was strong enough to control the Council. Perhaps "control" is not the right word. He had the ability to win the majority of the Council members over to his point of view. The accusation that he used the Council as a rubber stamp was not without foundation.

OJJ Tabane described the relationship between Eloff and the Council: "He was a strong VC. He ran the show, literally. We would try to reel him in from time to time, but it's like any situation where you have a strong CEO. It's like that in corporations. The CEO is strong, the board would get fed up with the CEO and try and reel him in, but it's not always a success." According to Tabane, who served on the Council for eight years, there were two or three incidents during which Eloff and his management team seemed to be "going ahead of Council".

This appeared to have provided added ammunition to those who wanted to get rid of Eloff.

Prof Dries du Plooy, a former Rector of the PU for CHE's theology school and a member of the post-merger Council, recalls how labour legislation was used to get rid of Eloff. At some point "he had been warned and it was a third warning and when we realised this we walked out". Subsequently there was no quorum so the Council could not take a decision.

Former Vaal Triangle Campus Rector Prinsloo agreed that Eloff was not only instrumental in establishing the NWU, but could "control" a meeting: "If he was not there, this thing would not have happened. His personality, his approach, his relationships – and he has guts. I mean you sit in a meeting,

July 2014
The university initiates a new strategy development process aimed at determining a new strategic agenda.

July 2014
3 000 students on the Potchefstroom Campus take part in a march to counter "misconceptions" about the campus culture.

"It was a proud moment for the merger. We all worked as a team. Dr Eloff was a great leader on the expedition," says Prof Melvin Mbao, Executive Dean of the Mafikeng Campus's Law Faculty. Mbao, Dr Theuns Eloff, Vice-Chancellor, Prof Annette Combrink, Potchefstroom Campus Rector and Elbie Steyn, Registrar of the Vaal Triangle Campus, were part of an expedition to climb Uhuru, the highest peak of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest freestanding mountain in Africa. This was in 2005 and was an initiative to strengthen the merger. Photo: North-West University

in the Senate, there is a powerless group that watches him as noisemakers who have the floor. And Theuns will stand there and handle it just like that."

Even from the side of the education authorities, officials recalled his powers of persuasion. Sanette Boshoff, who worked in the department at the time of the merger, said: "I don't know how Theuns did it, but he is not seen as a white Afrikaner male."

On a day-to-day basis, he had an informal, accessible style. Some colleagues called him "Dr Theuns" and others simply "Theuns". But Eloff's abilities, which helped to calm emotions and bring people together during the establishment phase of the merger, had been the very ones that prevented some tough decisions from being taken in the early uncertain days. He had been accused of "soft hands" and his belief in a win-win outcome for most problems meant that difficulties that existed at the birth of the NWU 10 years ago persisted. These include the time it took to close the Mankwe Campus and salary disparities.

Theo Venter, who worked with Eloff as an advisor, said the biggest flaw in the Eloff leadership armory was that he pushed facilitation too far when he should be taking a decision: "There were times when he should have taken decisions and he could not or did not want to." Although seeking consensus was important to Eloff, he could also stick to his guns and refuse to budge. When he was challenged on these occasions, things did not always end well.

One of these public spats was between him and Dr Ingrid Tufvesson, executive advisor on transformation in the Institutional Office. The position was created to help the NWU management and the Council with transformation (see Chapter 26). Several other academics also accused Eloff of ruining their academic careers because the university acted against them on various charges, but that the real problem was that they were too outspoken, in particular about a lack of transformation, including Nhlanhla Maake, Monde Ndandane and Hannelie Booyens.

In addition, disagreements also seemed to damage the friendships between the likes of Eloff and Dr Leon Wessels, Max du Preez and Kgwadi, Eloff's successor.

Initially Eloff was the Vice-Chancellor as well as the campus Rector of Mafikeng for six months. This was when it was still gripped by instability. His PA at the time, Lizette van Deventer, who had worked for top people in the business and public sectors, said she had not encountered his equal, especially during times of crisis. When a memorandum arrived from the Mafikeng Campus and Eloff was in a meeting, she would SMS him. He was then deputy chair of Higher Education South Africa[13] and therefore often at meetings in Pretoria. But if the crisis demanded immediate attention he would head home and his car would become his office.

"He puts the phone [in his car] on loudspeaker and say: 'Right, let us formulate an answer' and he dictates to me with the phone on loudspeaker. And I hear that he is in the traffic and how his indicator tick, tick, tick. He does not sit down and write everything down. He thinks and drives. He pays quickly at a toll gate or at a parking garage, says 'thank you' for the change and goes on. And he would say, for instance, when we reach paragraph four, tell me: 'What did we say in the last sentence of paragraph one?' And he would refer back and add a bit and all that while he drives."

Eloff's positions required him to micro manage, but having to deal with day-to-day crisis situations was perhaps not that easy for him. Although he put together many of the deal-breakers during the merger, he was seen as a big picture guy[14]. And if he had made up his mind and could envisage the success of a plan he would run with it – and sometimes not close the loop – while his colleagues lagged behind.

Van Deventer explains: "You had to be a stage manager when you worked there. Theuns does not want to know about the missing stage props or that I have forgotten this or that. You have to ensure that everything is fixed. There are people who can do it. They must do it. The show must go on. He is only interested in the final production…He does not know what happened behind the scenes. You have to make it happen."

He would rely on managers to execute plans, but they would not necessarily do so either because they had their own agendas or because they did not grasp what his grand plan was. One instance in which this happened was the alignment of programmes between campuses. It got stuck, but he was not aware of it. He said later, after difficulties emerged, that had he known he would have acted.

Academically speaking

Eloff's greatest contribution in the consolidation phase of the merger was how he focused the university in terms of its academic outputs (see Chapter 22). There were goals and he

4 September 2014
The Press Ombudsman rejects AfriForum Youth's complaint about *Beeld*'s coverage of the "Nazi" salute.

23 September 2014
Peet van der Walt resigns as Council chairperson because of ill health. The deputy chairperson Itumeleng Pooe takes over duties in the interim.

constantly reminded colleagues to attain these. In addition he wanted to measure and count outcomes.

As the deputy chair and later the chair of HESA[15], he also began building a profile as a higher education commentator. He even became the deputy chair of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

The most significant benefit flowing from his work in the higher education sector was that he was elevating the public image of the NWU.

The institution was created from two universities, each of which had apartheid baggage. The merger was an opportunity to get rid of the past and Eloff was working hard to build an NWU brand – although his critics said he was promoting himself. At times the Council even warned him against burn-out.

Towards the end of his first term, the consultant Rolf Stumpf praised Eloff in a report about the controversial three-campus lay-out of the NWU – one of the ideas Eloff fervently believed in:

"The Vice-Chancellor came in for singular praise on the clear role model he personally constituted in consistently honouring the principles of the management model especially in his interactions with the campuses. Many felt that the management model would long have collapsed under the combined weight of the many implementation problems, if it had not been for him.

"Unanimously, the view was expressed that the merger itself which was based on the present management model was the success it had been because of his ability to keep the new NWU together internally and position it externally during the trying and turbulent merger period. He was praised in particular for his efforts, despite a near inhuman work schedule, to engage with a wide spectrum of staff members of the NWU through regular campus visits, breakfast meetings with staff etc."

But on the back of the praise from Stumpf came a clash with Education Minister Naledi Pandor over ongoing upheaval on the Mafikeng Campus. Eloff believed Pandor interfered in NWU matters in an unacceptable manner. The Council supported him. Pandor thought Eloff did not try hard enough to sort out the problem. Their relationship soured temporarily.

On 21 November 2008 the NWU Council awarded Eloff another five-year contract.

Departure

On 21 February 2014 the Afrikaans daily *Beeld* published a front page article titled: "Pukke sê: "Heil!"

Two weeks later Eloff announced he was vacating his office after 147 months and not the 149 months in his contract. From the outside looking in Eloff was taking the fall for others.

But Eloff was not blameless in the salute affair.

He knew about concerns over the symbolism of the outstretched hands of first-year students as they uttered "Heil Puk!" or any of a range of other so-called traditional greetings. He did not act. His decision appears to have been based on at least two considerations. Firstly, the management model, which delegated powers to each campus, meant hands off - it was up to the Potchefstroom Campus to deal with the matter. Secondly, he did not believe there was anything wrong with the salute, which had been part of student life on the Potchefstroom Campus for decades. He spoke of the salute as an isolated incident when there were several pictures and videos taken over a period of time.

But it was hard for Eloff to pack up. He was not only confronted with the Sieg Heil crisis, but also with the negative findings of an international report on the merger – an investigation he had commissioned.

The year 2014 turned into a low point of his time at the helm of the NWU. His legacy was tarnished and he blamed *Beeld* for the front page lead about the use of the salute on the Potchefstroom Campus and Adriaan Basson, the editor, for being out to get the campus.

At the end of March 2014, Eloff bade farewell to the NWU community. He was visibly emotional on the video clip that was emailed to staff. He said little about the salute, focusing instead on the merger and the achievements of the university, particularly in research. The question is this: What does the media savvy and politically astute Eloff's blunt refusal to acknowledge that outsiders could interpret the movements made by students as imitating the Hitler salute tell us about him? What happened to him?

He appeared to have returned to the open arms of the establishment that had once rejected him. He protected their interests.

Journalist Max du Preez writes about this phenomenon amongst some of his Afrikaans friends. He says: "It can be cold and lonely for an Afrikaner to be rejected by his/her

25 September 2014
At a press conference where he discusses the Wessels Report, Nzimande refers to the Potchefstroom Campus as an "apartheid enclave".

26 September 2014
The Chancellor of the University, Kgosi Leruo Molotlegi, is inaugurated for a second term. Kgwadi is inaugurated as Vice-Chancellor of the NWU.

Dr Theuns says goodbye

Good day colleagues and friends,
By the time you return from the April recess, the NWU will have a new Vice-Chancellor and we wish Prof Dan Kgwadi all of the best. I know it will go well.

As you may know I offered Council, and they accepted, to step down two months earlier. I still remain in the employ of the university but Prof Kgwadi takes over on 1 April. I still believe that that is in the best interest of the university and will give Prof Kgwadi a chance to take ownership of the processes that flowed from events on the Potchefstroom Campus earlier this year.

Suzette and I will still have the opportunity and the privilege to have on all three the campuses and the Institutional Office ceremonies where people will say goodbye to us and we really look forward to that.

During the months of April and May I will still be around. I will help with certain tasks with Prof Kgwadi but essentially he will be in office and I will work from home.

This is therefore my last video message as VC.

I am leaving the North-West University with mixed feelings. On the one hand a hint of sadness. It has been part of my life for 10 years at NWU and another two at the Potch Campus and I have enjoyed it. We did a lot of things together.

On the other hand I am also looking forward with Suzette to my new life. We are moving to Pretoria where we have a house where we have never lived. I will be serving on some boards, and also do some consultancy work and …play a little bit of golf.

About the NWU: I am leaving a good university behind. The merger was a success – that is behind us. And I am sure that with Prof Kgwadi and the leadership team things will just go upward.

All the curves are up. We don't talk about that today, but the indications are that our publications output for 2013 will be over a thousand. So I hope at some point we will be able to celebrate that together. I leave you with a light heart. Thank you to everyone: Staff and students who had helped in this time to make this a great university – May God bless you all."

people (volk)…" but wonderful to be cuddled again at the bosom of the same establishment which rejected him/her."

And this was how Theo Venter described the change in Eloff: "You should not forget that Theuns with all his qualities is still being influenced by the old order. What I mean with 'old order' is the old established reformed decision-making structures. Theuns is not a member of the Afrikanerbond, but all those guys are."

The Eloff legacy

"Eloff and a group of courageous people took a giant leap of faith when they established the NWU. How he led will go down in history as one of the most applaudable interventions by a single individual," said Peet van der Walt, former chairman of the NWU Council.

Van der Walt said the biggest decision in the merger phase was that the university would continue to focus on its main business, keep that intact and build on it.

"And that, if you look back, worked very well for us," he says.

Indeed it did. Van der Walt's words are not a hollow praise song. The statistics of the merger (see Chapters 21 and 22) are telling. They confirm that over 10 years the new university had continued to push up its performance curves in teaching-learning and research. This would not have been possible without stability, sound management and decent facilities and resources for staff and students. On each campus were signs of infrastructural growth and

17 November 2014
Advocate Johan Kruger is elected as Council chairperson and Dr Joe Tshifuralo as deputy chairperson.

29 April 2015
The NWU is included, for the first time, in the 2015/16 QS University World Rankings. It is among the world's 800 top universities and between the 150 - 200 best universities in the BRICS countries.

The Rector who could make Potch cool

Tim du Plessis

*Column title: Take a deep breath (**Weekliks**, a supplement to **Rapport**, 9 March 2014)*

During the past week Theuns Eloff took the proverbial bullet for his beloved Puk, and vacated his position as Rector two months before the appointed time.

Staunch alumni have now expressed the opinion that *Beeld*'s reports about episodes of initiation at the Potch campus of the North-West University (NWU) have unjustly tarnished the legacy of an outstanding leader.

Yes, the overdone reporting smeared the face of the University with an undeserved Nazi tarbrush. That is sad.

But, that will not topple Eloff's monuments at three campuses – Potchefstroom, Vanderbijlpark and Mafikeng. During the past week a formidable figure, a Matie to the marrow, said: If Stellenbosch had Theuns Eloff, we would have had nothing of the language uproar of the past ten years.

A university can hardly wish for someone better than Eloff – a super technocrat with both character and personality, not an academic, but smart.

No maverick, for that is not the purpose of a Rector. A Rector's job is to create a properly managed and academically secure environment where eccentric lecturers and students may flourish.

At Potch Eloff went and wiped away the last remnants of the old 'Dopper'-dominated culture. NWU-Puk gained the image of a cool place – unashamedly and assertively Afrikaans.

There was nothing of that nonsense that a campus has to become English in order to be so-called 'world class'. The innovative manner in which the Potch campus secured Afrikaans as a university language by means of an interpreting service is now keenly followed at Stellenbosch – although almost too late.

In 2002 the young Eloff had barely seated himself at his desk when he had to start with the forced merger of his university with the then University of the Northwest at Mafikeng, which was little more than a homeland university, even though it was a hotbed of ANC agendas and agitators.

Eloff should some time tell the world what exactly happened politically during that time, how the ANC cadres tried to frustrate him at every turn and often treated him like dirt.

But Theuns persevered. Make no mistake, this former Puk first rugby-team centre is a tough customer and hard as nails. In the end politics had to bow the knee to sound management. Today NWU-Mafikeng is producing students who are second to none.

It seems now as if the worst is over for the NWU. Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education, could have hit them much harder than the official investigation he ordered into the initiation and other practices at the NWU campuses. Eloff's seeming resignation may have played a part in this victory of common sense over hotheadedness.

Further about initiation, just this: I wonder why, each time there is a commotion or scandal in this regard on campus, Afrikaans-speaking students are involved? What is it with our people that we think we can get into a party spirit or have fun as students by humiliating others, no matter how innocent and without coercion the dishing out of "humiliation" may appear to be?

Parents, who idealise initiation when talking about it to their children, contribute to the problem. It is like nostalgia about the days when "the man was master in his own house". It is as outdated as that.

Initiation and other euphemistic terms such as "orientation" and "welcome ceremonies" are from days of yore. The whole idea is discredited and outdated , although thousands of Afrikaans-speaking students and their parents may think otherwise.

Universities should simply forbid and prohibit it.

Can it be that difficult?

The chickens will come home to roost

***Theuns Eloff**, former Vice-Chancellor of the North-West University (NWU), writes this open letter to Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training [following an attack by the latter on him]:*

Honourable Minister Nzimande, I was surprised to read your attack on the NWU, the Council of the NWU, the management of the Potchefstroom Campus and the former Vice-Chancellor. As far as I know, this is the first time in your term as Minister that you have attacked a specific institution and person in this way - even though there were (and still are) universities and Vice-Chancellors that did not fulfil their management obligations, where serious financial mismanagement occurred and where there was no oversight.

You haven't even attacked any of the universities that have been put under administration and where unrest is still going strong in this way. And therefore I feel compelled to respond to these accusations – not to defend myself but rather to defend the NWU, its Council and its management.

But first, I'd like to share an observation about the remarkable "coincidences" that occurred last week.

In a week with a public holiday in the middle, the parliamentary portfolio committee visits the NWU on the Tuesday; on Thursday, you summon the executive committee of the Council for a scolding; on the same day, you decide to hold a press conference about a report you had received months before; and then – the cherry on top – the new Vice-Chancellor is inaugurated on Friday. This is almost too good to be true or to be a coincidence, wouldn't you say? Wouldn't the revolutionary term for this be lobbying?"

From the quotes in the media, it's obvious that you base your attacks on the so-called Wessels Report. What you didn't mention to the media was that you had agreed to the Council's request not to make the report public since it might possibly contain libellous accusations for which, if published, the university could be held responsible.

You didn't mention to the media that the report wasn't accepted by Council because of serious flaws in methodology and in terms of the principle of giving the other side a "fair hearing". You know the report made findings based on complaints that were treated as facts, but that the people who were attacked did not have an opportunity to state their side of the story.

And yet you state in public, without batting an eyelid, that the Council had tried to prevent the publication of the report because it exposes "deep moral corruption" at the university. On what exactly do you base this loathsome accusation? On a report that you know is seriously flawed? How irresponsible is that?

Nazi salute

Yet there's more. Even though this flawed report finds there is no Nazi or fascist culture on the Potch Campus, you blithely continue to accuse the management of this campus of "tacitly" approving such a culture.

You don't mention that you were shown the video clip on which the whole *Beeld* exposé was based and that you could see for yourself that it wasn't a Nazi salute at all but a song first years were performing for their residence leader.

I want to place it on record that everything which happened or is happening at the NWU is not necessarily a model for the hereafter. There are still many weaknesses and mistakes are made. The question is: Were and are the Council and management determined to work hard to improve things? And my answer was and is "yes".

You consider it "refreshing" that the flawed Wessels Report blames everything on the NWU's management model. But every year for the past five years, you received a detailed annual report from the NWU in which the university's achievements in teaching-learning and research, as well as the positive role management

played in this, were clearly outlined.

You never had any criticism. In fact, you gave permission for many elements of the NWU's management model to be written into the new Statute of the Walter Sisulu University to try to manage the multi-campus setup there.

Campus transformed

Conveniently you forget that Prof Dan Kgwadi, present Vice-Chancellor, used the exact same management model (without any objections) over a period of nine years to effectively transform the Mafikeng Campus from an unmanageable and academically weak campus to a fully fledged NWU campus.

In terms of research the Mafikeng Campus can today compete with any university in the country. You have access to this information, don't you?

You also forget that for five consecutive years, the NWU won first place in the annual PricewaterhouseCoopers Higher Education Excellence Award for Corporate Governance.

About Potchefstroom and Afrikaans, you make the disturbing, naïve (or alternatively malicious) statement that it's the management model which has "forced" Afrikaans upon the campus. No, minister, it's article 29 (2) of our Constitution, born from gruelling negotiations and of which you should be a champion, that gives Afrikaans a place in Potchefstroom.

And then you make the enormous leap of logic that this state of affairs makes Potchefstroom an "apartheid enclave".

If you had read the flawed Wessels Report carefully, as well as all the reports in *Beeld* about this issue, you would have made the astounding discovery that not a single case of racism was pointed out. Not even intensive investigations by a whole team of *Beeld* journalists could find a single racist incident in Potchefstroom. An apartheid enclave? That's not even close to the truth, is it?

According to media reports, you came to the conclusion from the university management's answer to you about the so-called salute that I had lied to you.

At least two of the other reports to which you refer were just as flawed as the Wessels Report and the other one, despite the NWU's obvious attributes, focused only on a lack of "transformation".

Like any self-respecting executive head of an organisation, I would not break down the institution I am associated with on the basis of such flawed and clearly one-sided reports to score political points. I stand by that answer to you. You can try to dismiss me as a liar – former President PW Botha also did that in 1987 after the Dakar Safari. And it didn't hold water then either.

Your uninformed allegation that I didn't want to establish or promote a culture of human rights at the NWU doesn't even deserve an answer. My history and what I have achieved at the NWU speak more clearly than any words. The reasons for your attack on the NWU are very clear to me.

ANC straitjacket

It irritates you that there could be a university that doesn't just slip into the ANC's straitjacket of one-sided transformation but thinks for itself and wants to do the best for the country and all its people. You see a new Vice-Chancellor who apparently wants to bring about dramatic change and you think: "Let's support him."

But then you do this by condemning the university that he now leads and where he's worked for nine years with his colleagues and former colleagues. That doesn't speak of integrity.

You aren't known for tolerance when opinions differ. Many other universities can testify to this.

But to attack and condemn a good university such as the NWU, the second biggest in the country in terms of student numbers and amongst the top institutions for research and teaching outputs, in the hope that a new Vice-Chancellor will dance to your tune, is neither honourable nor realistic. As the saying goes, the chickens will come home to roost.

I sincerely wish you well with your big task of supporting, empowering and improving the financing of all the universities in the country.

For your and democracy's sake, I hope the university sector stays autonomous and critical.

(*Volksblad*, 29 September 2014)

A lost opportunity, writes Eloff

I respond to the letter by Izak Smalman under the headline "Theuns Eloff slips through the gap beautifully" in *Beeld* of 25 June 2015:

In order to generate money for the NWU, it was decided in 2013 to set up a trust based on the Harvard model. It was to take on property development projects in particular.

To manage the risk, the North West Higher Education Trust (NWHET) was registered as an independent trust with higher education institutions in North West Province as beneficiaries. To maintain its independence, no NWU board members, employees or students were to be trustees and the NWU could not be the only beneficiary. However, more than half of the trustees had to be NWU alumni.

The NWHET's first project was the construction of an own building for the Potchefstroom Business School in order to maintain its international accreditation. The NWHET was to buy land from the NWU at market value for development by external investors. The project would include offices, restaurants and an auditorium. The project was to be carried out on a sell-and-rent-back basis and would cost the NWU much less than the capital burden of constructing the building itself. Moreover, the NWU would receive the income. When the tender was accepted in June 2014, land conveyancing and architectural planning was begun. When the NWU cancelled the project in August 2014, certain costs had already been incurred.

A second project was the sale of the NWU's Cachet shopping centre to the trust at market value (R50 million) in order to re-capitalise it with external money and investments by large chain groups. Work was begun and then stopped by the NWU. Similar centres were planned for the Vaal Triangle and Mafikeng campuses. The trustees had estimated that direct income for the NWU would amount to R300 million in total.

It is tragic that – while no fault could be found with the setting up of the NWHET nor with the endowment of R10 million – the NWU lost hundreds of millions of rands of income. Someone ought to be held accountable. Were the board to decide to continue with some of these projects, it would at least ensure that the R2,5 million paid for professional services was not spent in vain. The rest of the money is still safely invested.

My association with Dabiko [Consulting] was temporary and aimed at other projects. I was never a trustee or advisor and never received any benefit. I only acted to the benefit of the NWU. (*Beeld*, 6 July 2015)

rejuvenation. Eloff had a firm hand in the progress. He had support from the inside and the outside – alumni, business, peers.

But Eloff, who took over at the PU for CHE in the era of managerialism, build a new university on many of the advantages of a businesslike approach. It set down systems in an attempt to equalize the unequalities between the campuses. Within this microcosm excellence was beginning to grow. - sometimes at the cost of people.

So, whether you loved or hated Eloff, revered or disrespected him, he was one of the primary architects of the merger between the PU for CHE and the UNW.

He was instrumental in the founding years in keeping the fragile union intact. It was an arranged, loveless marriage between unwilling partners across the colour line. Much anger and bitterness and fear had to be overcome. At the time Eloff could help to unite the majority of people by creating a structure in which they could continue their work with the least disruption possible. Thereafter he pushed everyone relentlessly forward.

Unfortunately the same structure with all its advantages at different times during the first 10 years of the merger started to undermine the NWU as a new entity.

The structure remained the most significant reminder

19 June 2015
Eloff is cleared by the NWU Council of any wrongdoing after donating R10 million to the North West Higher Education Trust (NWHET). But the money has to be paid back.

7 July 2015
In a letter to *Beeld* Kgwadi explains why he believes it is in the public interest to disclose the findings of the forensic audit into the R10 million Eloff had donated to the NWHET.

Let me manage, writes Kgwadi

Dr Theuns Eloff's latest attempt to justify his donation of R10 million to the North West Higher Education Trust (NWHET) refers.

This donation forms part of a pattern of behaviour through which he wanted to steer the appointment of his successor.

Firstly, in his last year as Vice-Chancellor he tried to extend his term by two years. When he didn't succeed in this, he tried to influence me as his successor with the idea that the Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus could also be the deputy head. This would apply for the same period as my term as Vice-Chancellor.

This was not acceptable to me.

It later emerged that this plan was counter to the university's rules and statutes. The board rejected it.

Dr Eloff tried in similar fashion to ensure that an independent trust would take over the university's fund gathering efforts.

This independence would make it possible to bypass the Minister of Education's ban on loans that would exceed 5% of the university's average turnover over the previous two years.

Such an independent trust would also mean that neither the Vice-Chancellor nor any other executive officer of the university would have any control over the trust's investments. This is totally unacceptable in the context of a transforming university.

Never before has a serving Vice-Chancellor tried to steer the university's future in such a peculiar fashion.

It would be to Dr Eloff's own advantage if he were to accept that his term has come to an end, and that he should rather pursue his own goals and interests.

I am now responsible for the university and I dare not expose the institution to risky business practices that run counter to legal advice.

Dr Eloff is aware of the loss we suffered from the Velodrome project, where wood to the value of more than R1 million was bought from Russia before the project failed. The university also bought a filling station in the Vaal Triangle, but did not benefit from it.

The intentions regarding the NWHET has been presented as the norm at foreign universities. But [elsewhere,] such trusts are consolidated into the university's financial statements.

It is also held that I was consulted before the trust was established. [But] in this consultation the risks and legal opinion thereof were never mentioned.

The alleged projects on which a portion of the R10 million was spent, were not approved and also not submitted to the relevant board committees. The university's tender procedures were not followed and therefore I did not want to lend credence to it by nominating alumni to the trust or by supporting the projects.

I still believe the findings of the forensic audit are in the public interest.

The perception must not be created that I am busy with a witch hunt, while I have acted with circumspection and demanded accountability.

I hope the day arrives that Dr Theuns [Eloff] makes his peace and allows the current management to take the university to new heights.

With everything taken into consideration, he did a good job. He left behind a good university and my task is to make it even better. I request that he allows me the room to do so.

It is almost impossible to drive a new agenda for the university without removing the obstacles that were created by improper decision making in the past and that had a negative impact on a changing institution. (*Beeld*, 7 July 2015)

that some of the toughest decisions other universities with unitary structures had to make were postponed. Eloff was aware of this and concerned that the model would mean that some people on both the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses, as a result, would never merge in their heads. It was as if the merger had never happened. Even so, Eloff believed unflinchingly in unity in diversity. But his apparent unwillingness, 10 years after the merger, to consider the possibility that the model might need to be replaced or even tweaked, cast doubt over his intentions for wanting to keep it. Had it not perhaps, over time, become an instrument to protect the status quo?

This is what the Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande accused Eloff of: he did not want to transform Pukke – the Potchefstroom Campus.

When Eloff returned to Potch his intention was to change the campus. His effort to change the name from Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education to simply Potchefstroom University is a case in point. But at some point he stalled.

The manner in which Eloff handled one of the worst crises the NWU had faced in 10 years seemed to suggest that Nzimande was not merely being a populist.

Although Eloff stepped down early as Vice-Chancellor, his persistent denial that students on the Potchefstroom Campus were executing a Nazi salute, and that the series of pictures and videos were an expression of elements of a campus culture in desperate need of change, undermined the authenticity of the sacrifice he made. He had been simply unable to acknowledge that he should have acted when he first heard about the dangers lurking within the residences. It was as if he was overwhelmed by his roots during his last days in office. In this time he alienated many of the allies who had been on his team since as far back as the 1980s – in particular Leon Wessels who was the head of the task team that investigated the salute.

An Afrikaner who had helped to change South Africa, not least by creating a new university, failed to change the culture of one of its campuses. The DNA of the Potchefstroom Campus – Afrikaner nationalism - had remained intact despite the merger. In fact, the trade union Solidarity and the civil liberties organisation Afriforum, which prioritise white Afrikaner interests, had in the year following the Nazi salute, strengthened their foothold on the Potchefstroom Campus and appeared to have pulled Eloff into their fold. Their common interest: the protection of Afrikaans. The political context of the time – one of racial polarisation and identity politics – provided the ideal breeding ground to do so. This could be a dangerous space for the campus to be in.

The insistence by the likes of Solidarity and Afriforum on the retention of the three-campus model, primarily for the sake of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction (the subtext is whiteness) did Eloff no favours. It seemed to prove to Eloff's critics that his intention with the model was simply to protect the cultural interests of the PU for CHE. Although it was a contributing factor, history suggested there were other reasons than Afrikaans for the model as well.

Eloff's legacy was a model that allowed the merger to take place by neutralising the worst opposition and overcoming the vast distances between the three campuses. But over time the campuses became stronger than the NWU rather than vice versa. Eloff could manage the model, but it removed him from the coal face where he has proven to be such a successful midwife to change. The model had been criticised for years for undermining the real birth of the NWU. Eloff had not acted on these messages.

As a result his legacy was tarnished.

A few months after his departure another error of judgment would make matters worse.

Theuns and Dan

It was a month or two before his appointment on 26 November 2004 that Prof Dan Kgwadi walked into the office of the Vice-Chancellor of the NWU.

In one hand he held the hand of a little boy. In the other was an application form for the position of Mafikeng Campus Rector.

"He spoke a few words to me," recalled Eloff's PA at the time, Lizette van Deventer. "Afterwards I said to Frans [du Preez], 'I have the new [Mafikeng] Rector's CV.'"

Eloff and Kgwadi were a strong team.

In the first four rough establishment years they faced angry students together. They addressed discontented staff together. They withstood ministerial pressure together. They believed in each other, in the Mafikeng Campus and in the NWU.

"I would not have been able to [do it] without him," Eloff said in an interview in December 2013. "Remember, he [Kgwadi] knows the [Mafikeng] environment, he was there,

12 July 2015
In a scathing attack on the Vice-Chancellor published in *Rapport*, Eloff calls Kgwadi the "biggest professional disappointment of my life".

16 July 2015
News24 reports a group of NWU students and workers have penned a letter to Eloff calling his criticism of Kgwadi "cowardly, racist and barbaric".

he was a member of the SRC, he was a troublemaker. He knows all the tricks. He is on Facebook. The students phone him."

Later, when Eloff announced his departure, he was unequivocal about Kgwadi: "We got to know each other very well in the trenches of the Mafikeng unrest in 2008 and we work like brothers. Sometimes he was the bad cop and I the good cop. When the politicians said: 'Let us just let these students free. They burnt a building…but let them free.' And he said: 'No.' And he must get credit for that. So he is quite capable …"

The praise was reciprocated. Earlier, in an interview with Kgwadi about an incident on the former Mankwe Campus during which Eloff was nearly assaulted, Kgwadi said: "I saw how brave he is. He has got to face a situation and he goes into it."

Eloff and Kgwadi could exchange stories on how they survived the first year or so in their respective jobs at the NWU. Both Eloff and Kgwadi encountered hostility as the merger arrived and unfolded; they were both branded sell-outs and experienced real opposition against the merger.

When the time came for the NWU to choose a new Vice-Chancellor Eloff backed Kgwadi but apparently not until the end. He was said to be concerned about how "autocratically" Kgwadi had managed the Mafikeng Campus

In the Council there was behind-the-scenes deal-making to ensure that the Council would select him and accommodate the other candidate, Potchefstroom Campus Rector Prof Herman van Schalkwyk. In the end Van Schalkwyk, in addition to being the Potchefstroom Rector, would also become deputy Vice-Chancellor for a term running parallel to that of Kgwadi's. But based on legal advice Van Schalkwyk's term could not be extended automatically after January 2016. If he wants to stay he will have to apply for the position of Potchefstroom Campus Rector again.

Kgwadi's selection set off various responses: Joy on the Mafikeng Campus and angst in certain corners of the Potchefstroom Campus. It also contributed to the souring of the relationship between Kgwadi and Van Schalkwyk. A group of Potchefstroom academics, including deans, directors and senior academics, had an emergency meeting with Eloff a day after Kgwadi's selection. This was the beginning of a process during which Kgwadi had to face ongoing public criticism – which was sometimes racist in the extreme. The attacks were not dissimilar from what Eloff had to endure when he first became the Rector of the former PU for CHE. Kgwadi's supposed opposition to Afrikaans and proposed changes to the three-campus model in favour of stronger unitary characteristics became the sticks to beat him with.

A particular concern was a draft document that was circulated and stated: "The Vice-Chancellor's expectation was that an essential outcome of the process was to develop a unitary university with an integrated culture, with socially integrated campuses, and an equitable allocation of resources."

By this time the relationship between Eloff and Kgwadi had unravelled to such an extent that Eloff said in an interview: "Dan Kgwadi is the biggest professional disappointment in my life. It is terrible to say that of your successor, but with Kgwadi I temporarily lost my judgment abilities."[16]

Eloff appeared to base his disillusionment and disappointment with Kgwadi on two things – his successor's questions about the organisational model and an investigation into a R10 million donation to the North West Higher Education Trust which Eloff authorised.

Kgwadi began questioning aspects of the NWU organisational model soon after he took office. It came at a time when the NWU had started reviewing its strategic plan and the Department of Higher Education and Training was phasing out its multi-campus subsidy. The high cost of the model (R75 million in management costs) had been one of its disadvantages.

But for Eloff the model had been a non-negotiable.[17]

The second setback in their relationship was the R10 million which Eloff authorised as a donation for the North West Higher Education Trust, an independent organisation to raise funds for the NWU and other higher education institutions in the North West Province.

What was particularly problematic about the money was that Dabiko, a consulting firm, acted on behalf of the trust and that Eloff was an associate at the firm after he left the NWU. Although Eloff said that he was not involved in any work of the trust – and there was no reason to believe that he was – any involvement with Dabiko was inappropriate.

In September 2014 Kgwadi announced a forensic investigation into the matter.[18] The investigation found no wrongdoing on Eloff's side, but all projects were halted and the money had to be paid back. A bitter polemic followed (see pages 246 and 247).

At the time of concluding this book the conflict between Eloff and Kgwadi had still not been resolved.

CHAPTER 26
PART I: TRANSFORMATION

"The pain of transformation has been postponed for too long."
— Prof Dan Kgwadi, Vice-Chancellor of the NWU [1]

Until October 2015 the old man standing on the edge of the Calvin[2], the leaping fountains in front of the Potchefstroom Campus's historical main building, did not appear to offend too many people. A revered Afrikaans poet and theologian, Totius or Prof JD du Toit, was immortalised for his many contributions to the Afrikaner's intellectual awakening. This included translating the Bible into Afrikaans and his role in founding the PU for CHE.

Although a product of his time, Japie du Toit, as he was also known, had a few things to account for – not least his Biblical justification of apartheid.[3] Hence, when the call came from a disgruntled group of students to topple him from his pedestal it was a protest against what he symbolised: Afrikaner domination and its perpetuation. Similarly, those lining up in front of Totius to protect him were standing up for what they believed was an unnecessary onslaught against someone who represented one of their few remaining cultural heirlooms, Afrikaans, and its use on the campus.

The clash had been coming for some time. But its forward momentum fed on the anger of students that has ripped across South African campuses over social and economic exclusion. It started with a campaign in March 2015[4] to remove a statue of British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes as a symbol of institutional racism. Galvanised by the toppling of Rhodes, students from Wits began a protest against fee increases –#FeesMustFall[5] – early in October, which spread in an unprecedented revolt to campuses across the country.

During this period – and preceded by a protracted period of internal institutional conflict at the NWU – ReformPuk was set up to represent a group of students on the Potchefstroom Campus. Their demands to remove Totius and Afrikaans as a medium of exclusion and an end to racism[6] were countered by campaigns, mainly on social media, such as #ProPuk and #BreaktheSilence, the latter a movement started by the Potchefstroom Campus SRC. These had the support of Afriforum.

The call to topple Totius

Students on the Vaal Triangle and the Mafikeng campuses participated in the protests. In Mafikeng the cafeteria, book stores and a clothing outlet were damaged. But despite challenges on the other campuses, the NWU transformation profile has been and continues to be measured in terms of the width and the breadth of change on the Potchefstroom Campus. Its historical whiteness and Afrikaansness, which has by and large remained intact, continues to be perceived as blocking access. Moreover, it remains the biggest of the NWU's three campuses. Of its 45 533 students, 24 472 are distance students, predominantly black, which has raised questions over the racial profile of the campus, although it was 28% black by 2015.

But the transformation of the NWU, and in particular the Potchefstroom Campus, was about much more than numbers. When he had to deal with the student protests (from various sides of the political spectrum) in October 2015, Prof Dan Kgwadi, then Vice-Chancellor, had been involved with the transformation issue for some time.

In April 2013 as the Rector of the Mafikeng Campus, he described the NWU's transformation conundrum as follows:

"I must say we have a big challenge. I have said to my friend Herman [van Schalkwyk, campus Rector Potch]: 'Herman, it is about time you do something… The picture and the

1 August 2015
Prof Johannes Froneman is appointed as Strategic Communication Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor of the NWU.

17 August 2015
Former Puk AfriForum Youth chairman and theology student Paul Maritz is elected SRC President on the Potchefstroom Campus.

"We demand that the statue of Totius be removed from the campus and that all spaces celebrating him and other Apartheid thinkers be renamed or alternatively that these spaces be properly contextualised by including visible information at these locations providing information on the role they played in oppressing black people. The Totius statue must be handled as a matter of critical urgency." – ReformPuk Manifesto, 13 October 2015

Photo: Susan Cilliers/*Beeld*

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FEES MUST FALL!

'We are gatvol with government'

Fiery rage! NWU Students demonstrating in Hendrik van Eck Boulevard, Vanderbijlpark, even after the fees-freez. Photo: Lazarus Dithagiso

Sewage still pours into dam - P4

Binne: Interessante nuus van Toeka tot Nou

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view that Mafikeng Campus is doing well, is good, but for anyone to think that the merger has done a good job, at the moment Potch is their indicator.' You cannot afford to have a dean structure that is …a single colour. …Amongst your vice-rectors …don't you have a black vice-rector you can put there? Change is not what we say. It is what we see."[7]

But as much as the Potchefstroom Campus is used to measure the NWU's transformational race profile, it is still only one campus. The other campuses also face diversity challenges. The Mafikeng Campus has started to attract white students, in particular those who live in nearby towns such as Lichtenburg and for whom this campus is geographically closer and therefore more affordable. In turn the Vaal Triangle Campus has to ensure that it continues to have a mix of black and white students.

In pursuit of equity

The National Working Group (NWG) which advised Asmal on how to reorganise higher education institutions in South Africa identified three characteristics of a new system. These were outlined in the report of the NWG to the Minister of Education in December 2001 as equity, sustainability and productivity.

The report explained: "A restructured higher education system should be socially just and equitable in its distribution of resources and opportunities, it should meet the requirements of long-term sustainability and it should enhance the productivity of the system through effectively and efficiently meeting the teaching, skills development and needs of the country."[8]

When the NWU merger was announced, these features translated into several reasons for the merger, which were communicated to the PU for CHE and the UNW when they were still in merger talks. Two of them stemmed from the NWG's equity goal, namely to overcome the "apartheid-induced divide between historically white and historically black institutions" and to "promote a more equitable staff and student body." If the merger succeeded on these two counts, the policy makers assumed, a new institution with a South African culture could be created. Arguably this is a narrow interpretation of transformation, a term which has evolved and continues to be contested. But it was the starting point for the government-induced merger to build something new.

It was clear from the start of the merger talks that the differences between the campuses would require smart footwork from negotiators. The outcome was the notion of "unity and diversity".

Eloff explained: "We realised early on that we have three vastly different campuses – not only in terms of history and campus culture, but also in demographics and geographical location. The choice was between trying to make all campuses exactly the same – in composition, culture and processes – or choose to allow campuses to retain a certain campus identity, but as an intrinsic part of one NWU. The Council wisely chose the latter…"[9]

But the NWU's three-campus organisational model, which had indisputable advantages during the establishment (2004-2008) and consolidation (2008-2013) phases of the merger, was seen as the nemesis of the institution's transformation efforts.

This applied to the Potchefstroom Campus in particular. Criticism of the model emerged repeatedly from various investigations over the years. The Phaahla task team in 2008 following destructive and prolonged campus protests on the Mafikeng Campus; the report of the CHE's Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in 2009; the Wessels report into matters of institutional culture and initiation in 2014 and the Van Vught international review of merger achievements, also in 2014 (see Probing the NWU on page 261). Notwithstanding the politics informing some of these reports the message in terms of transformation was consistent: the NWU model appeared to preserve the status quo so that Afrikaans interest, language and culture could prevail.

In its assessment of whether the NWU has achieved the merger objective of overcoming the apartheid-induced divide between a historically white and historically black institution, the Van Vught report adopted a nuanced but critical approach: "The panel accepts that the merger model adopted was not necessarily intended to subvert transformation, but to allow transformation in as ordered a manner as possible. However, if present management models and practices remain unchanged, there is a risk that they may serve as a shield for regressive interests and may eventually have a negative effect on furthering the transformation objectives of the university."

The report stated that there should be more emphasis on co-operation between the campuses to develop an integrated NWU culture. Focused, centrally led transformation

13 October 2015
ReformPuk holds its first mass meeting on the Potchefstroom Campus. In its manifesto it demands the removal of the statue of Afrikaans poet Totius, changing the admission policy, reforming the SRC and introducing parallel medium instruction.

14 October 2015
AfriForum Youth lodges a formal complaint against Kgwadi for allegedly inciting public violence. Kgwadi encouraged hundreds of students at a public meeting of #ReformPuk "to fight", they claim.

Mixed progress on transformation, says departing Council member

After eight years of working along with many to build this into a new university with a new culture I end my term with mixed feelings. There is a lot that has been achieved, but a lot still lies ahead in order for gains not to be reversed.

The university has a very strong leader. This was initially its weakness but it can also be its strength as we need the university to be independent. At times there was a feeling that the executive tended to run the Council and that in general the leadership of the Council resigned too much to the VC. This includes setting the agenda for priorities of Council and its subcommittees. Obviously serious oversight in this regard can be compromised. Overall, however, Council members have been inquisitive and in general have not been rubber-stamps. The university's awards in governance have been well deserved.

A stronger Council chairperson who is not too pliable needs to balance a strong executive leader to ensure that oversight is not perceived to be compromised. In the eight-year period, calmness has been restored in discussions at Council level and a few proposals have been returned by Council for further work. Key documents such as the institutional plan that have been drafted by the management have not really had to undergo major changes in the Council. This is due to efforts to convene Council workshops where policy matters are discussed. This practice of giving Council an opportunity to shape major documents of the life of the university is a key mark of the leadership of the VC that must be commended.

In the period under review the university held two transformation conferences. The first was one was a lot more heated with the merger still fresh and the old divides still more pronounced. The second one was almost a non-event as there was a lot more consensus. This colloquium resulted in the realisation that there is a need for a mechanism to track transformation. A transformation advisor is now in place. The question is how effective can she be in an environment where there is a belief that transformation is becoming an annoyance?

There is too much defensiveness about change. The reality is after eight years of a merger we will still need to review where we are and take things from there. There is a lack of internal activists to keep change on the agenda. This to me is the only reason why people see the transformation office as a ghost buster for all kinds of trivialities …by all sectors…This has come to annoy the VC in particular, who is being asked by some conservatives to rein in the advisor. The dual reportage lines of the advisor need to be maintained. There were people in Council who sought to change this on day one. This would have altered the wish of Council or at least its stated intention to have an advisor who can help with its job of oversight on transformation. The position of advisor was already a compromise.

The advisor also needs to take people with her. If she is seen as merely a troublemaker who is interfering in line functions, that may militate against her good work. The mooted transformation network must be supported to ensure that there is a network of champions monitoring change across the university and this is not just left to the advisor. The appointment of transformation liaison officers is a singular achievement that can propel change across the university.

The relationship between the advisor and the VC also needs attention. At the moment it is shrouded in a bit of mistrust and in my view there is no alignment of purpose. There must always be tension if a position is established as a change agent as there is no one who should be above scrutiny.

The key mechanism for Council must be to strengthen the dashboard (measuring progress against the transformation targets). This will assist Council to oversee whether there is progress without being lost in the detail. The focus by members on key areas of the dashboard is also crucial in making oversight a lot less superficial. At the moment members are often caught unaware when

faced with dashboard findings. The meetings are few and far between for an oversight role of this importance. The committee is too hands-off and will never achieve much if it does not open a mechanism for feedback by the university community. The advisor needs to look into this actively. The co-ordination between the work of related committees such as the equity committee is very poor. There should be constant comparing of notes between these committees in order not to confine transformation to the Transformation Oversight Committee. As part of its oversight, the TOC should develop a matrix of the transformation interventions made by other Council committees. For example the tender committee has to implement the BEE compliance as a transformation matter and feedback into the dashboard.

The language questions, the heart of coherence

The issue of the language question is divisive if not handled as a key change issue at the university. The recent report into the drowning incident on campus revealed that assurances of a growing multilingualism on campus are false. This must be addressed soon.

The debate about anchor campuses must be approached with extreme caution. While it was introduced with the good intention of balancing the language profile of campuses, it may be abused to stall change. Other issues highlighting coherence include the relationships amongst students of different campuses. The recent spat amongst SRC members does not augur well for the future of the university.

Finally, we need to ask the question of how the resources are going to be evenly distributed amongst the campuses to ensure innovation that can increase enrolments in particular. The debate we had today about engineering points to this outstanding matter of change. I hope it will receive attention.

Thank you to all of you for your co-operation in this committee. I wish you all the best ahead.

– Edited version of the last speech delivered by OJJ Tabane in his capacity as the chairperson of the Transformation Oversight Committee, 3 May 2012

strategies to address "diversifying race and gender access at all campuses of the university and attention to the exclusionary effects of the language policy" could help with the creation of a new culture, according to the report.

Similarly it found that the merger objective of achieving a more equitable staff and student body had not yet been achieved. Of particular concern was that racial imbalances in the student profile still existed and that the university had to meet its own targets. In terms of these targets there should be 30% black students on the Potchefstroom Campus by 2020, 30% white students on the Vaal Triangle Campus and 10% white students on the Mafikeng Campus. The international panel said it was concerned that these targets could also be interpreted as "racial caps".

So how did the NWU arrive at these figures? The answer lies in the NWU's approach to transformation.

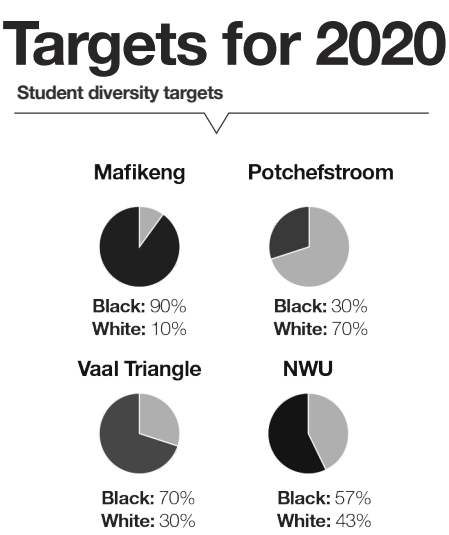
According to a report on the NWU's transformation trajectory, 2004-2013, the NWU institutional plans have over the years shown that the university community agreed from the outset "to pursue a comprehensive transformation agenda by means of which a healthy balance was struck between efficiency and effectiveness on the one hand, and equity and redress on the other hand". Furthermore the Council and management believed that the NWU's core business and its quest to find best practices bolstered transformation endeavours nationally.[10]

OJJ Tabane, when he became the chairperson of the Council's Transformation Committee in 2009, questioned the progress that had been made in terms of the NWU's broader but softer approach.

He said, "I could not put my finger on what the previous transformation committee was busy with. So I said, 'Look, let us have a colloquium…and assess where we are.' And then we had that as a big thing. I think it was a day or two... Everybody came together to assess where we are. And we… realised that five years prior there was a meeting of that nature where we looked at transformation, and the general consensus was there was not much movement. So we need

14 October 2015
The SRC of the Potchefstroom Campus opens a Facebook Page Breek die Stilte/Break the Silence in response to ReformPuk.

15 October 2015
The NWU distances itself from Steve Hofmeyr's singing of the old version of the national anthem Die Stem at the Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival.



to do something new."[11]

The outcome was that Eloff and Tabane were sent off to find a solution that they could present to the Council.[12]

Tabane wanted the NWU to appoint a transformation director in the institutional office. Eloff recalls his response: "I said, 'No'…immediately the responsibility to transform is with that individual. No-one else would do it. He or she would become Mr or Mrs Transformation. We fought and fought and fought. Eventually we reached a compromise."

The compromise was that a transformation officer would be appointed for three years to support the Council and management on transformation. At the same time the Council would approve diversity targets for each campus.

Initially Tabane wanted the target to be 40% black students (English) and 60% Afrikaans on the Potchefstroom Campus. But Eloff wanted 30% black students (English). For him the 30-70 breakdown was about Afrikaans. He was guided by the late Prof Jakes Gerwel (1946-2013), the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Cape from 1987 to 1994 and the director in the office of former President Nelson Mandela (1994 to 1999). A few years earlier he had been the head of an informal task team that investigated Afrikaans at tertiary level in South Africa. Eloff referred to their conversations and that Gerwel had highlighted international literature which showed that the language tipping point was 30%. An international language such as English would therefore push out a minority language once the English speakers at an institution surpass 30%. If the growth of English would continue unhindered the minority language would eventually be replaced.[13]

This was how the Tabane-Eloff compromise was formulated in the Transformation Oversight Committee's report to the council: "Student demography targets do not need to reflect broad demographic representation." Instead… "an approach of a minimum degree of diversity" is to be followed of which the principle is that any organisation needs sufficient levels of diversity so as not to render it exclusive and exclusionary. The principle balances the Constitutional principle of the right of access (to higher education) with the principle of receiving (higher) education in a language of choice, where reasonably practicable (Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996, section 29(2)).

So in 2010 a transformation officer for the NWU was accepted in exchange for Afrikaans on the Potchefstroom Campus.[14]

Dr Ingrid Tufvesson

Dr Ingrid Tufvesson was appointed as the Executive Advisor: Transformation and Diversity in 2011. According to her she was attracted to the NWU because of its potential to become a "place of providing us with a true picture of reconciliation and transformation".

Tufvesson was bold in her job interview. She encouraged the interviewing panel to think about who they were employing.

"I told them if you are looking for somebody to say everything is right when I know everything is wrong do not employ me. I said, 'If you are expecting to have someone who is silent because they are afraid or whatever don't employ me…' "

Although she was informed promptly that the NWU wanted to make her an offer, it later emerged that the decision to appoint her was not a unanimous one. Whether Eloff supported her appointment is not clear.

Theo Venter, an advisor to Eloff during his tenure, said it was a mistake to appoint Tufvesson and that there was a conflict, from the outset about whom she should report to. He recalls that Eloff wanted her to report to him; she did not. It caused the break.[15] However, the Transformation

19 October 2015
The first of the nationwide #FeesMustFall student protests against a proposed hike in tuition fees start at Wits University, UCT and Rhodes University. Thousands of students barricade the entrances to their respective universities.

20 October 2015
A violent clash between protesting students and the riot police at the gates of Parliament in Cape Town makes national headlines.

"I told them if you are looking for somebody to say everything is right when I know everything is wrong, do not employ me. I said, 'If you are expecting to have someone who is silent because they are afraid or whatever don't employ me…' " Ingrid Tufvesson, Former Executive Advisor: Transformation and Diversity. Photo: Maclez Studio

Oversight Committee, in its original report to the Council, suggested that the appointee support both the Council and management.[16]

In the minutes of a Council meeting on 23 September 2011 the issue came up. It was stated that Tufvesson "was placed in an untenable position in terms of her dual role as advisor to both Council and Management and therefore expecting of her to be both advisor to the Vice-Chancellor as her line manager, but simultaneously have an oversight role over him as advisor to Council. This could in future create structural tension between the Vice-Chancellor and the Transformation Oversight Committee."

At the same meeting the Council was "assured that there was no resistance against change…Extensive progress had already been made towards transformation and the maturity of the organisation was directly linked to the ability to hear views that were challenging and different."[17]

The relationship between Eloff and Tufvesson deteriorated.

For Eloff, a technocrat who felt comfortable as a manager rather than an academic, transformation was defined in terms of a series of measurable outcomes. In terms of these broad performance indicators, he believed the institution was on track.

The working definition of transformation at the NWU, which was accepted at the 2010 transformation colloquium, was: "Transformation is a ([n] 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."[18]

When Eloff left in 2014 he identified the NWU's approach to transformation as one of the reasons why he believed the merger was a success. He said: "Faced with a task of establishing a new merged university, and its transformation, the 2010 workshop of all internal stakeholders informed Council's decision to define transformation wider than the popular view and constituted a framework with ten elements: access, success, equity, diversity, increased unity, resource allocation, alignment, quality, redress and student experience. It is interesting that, after much debate, Higher Education South Africa adopted the same comprehensive approach."[19]

In addition, he was a facilitator. His approach to transformation given the NWU definition was less direct, less hurried and part of a bigger picture.

Tufvesson was the opposite. She had an academic grounding in transformation and was an activist. She was uncompromising about the urgency of and the manner in which a transformation plan had to be carried out.

For Tufvesson, transformation went beyond policies and statistics. She wanted to mainstream transformation so that every employee had to engage with and pursue it. It was as much about everyday experiences as about measurables. She believed she was making a difference to the wellbeing of people at grassroots level. She noted, "I used to go to talk with students at the faculty of education and when I came into those discussions people – I am talking about white students – were ready to flatten me. When I left those same kids were having conversations with me up until today. So this university can say what they want to. My being here actually started black students and white students talking to each other."[20]

However, to directly interact with people in the manner in which Tufvesson believed she should, would be to stretch the divisions between the Institutional Office and the campuses. A senior employee stated that Eloff appeared to have wanted the transformation advisor to remain in the Institutional Office.

"This person should not have connections with the campuses…with some of his management and governance structures, for example. That frustrated the hell out of Ingrid. That was one of the key things that they did not see eye to eye because [she] understood her role as more one of engagement, to go out talk to people, get information first-hand – not information that will be fed to you. [She wanted] first-hand information to get an accurate and honest sense… picture of this transformation you have to tackle…[The relationship] got so bad that requests to travel to campuses to have meetings were not approved. So it was like: '[No you will stay here. You will sit here]'. And you don't speak to people."[21]

Eloff and Tufvesson also had clashes at management meetings and at least one *bosberaad* about whether and how the NWU was dealing with transformation. Those who know Eloff said these were among the rare occasions that he lost his temper because Tufvesson would openly challenge him. She would say to him: "But, Theuns, I told you…Remember when you interviewed me?....I told you I was going to tell you exactly what I think even if you don't agree with me."

21 October 2015
Tensions run high on the Potchefstroom Campus during a stand-off between white and black students over threats to remove the statue of Totius.

22 October 2015
The Mafikeng Campus is barricaded after #FeesMustFall protests and this results in 43 students being arrested for public violence.

Eloff sent the following email to all staff about Tufvesson:

Dear colleagues

I have to bring to your attention that the ways of the NWU and Dr Ingrid Tufvesson, Executive Advisor: Transformation and Diversity, have parted. From 31 January 2013 she is no longer employed by the NWU after the NWU had terminated her services.

We have arrived at this point after following an intensive road of discussions, exchanges of correspondence and mediation over the past few months.

Dr Tufvesson had her own style and approach, which were such that I had to warn her early on during her appointment that her office was not to become the "complaints office" for staff and students. This improved, but towards the end of 2011 I had to meet with her and the chairperson of the Council's Transformation Oversight Committee, Mr OJJ Thabane, to resolve serious problems in her understanding of her terms of reference. She could not accept that she was an advisor to the management and Council of the NWU and that she could not start initiatives and projects on her own.

What resulted was a list of priorities, to which she agreed. Unfortunately in October 2012 I had to report to the Transformation Oversight Committee of Council that most of her targets had not been achieved. One example hereof was the so-called transformation dashboard, which in the end was developed by other colleagues.

Her style, approach and some public utterances gave rise to serious questions regarding her role as advisor to management and Council. As a consequence, in September 2012, certain pertinent operational questions were put to her in writing, to which she responded either inadequately or by merely denying it. Shortly after that she started preferring no longer to communicate directly with her line manager but rather to do so through an external attorney. This resulted in our becoming involved in a drawn-out process in which a mediator was also involved. Management put various proposals on the table to address the situation, but it was apparent that she had an uncompromising attitude with regard to her style and approach, or simply did not react to some of the proposals.

After the passage of almost five months, management finally concluded that the relationship of trust had been damaged irrevocably and that the way she fitted into the position was not conducive to meeting the strategic objectives of the NWU. Her employment was therefore terminated, with full recognition of her total contractual commitment until May 2014.

The work that had been done in the past while by many colleagues had given new momentum to transformation at the NWU. This momentum has to be maintained. I have therefore appointed Prof Marlene Verhoef (Executive Advisor: Strategy and Projects) as the NWU's representative in HESA's forum for transformation managers. Furthermore, transformation maintains its prominent position as the first element of the Institutional Plan, with specific targets and deadlines. I assume the same responsibility for the execution hereof as for the rest of the Institutional Plan and request that all managers and staff in terms of their task agreements should throw their renewed weight behind the transformation objectives of the NWU.

I hope that this statement will put into perspective any questions that may have arisen regarding this matter, as well as many rumours and false reports.

Our best wishes accompany Dr Tufvesson during the rest of her career.

Theuns Eloff

Vice-Chancellor

** At the time of concluding this book this email was still part of an ongoing dispute between Tuvfesson and the NWU.*

Tufvesson believed that the last straw was her involvement in supporting the mother and family of Thabang Godwin Mokhoang, who drowned during a fruit festival for first-year students (see Chapter 20). She had publicly raised questions over the circumstances under which he had drowned."[23]

Eventually Tufvesson's departure became a public spat. In an article in the *Mail & Guardian* she said many staffers who had been labelled as "difficult people", were "pushed out" by the university for raising concerns similar to hers – "some white but overwhelmingly and predominantly black".[24]

Eloff, in turn said the "trust" between him and Tufvesson had been lost and that the university was serious about transformation. "We have staff equity targets [and] we do lose people, white and black, like every university [but] we don't see a trend of people who leave saying 'we are being victimised.'" One of the senior staff members described the situation: "I think she had a very important role to play. Remember Council discussed her position... Council was vouching for her and supporting her. However I do think that [she] tended not to think about her way of working and then she tended not to pay attention to all the feathers she was ruffling along the way."

Eventually after both sides exchanged legal blows – Tufvesson for the email that was sent and Eloff for statements she had made about Makhoang's drowning – the NWU paid her a severance package of R1,229 million.[25]

Eloff continued to believe that the university had advanced well in terms of transformation. In May 2014 at his farewell functions he said: "Transformation is a task that will never end – the same as quality. But change is inevitable, and should be managed so that it serves the good of the university and the country. As a university, we have made progress with our 10 elements of transformation, but much remains to be done. The important thing is to realise that transformation is not an end in itself, but should always support the core business of the NWU and the interests of all the people of South Africa."

Before his departure in 2014 he did say the Potchefstroom Campus had to do more in terms of transformation and faced a real challenge regarding Afrikaans, which he fully supported as a medium of instruction.

The NWU has marched forward on many fronts first, during its early years. Many statistics back this up. But because a definition cannot always capture the essence of a process such as transformation, there will at any given time be disagreement over an institution's state of transformedness.

The NWU has been no different.

■■■

The panel which evaluated the merger in 2014 consisted of international and South African members. They are at the back from left Ian Bunting, Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) , Dr Barney Pityana, former Vice-Chancellor of Unisa, Dr Tobern Rasmussen, Denmark and Dr Nico Cloete, CHET. In front are Prof Lynn Meek, Australia, Prof Frans van Vught, Netherlands (chairperson), and Prof Mala Singh, former member of the HEQC and the CHE. Photo: NWU Institutional Office

Probing the NWU

During the first years of the NWU, it was the focus of several investigations. Some of them were Ministerial probes while others were self-evaluations. Although their purpose and emphasis varied and there were suggestions of political meddling, their findings still overlapped in many respects. In all the reports, transformation and the impact on the institution's culture were raised as a concern and associated with the three-campus organisational model. Some of these reports are mentioned in other chapters and are therefore only briefly touched on in this section.

Phaahla task team 2008

The Education Minister at the time, Naledi Pandor, appointed Dr Joe Phaahla in 2008 to investigate the reasons why the Mafikeng Campus experienced several interruptions in its academic activities due to protests. It also had to probe how the merger was doing. Other members of the task team were Dr Nico Cloete, Dr Jon Lewis, Dr Yvonne Dladla Mashupye Kgaphola and Ms L Vilikazi.

The manner in which the task team was appointed caused conflict between Pandor and Eloff. According to the Vice-Chancellor the aim of the task team was to get rid of him. One of the task team members did not support the findings of the report.

The recommendations of the task team basically remained just recommendations, but the education officials at the time believed the task team had helped to get academic activities in Mafikeng back on track.[26]

Stumpf report 2008

Higher education consultant Dr Rolf Stumpf evaluated North-West University's management model. He found the three-campus model was the appropriate model at the time, but some challenges had to be addressed (see chapters 13, 14 and 25).

Higher Education Quality Committee report 2009

All higher education institutions in South Africa had to undergo audits conducted by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE), which conducts institutional audits in terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997. The National Qualification Framework Act of 2008 recognises the CHE as the quality council for higher education and training.

From 16 to 20 March 2009, Prof Niek Grové, registrar of the University of Pretoria (UP), led a group of senior academics on a visit to the campuses of the NWU. They were Prof John Cooke from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Kenneth Netshiombo from the Durban University of Technology, Prof Wendy Kilfoil from UP, Prof Beatrys Lacquet from Wits, Prof Maureen Robinson from the Cape Peninsula University of Technolgoy, Prof Agyapong Gyekye of the University of Venda and Dr Julie Jackson from La Trobe University in Australia.

These academics, a pro Vice-Chancellor, five deans and one director, had come to scrutinise the quality of the work done at the NWU. For the Vice-Chancellor and the senior management team to agree to the audit in 2007 was courageous. It was not even four years after the establishment of the NWU and much still had to be done to consolidate a difficult union. By the time the audit committee visited the three campuses in March 2009, the Mafikeng Campus was still smouldering after nearly a year of unrest in 2008. Moreover the highly critical and controversial Phaahla report had just been published.

The NWU had to compile a comprehensive pack of information on the institution to submit to the audit committee. The self-evaluation report, appendices and supporting documentation were submitted to the HEQC in December 2008. Subsequently about 408 people were interviewed, including Council members, the Vice-Chancellor and members of his executive team, academics and academic support staff, administrative staff members, full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students, civic and community representatives, as well as alumni.

The executive summary of the report was published in September 2010. It contained 18 recommendations which required attention and seven commendations.

According to the conclusion in the summary, the NWU was doing well in its core business: "NWU was found to be building on strength in the teaching and learning arena and developing a stronger research profile to become a balanced teaching and learning institution. These functions, and the interpretation of community engagement as the implementation of expertise, are generally well acquitted." The summary states that there were areas for improvement but that the institution was aware of these.

However, there were several areas which concerned the committee. These included programme alignment, access and the lack of diversity at the different campuses.

The report says a "more comprehensive process of curriculum transformation and innovative ways of addressing the language question" were required. In addition, the Potchefstroom and Mafikeng campuses both needed interventions.

Measures had to be developed to "deal with the slow pace of transformation at the Potchefstroom Campus, in particular, in terms of student and staff composition, institutional culture and curriculum in order to increase access to all sectors of the population".

In terms of the Mafikeng Campus, the NWU had to ensure that the campus "is fully an integral part" of the merged institution, "enjoying an equivalence of provision and quality of education, accommodation and services with the other campuses".

As an outsider looking in, one could argue that given the circumstances at the time of the audit at the NWU, the committee's findings were to be expected.

However, Vice-Chancellor Eloff says that he was informed that the NWU report, as compiled by the audit committee, was much more positive than the version that was published in 2010.[27]

This was confirmed in a letter from a committee member to Dr Lis Lange, the executive director of quality assurance of the HEQC, questioning the discrepancies in the two versions.[28]

The letter starts by explaining the process: "During the week-long site visit and the visits to the various campuses of NWU, the panel gathered information based on the audit criteria and provided oral feedback during their last meeting. This oral feedback represented

the panel's consensus on the findings of the audit and was the basis on which the initial audit report was drafted."

It continues to state: "…[d]uring our meeting in November 2009, a number of changes were implemented throughout the process of compiling the final report often without the knowledge and/or approval of the panel. They said changes ranged from the meaning of words being replaced to the number and wording of commendations and recommendations being altered. Many of the initial commendations were merely integrated into the body of the report without receiving the recognition intended by the panel."

It goes on: "Given the fact that the audit is designed to be a peer reviewed evidence-based process, it is problematic when the report is amended by parties who were not involved in the original process and when no reasons for the amendments are provided. This undermines the legitimacy of the process and the panel, as well as the reliability of the report. I therefore respectfully suggest that the HEQC desist from this practice in future."

The HEQC audit would not be the last report with a controversial twist.

Van Vught report 2014

In January 2014 an international panel of higher education experts visited the Mafikeng, Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses to probe "the extent to which the initial merger objectives had been accomplished, and secondly to evaluate the extent to which the NWU's mission elements had been achieved."

The panel was Theuns Eloff's idea. He expected positive findings. They would serve as the basis for a fresh vision, mission and strategic agenda for the NWU before he left the institution. Eloff hoped that the panel would find that the merger was a success.

The members were: Prof Frans van Vught, president of the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities, 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 of the LH Martin Institute of Higher Education Leadership and Management at the University of Melbourne, Prof Mala Singh, former member of the HEQC and CHE, and Prof Ian Bunting, former chief director in the South African Department of Education.

But like the HEQC audit, which was done on the back of the Mafikeng unrest, the timing would not favour the observations of the panel. At the time of the panel's visit in January 2014, the reception and introduction programme on the Potchefstroom Campus was in full swing. The way the first–year students were dressed and were moving around the campus in regimental format was noticed and commented on by some panel members. But worse, the drama around first years who appeared to be making Nazi-style gestures was about to erupt.

Be that as it may, the findings were not what Eloff had expected. In fact, he describes the outcome of the panel's work as one of the three worst moments in the decade during which he occupied the Vice-Chancellor's office.

He believes the panel did not answer the question of whether the NWU has succeeded in becoming a balanced teaching-learning and research institution.

According to Eloff the panel changed their findings and would have fallen apart if these views were not reflected in the final report. Van Vught told the Council about what had happened when it discussed the report.[29]

Wessels report 2014

The most controversial of all the reports was compiled by a task team lead by Dr Leon Wessels after *Beeld* newspaper reported the use of a gesture by first-year students that resembled the Nazi Sieg Heil salute (see Chapter 20).

The university Council appointed the Wessels task team to investigate initiation practices associated with the welcoming and induction of first-year students. The other members were Dr Bismark Tyobeka, Adv Rehana Rawat and Prof Somadoda Fikeni. Another member, Rhoda Khadalie, resigned due to work commitments.

Eloff, in anticipation of this report, also said he expected a "political" document.[30]

In the end the Potchefstroom Campus rejected the report and the Council accepted the document as only one of the inputs that it would use to compile a final report for the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande.

PART II: AFRIKAANS

"..is it not so that even efforts or intentions to give progressive content to communities defined by language in essence amount to reaching back into the past, a reactionary moment in a modernising society? And that it applies in double measure to Afrikaansness given the political history of the language?"

— Prof Jakes Gerwel, Rapport, 8 August 2004

Afrikaans is an inextricable part of the transformation history of the NWU. In fact, the safeguarding of the language was non-negotiable for the PU for CHE during merger negotiations.

Eloff, in anticipation of sweeping changes, decided to be a guardian of the language. And he took the decision before he became the Rector of the PU for CHE: "I remember before I knew about the merger, just before I applied [for the position of Rector]…I said: '[I] know if I become Rector history will show that I was the guy who allowed that CHE be dropped. I do not want to be the guy who allowed Afrikaans to be dropped."[30]

At the time the use of Afrikaans as a scientific language at university had been a longstanding concern for many of the language's speakers. They felt the negotiators of South Africa's political transition did not adequately secure its Constitutional protection.

In 1996 President Mandela, with his remarkable ability to tune into concerns at grassroots level, said at Stellenbosch University (SU): "It surely must be possible in a system with more than 20 universities to come to an agreement that there would be at least one university whose main task would be to promote the sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic medium."[31]

But it took another five years before someone acted on his statement. In 2001 Asmal investigated the suggestion by appointing Prof Gerwel to report on the place of Afrikaans in the higher education system. The Gerwel committee recommended that two universities, the SU and the PU for CHE, be tasked with the continued responsibility of developing Afrikaans as a scientific language.[32]

Prof Andreas van Wyk and Prof Carools Reinecke, rectors of SU and the PU for CHE respectively, were keen to accept this task, but the rectors at other historically Afrikaans universities (HAUs) objected. A valuable opportunity was wasted.[33]

In 2002 Prof Chris Brink, at the time the Vice-Chancellor of the SU, stepped forward and suggested that the five HAUs[34] publish a position paper on Afrikaans as medium of instruction. The central point was this: the primary function of a university centres on knowledge and not identity. [35]

They stated: "We believe that the primary task of a university revolves around knowledge: the creation of knowledge, dissemination of knowledge, and application of knowledge, within the broad context of social involvement.

We see Afrikaans as a national asset. As such, and as with the other official languages, the interests of Afrikaans is a shared responsibility of the broad South African community, not only that of universities.

As HAUs we are individually and collectively committed to retain and promote Afrikaans as a university language. This cannot and should not be the responsibility of only some of the HAUs.

We believe that Afrikaans can serve as an instrument for empowerment of a large section of the disadvantaged groups of our country.

We acknowledge the realities of a multilingual society and university environment and reflect these in the practicalities of language policy on our campuses. We take seriously our responsibility to deliver graduates that are well prepared for the world of work, nationally and internationally.

Within a multilingual context, there is room for different strategies and models for the retention and promotion of Afrikaans as medium of instruction at university. Depending on the context and environment of a university, this includes the use of Afrikaans as primary medium of instruction as

23 October 2015
President Jacob Zuma confirms university fees will be frozen in 2016.

29 October 2015
The Mafikeng Campus management announces the campus will remain closed until exams start on 16 November. Prof Kgwadi says a large quantity of petrol and a large number of petrol bombs were found on the Mafikeng Campus.

well as dual- and parallel medium instruction.

We will continue to serve the interest of Afrikaans in our various ways, each in accordance with policy determined by the specific university senate and council, and in this regard commit ourselves to dialogue and co-operation within the Higher Education Sector."

Eloff was one of the signatories to the position paper.

Amid the intensifying pressure on Afrikaans he was thinking of ways to protect Afrikaans in a multilingual context.

Eloff decided to investigate the international best practices for dealing with multilingualism. He found his answer: interpreters. They were used by global organisations such as the United Nations, which operates across borders and in several languages. It was his point of departure.

"I told Wannie Carstens [Director of the School of Languages]. He said it won't work. It is too expensive. Fortunately I am stubborn."

The university investigated and the system of simultaneous interpretation was introduced whereby students who needed interpretation could use headsets as they listened to an interpreter who sat in the classroom.

"Even if we did not merge, Potch would have done it. The difficult decision [post-merger] is how many [modules] to interpret. My feeling is it should be in line with the 30% black students we want. It will have to be managed," Eloff said in 2012.[36]

Remaining Afrikaans and Christian

But first the place of Afrikaans at the NWU had to be secured.

Afrikaans was embedded in two of the PU for CHE's six preconditions for entering into the merger. The protection of its institutional culture and ethos as well as the maintenance of its traditional support base or niche market was built, among others, on Afrikaans. The PU for CHE had a strong support base, both in terms of current and prospective parents and sources of financing from the Afrikaans-speaking community.[37] On the side of the UNW it was also a non-negotiatble. It wanted to scrap Afrikaans "as the sole medium of instruction". On 6 September 2002 at a UNW assembly on the merger, Afrikaans and an emphasis on Christian principles [by the new institution] were rejected, among others, as obstacles to access.

Before the merger was final Eloff had already had to prepare the PU for CHE for the possibility that the Christian character of the university might change. In fact, shortly after he joined the PU for CHE he wanted the CHE to be dropped from the name (see Chapter 9).

The Christian character was about more than the institution's name. It was about a formal philosophical framework from which academic endeavours were approached, including a compulsory module for all students on practising science grounded in a Christian vantage point.

For some staff it meant opening meetings and lectures by reading from the Bible and saying prayers. But it also involved a strong emphasis on Christian values.

Eloff said the thinking was not to ask for a Christian university because even if Mafikeng agreed with it, they still would have had to convince Asmal.

"There was no way he would accept it," Eloff said.

The approach was therefore to align the new university's (Christian) values with the Constitution, which would allow the freedom for individual lecturers to practise science in accordance with their Christian faith.

But for many staff the removal of the CHE and what it represented remained a radical move. It was the end of a Christian university. They resented the negotiators for not appearing to have opposed this development.[38]

But PU for CHE representatives emphasised that the CHE could continue to live on. Still, it was not a seamless transition. Initially the NWU's new Council opened meetings with prayer, but some members objected. Later on the use of prayers at the start of Council meetings resumed. When the university entered the consolidation phase, many of the practices that were used before by the former PU for CHE were reinstated, including scripture reading and prayer at Senate and Council meetings and at graduation ceremonies. Nonetheless, for some staff members the loss was a significant one in terms of how they approached their teaching.

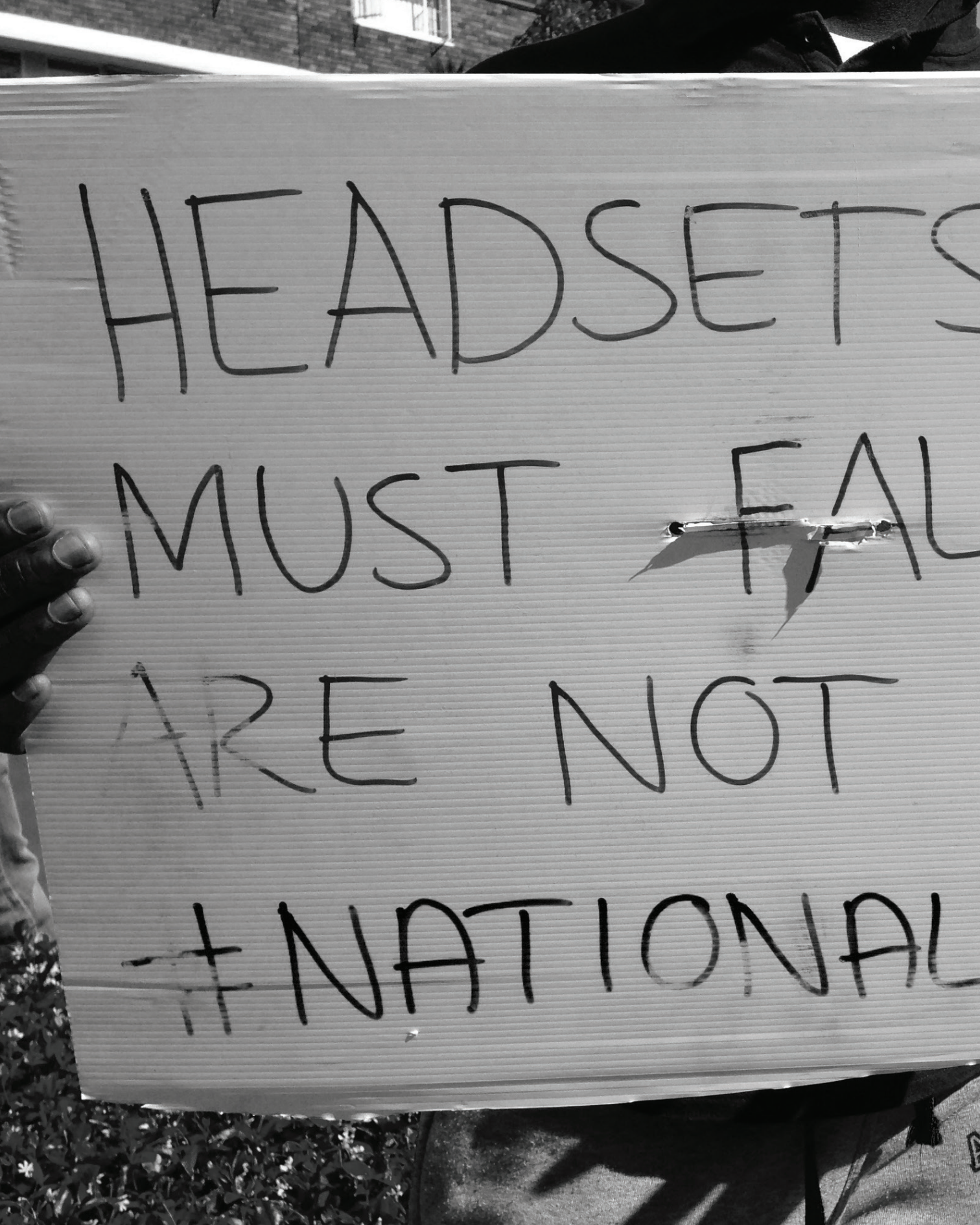
Although the UNW did not want the university to formally adopt a Christian ethos, it was still an institution which used Christian practices.

Steven Langtry, a former employee of the NWU who worked on both the Potchefstroom and the Mafikeng campuses, said the fact that the Christian character came up during the talks was ironic.

"…Mafikeng was a very religious campus. They pray a lot there. More than they pray in Potchefstroom…I thought that

29 October 2015
Both the SRC of the Potchefstroom Campus and ReformPuk hand over petitions to the NWU management concerning issues such as racism and language.

30 October 2015
The executive committee of the NWU Council announces it has been decided that parallel-medium classes will be implemented from the beginning of 2016 in large first-year modules on the Potchefstroom Campus.


HEADSETS
MUST FAL
ARE NOT
NATIONAL

"We have nothing against Afrikaans, but we want English as well." – Honours student in Economics, protesting in front of the main gate of the Potchefstroom Campus, at the end of 2015, against the system of simultaneous interpreting. Photo: Cornia Pretorius

was the least important issue to fight about."

With the Christian character settled, Afrikaans remained on the merger agenda.

The convocation of the PU for CHE and the Bond van Oud-Pukke (alumni society) stated in their response to the merger on 19 September 2002[39] that the new institution should continue to use Afrikaans as scientific language on the Potchefstroom Campus, but within the context of multilingualism. A single-medium institution would be untenable.

Later on a task team appointed by the Senate stated that the fundamental principle of the language policy was that Afrikaans-speaking students should be able to study in Afrikaans from a B degree up to PhD level. The fact that the Afrikaans and Christian foundation of the PU for CHE created a niche market was again emphasised.[40]

On 3 October 2002 following a meeting between representatives of the PU for CHE, the NWU and Asmal, Eloff wrote the following in a confidential letter to the PU for CHE Council: "What struck us about the UNW delegation was the strong emphasis on transformation and the necessity of leaving behind the 'baggage of the past' (read 'Afrikaans and Christian') in the establishment of the new institution. They are really afraid that the new institution will merely be an umbrella over the two current universities and that nothing more is going to change. It was clear to us that the actual negotiations on the really important matters have actually just started." [41]

Langtry also recalls that discussions around language took time.

"I think the big break around language happened at the Indaba Hotel [in Johannesburg]…we had a breakthrough on the language thing because our position from Mafikeng was a very hardline approach, which said: 'English was the dominant language. It was an international language. It should become the language of the new university.' And Potchefstroom was saying, 'No, Afrikaans is a scientific language. It has been used academically. It has a history of being published.' What they proposed was to maintain Afrikaans and add the capacity to develop other African languages. So, the whole idea of simultaneous interpretation came from them…And I think the way that argument was settled was more from a personal level because you would have these intense meetings during the day and then during dinner and over dinner you would talk on a more personal level about your experience with language and being excluded on the basis of language. So I think that was how the language thing was settled."

By the end of October 2002 Eloff, in a memorandum on the road ahead, noted the progress.[42] He wrote that each campus would have its own language policy:

"On the Potchefstroom Campus it would be Afrikaans (in line with discussions at the time with other HAUs), on the Vaal Triangle double or parallel medium Afrikaans and English and in Mmabatho (Mafikeng) English.

"The Joint Operational Team reached consensus on the language policy at a bosberaad in April 2003.

"The Council of the NHEI will, in concurrence with the Senate, develop its own language policy, in line with Ministerial policy. The NHEI will leave room for a variety of languages as mediums of administration and of instruction, in order to improve access as well as a 'sense of belonging'.

"This means that: The NHEI's Council will leave room for campus language plans to make provision for a specific language or languages to be 'the primary, but not the sole medium of instruction'.

The language needs of students and the realities on the different campuses will be the main determinants to contextualise and operationalise the NHEI's language policy in campus language plans.

At administrative points of service, spoken and written communication will be functionally multi-lingual.

Setswana and SeSotho will be promoted as scientific languages.

Languages as fields of academic study will be promoted.

Simultaneous interpreting as an international best practice for a possible long-term solution for language diversity will be investigated and piloted."

Despite the agreement on and operationalisation of a language policy, a lack of trust and tensions between people from different worlds did not always mean that the implementation was without hiccups.

The way Afrikaans was used as an institutional language was often a source of conflict in many meetings. Some of the founding Council members described it as a "huge issue".

One of them explains: "The other big thing was around language on the Council and interpretation and so on. The problem in the end was 95% spoke in English, but they insisted on having the guys to do the translation and that was a matter of principle to them. At one stage we did manage to say it was a waste of money but then somehow in terms

1 November 2015
NWU management obtains an interdict to prohibit intimidation and the limiting of free access to the campus. The interdict is sent to representatives of ReformPuk.

2 November 2015
Exams start on the Potchefstroom and Vaal Triangle campuses.

of the Constitution it came back again."

Yet some Council members appreciated the effort of colleagues to overcome potential language difficulties. Dr Ngoato Takalo, formerly UNW Rector and later vice-principal of the NWU, said some of the Council members struggled with English, but they tried, but there were others who did not want to speak it.

"There was this anger. This attitude."

Leon Wessels, who was the PU for CHE chairperson before the merger, recalled a day when a Council member refused to continue using the Tswana interpreter because of a poor-quality translation.[43]

"That type of behavior undermined the fundamental point of departure of accommodating each other and not to allow Afrikaans, as was the complaint, to dominate, but to promote multilingualism. It was plain small-minded. I was offended," Wessels said.

In addition, at an institutional level, non-Afrikaans speakers would take offence when Afrikaans speakers would revert to their language. They would feel marginalised and even if they could follow the conversation, they felt that they "might miss some subtle nuances and then did not have the confidence to fully participate".

As the merger progressed staff from the Potchefstroom, the Vaal Triangle and Mafikeng campuses also had to begin interacting. The language policy was discussed. A staffer remembers one such discussion when an Afrikaans speaker addressed a colleague from Mafikeng: "In this merger I want to feel that my Afrikaans, which is important to me…I want to put it in your hands and sleep peacefully because [you] will take care of my Afrikaans. That is how I want to feel in this merger."[44]

Afrikaans survives

In the end Afrikaans managed to survive the merger and is one of many languages that are used on the Potchefstroom Campus.

The university's flexible language policy, which was last reviewed in 2012 and provides for the use of other languages, appears to be opening access.

In 2004 only 24 class periods were interpreted. Within 10 years the figure had grown to1 800 periods.

In 2014 the majority of 674 undergraduate modules were interpreted. Only in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, as well as in languages, were certain modules not being interpreted. Furthermore interpretation was also taking place from English to Afrikaans in fields of study such as politics in which the staff and the majority of students were English. Some postgraduate modules were in English only and the foundation phase in the education faculty was also translated into Tswana.

In February 2010 the NWU received two awards at the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) annual multilingualism awards. It was the winner in the interpretation and translation category. In the feedback received at the time, the NWU Language Directorate was described as a world leader in the field of language support service. Surveys have also shown that students rate the interpretation services highly.[45]

But the success of the interpretation services at the NWU has not been able to prevent Afrikaans from being seen as an obstacle to transformation. Many black students and staff experience social and cultural exclusion – and racism – on the Potchefstroom Campus. They remain on the periphery of the university community like educational outcasts.

For black students the use of headsets as part of simultaneous interpretation has become a symbol of alienation.

"We have nothing against Afrikaans, but we want English as well." This student, doing an honours degree in Economics, said his postgraduate studies were in English.[46]

The question is therefore why, if he and others are already studying in English, do they want the status quo to change on the Potchefstroom Campus?

Nzimande as the Minister of Higher Education has said the issue is not necessarily Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.

"Open up, be aware that people use Afrikaans to exclude... They do so by being insensitive. We receive many complaints about lecturers who refuse to teach in another language but Afrikaans even if there are English students in the class. Also the attitude on some campuses towards non-Afrikaans speakers poses major challenges."[47]

This was already picked up a few years earlier by the CHE's HEQC. It recommended the following: "That the NWU address 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. Afrikaans as the "dominant language of social engagement on the campus and in

2 November 2015
Kgwadi says infrastructure expenditure is likely to be cut following President Zuma's fees freeze.

7 November 2015
Amidst controversy about her participation in protests, the secretary-general of the Vaal Triangle Campus SRC is forced to step down.

When OJJ Tabane became the chairperson of the Council's Transformation Committee in 2009, he questioned the progress on the transformation front. Tabane insisted on the appointment of a transformation officer. This was done, after a compromise with Eloff, to hedge the protection of Afrikaans on the Potchefstroom Campus. Photo: Maclez Studio

The NWU policy of functional multilingualism acknowledges English, Afrikaans, Tswana and Sotho (upon request of the Vaal Triangle Campus). Below is a breakdown of how languages were used during 2015:

- **Potchefstroom:**

  One language only:
  English: 15% of modules
  Afrikaans:14% of modules

  Parallel medium:
  English: 2% of modules
  Afrikaans: 2% of modules

  Interpretation:
  From Afrikaans to English: 62% of modules
  From English to Afrikaans: 2% of modules
  From Afrikaans/English to Tswana: 2%

- **Mafikeng: Undergraduate modules are in English. Only the BEd foundation phase is interpreted from English to Tswana.**

- **Vaal Triangle: Parallel medium (English and Afrikaans) instruction is used in all undergraduate lectures.**
  In the second and third years, all modules are in English.

the town" was identified as a "potential barrier to widening participation". In addition, the report stated that the institutional and town culture were perceived to be unwelcoming to African students.[48]

This appears to be true of residence life in particular. Some of these problems were highlighted in the Wessels report, including cultural practices such as the use of Afrikaans songs and dances, which made non-Afrikaans speakers feel unwelcome.

One student said in a submission: "It did not make me a better person or help me to socialise because I could not make friends, most students in the hostel were white and they were not interested in making friends with me. In fact, one white student came to me and told me she was leaving the hostel next term because she cannot live in a place where there are blacks."

The report recommended the "radical normalisation" of the racial demographics in residences (15-20% black, 80% white) to bring about diversity in which initiation practices would be less likely to be carried over.

Kgwadi, who succeeded Eloff in April 2014, has been fiercely attacked for the review of the university's strategic plan and for statements about Afrikaans. So much so that colleagues Wannie Carstens and Johan Blaauw called on critics in an article in *Beeld* to refrain from racist character assassination as it was not winning friends in high places for Afrikaans.[49]

Ironically Kgwadi's message to staff about Afrikaans has been consistent: He does not want to change the NWU's language policy; Afrikaans should stay but should not prevent access.

This is how Kgwadi's explained his view at his inauguration: "Afrikaans is an obstacle for many students who want to study at the NWU. Therefore I am working to create a single transformed university, which will be as accessible to a child from Ikageng as a Gimmie child."[50] Several factors contributed to the attacks on Kgwadi. He became the first black Vice-Chancellor of the NWU shortly after the Sieg Heil crisis, which was turned into an attack on Afrikaans by the pro-Afrikaans and pro-white Afriforum and the union Solidarity. At the same time Kgwadi made it clear the current three-campus model might need to change. It has helped to protect Afrikaans.

But ReformPuk says it is not calling for English only on the Potchefstroom Campus, which would pose many difficulties.

Blaauw listed several reasons why the campus should not become English only. If it did, its Afrikaans niche (which should not also mean a white niche) would be destroyed. There are indeed black and Afrikaans-speaking students who have a limited grasp of English and for whom the campus offers an opportunity for tertiary learning.

Blaauw said parallel-medium English and Afrikaans lectures would add 1 800 periods per week.[51] This would double the teaching load of lecturers, but the timetable would not be able to accommodate the additional periods and there are not enough lecture halls. Research outputs and publications would be affected. In addition Afrikaans and English students would be separated. Interpretation at least

12 November 2015
The Institutional Senate accepts Kgwadi's proposal regarding changes to the three-campus model

13 November 2015
In a farewell speech Van Schalkwyk praises the student life on the Potchefstroom Campus.

allowed some integration – although the overall number of black students on campus could mean that some modules have no black students.

However, at the time of concluding this book, the executive committee of the NWU Council decided that the biggest modules on the Potchefstroom Campus would be offered in Afrikaans and English from 2016. They argued that parallel-medium classes were already part of the offering and did not imply a change of policy.

There was an immediate backlash from many quarters – the union Solidarity, some students and staff who criticised the decision as "one-sided" and "political" while those who preferred English reacted positively.

Notably Blaauw was very supportive of the idea that larger classes would be translated as it would take pressure off the translation service.

Some Council members objected and demanded a special meeting while Van Schalkwyk, who chaired the Institutional Management meeting that accepted the broadening of parallel classes at the Potchefstroom Campus, had to issue a statement explaining that the translation service will continue and parallel classes implemented under certain circumstances only. Thus, Afrikaans students will still be able to study in Afrikaans, but clearly in an environment where the dominance of Afrikaans would be curtailed.

There was now a very real sense of urgency amongst senior managers regarding transformation, which would address, inter alia, the remark by an international panel, which, in 2014, described the Potchefstroom Campus as the "most culturally homogeneous and least open to external social and political influences of the three campuses."[52]

When this book was being concluded, contestation about Afrikaans was still at the heart of the matter and a crucial meeting of Council was awaited where a new strategy and structure for the NWU was on the table. Whatever the outcome thereof, it was clear that no consensus had been reached and that whoever found themselves in the minority, would not accept the outcome.

For the conservatives Afrikaans's future had to be guaranteed; for those in favour of change, Afrikaans had a place, but only within an inclusive, multicultural, multi-language institution.[53] For the NWU had no choice: it existed within a socio-political environment that would not accept special treatment of Afrikaans.

MEDIA RELEASE

Statement by the North-West University on decisions taken at an Institutional Management meeting on 28 October 2015 and endorsed by the executive committee of the university Council on 29 October 2015

Institutional Office - The executive committee of the NWU Council yesterday endorsed decisions taken by the university management on issues of importance to the university and requested management to see to the implementation thereof.

Exco has also taken cognisance of inputs received from various stakeholders, including the Potchefstroom Campus Student Representative Council. These will be addressed and also accounted for in the strategy process. It has been decided that parallel-medium classes will be implemented from the beginning of 2016 in large first-year modules on the Potchefstroom Campus of the NWU. No interpreting services will be provided in these classes.

This will be an extension of a practice that's already in place in a limited manner on the Potchefstroom Campus, for example in BCom Chartered Accounting (1st to 3rd year) and BCom honours. It is also in accordance with the present language policy.

The extension of this practice to all classes that have separate sessions, due to the large numbers of attending students, will create a more inclusive language dispensation at the Potchefstroom Campus.

It needs to be stressed that Afrikaans is in no way threatened as a language of tuition by this decision.

Regarding institutional culture, the NWU has decided that the issue of the Totius statue and other symbols across the university need to be debated as a matter of urgency and that the matter has to be concluded by 28 February 2016. The NWU has committed itself to the creation of an inclusive and open environment in all residences and on all three campuses. Our aim will be to address issues of social justice in the context of our wide and valued diversity.

Furthermore, an aggressive initiative to recruit and retain black academics will continue. For the Potchefstroom Campus this will mean, inter alia, that no academic who can add value to our academic mission will be less preferable because he/she cannot lecture in Afrikaans. In such cases the translation services will be available for Afrikaans-speaking students.

We will also rethink our curricula and seek ways in which we can continue to transform our academic content to better reflect Africa and her people, thoughts and dreams.

This will be done in support of the NWU's vision to be an internationally recognised university.

All of the above is perfectly in line with the key elements of our language policy and our proposed strategy and are responsive to issues raised by various stakeholder groupings, including formal governance structures, in consultations over many months.

EPILOGUE
A LOOK AHEAD

"Where the story ends will dramatically change its meaning." — Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath[1]

After its first 10 years of existence the NWU was expected to comfortably enter a second decade. The establishment phase and its accompanying teething problems were over. There was integration on levels ranging from the alignment of qualifications to IT systems, from human resources to tuition fees. Although some of the integration processes remained difficult and would continue to be challenging, the merger had consolidated. Or had it?

When Prof Dan Kgwadi, Rector of the Mafikeng Campus, succeeded Dr Theuns Eloff as the NWU's Vice-Chancellor in April 2014, the NWU entered a period when the strength of the unity was severely tested. The drafting of a new strategic plan, which would take another look at the NWU's controversial three-campus model, and the use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction on the Potchefstroom Campus, would become some of the most contentious issues. Kgwadi would find himself in the firing line. In this edited interview conducted early in 2015 for this book, he explained his position on the way forward and indicated how his appointment serves as both the conclusion of a first era and the springboard into the next. This is what he had to say:[2]

On the three-campus model…

I think one of the biggest challenges we face is to agree on where we are [in terms of the model]. Before I know where I must go, I must have clear coordinates of where I am. And there was never a clear understanding of where we are or agreement on where we are.

Firstly, you would hear other people tell you that the merger was so perfect... And there was another view that says, 'Look we haven't achieved much.' This was coming from the international review panel of our merger. Any generous professor would give it a supplementary. That is the best we could get, but definitely not a pass. Because, if you look at how we fared in terms of achieving the objectives of the merger it was clear that major objectives were perhaps not achieved.

But, I can say as far as the core business is concerned we fared very well. At Mafikeng the core business improved and research output increased. I would say Potch had its own transformation or diversity targets. It had moved a distance. It had, in terms of targets, performed very well. One could question the targets themselves. One could say they were set very low, but the reality is that they had performed very well with those targets.

So the issue is more the intercampus or intracampus diversity. You would have seen in the international panel report they consider us still as ethnic and racial enclaves in terms of our population.

Because we had not really addressed the racially induced divisions of the past and the [three-campus] model was really seen as an obstacle towards that. And some of the issues relating to sharing of resources, which was also a very important objective of the merger. They said this did not really happen and this was attributed to the merger itself or the model that we had adopted.

So at the end, being at a crossroad, it is a question of looking at what the model has helped us to achieve and whether the model can take us through. Can we still continue with it as is? And it became very clear that it had

served its purpose and it is now about time we start to revise and look at the model.

And I must add that perhaps you could tell that the model was based on ideological views. It was really strongly embedded on ideologies and then it becomes a battle to move forward with a different model. This is going to be a bit of a challenge because you must first go and fight the ideological views and deal with the perceptions that were there before people can now be ready to openly look at a new model.

When ideologies are entrenched, it becomes a political battle. This is the challenge. There is an admission that the model was of course not written in stone, but it is also very difficult to motivate a different approach that seems to dismantle or seems to go against a set ideology.

On Afrikaans…

I think the biggest issue as we move forward is the language: How is it going to be accommodated in the new model?

The language policy, which I do not think and see as a big challenge, has been a very flexible one from its inception. We implement it, not necessarily to preserve enclaves, but to be able to open up access.

I think therefore access is the one issue and Afrikaans is the other. People see the one as compromising the other. So, we have to balance the two. In other words, while we open up access, particularly to the Potch Campus, we retain the right to use Afrikaans for the Afrikaans learners. The two should not talk against each other. It is possible. We really have to come up with how we implement it in the language policy. It doesn't have to be changed in my view. We just have to see how we create a balance.

On the strategic plan for the next decade…

We have committed ourselves, through Council, to look at the management model of the university.

This was following the issues related to the initiation practices at the beginning of the year [2014] and the investigation, as a result of that.

We then made a commitment to the minister [of higher education and training] to look at some of the issues that are entrenched in terms of culture and traditions.

So really as we move forward we are going to look at the management model to move towards a more unitary university. Unity here is the issue. And the sharing of resources…a fair and equitable distribution of resources... and the new university culture. And of course the language policy and what it means to the university and how we implement it so it does not end up in the exclusion or the limiting of access as such.

On divisions between the campuses…

As far as our failure to address the historical divisions of the past goes, I have always said this and I know it doesn't sound well when I say it: Mafikeng has always been like, when you look at it, a tribal college, and Potch Campus is like a Volkstaat. I've said that before, and I've always said about the Vaal it's like a colour product of the two: a predominantly black and a predominantly white campus. But if we had anything to move on, I think Vaal Campus is a model of the North-West University. It must become a model in terms of the two campuses. They must look forward to achieving what Vaal has achieved. My biggest concern is that the number of the white students is declining [on the Vaal Campus]. That should not be our plan. We must make sure that there is good enough diversity at the Vaal Campus

On stereotypes and transformation…

The resistance and the fear that comes with my appointment does not come as a surprise.

I was told by one of the consultants at the Potchefstroom Campus that this has been one of the most uncertain periods ever experienced and I said that I fully agree with that.

I don't think the Potch Campus had to ever to report to a person of a different race.

It is not because of me being black. The same would have happened if I was a Chinese.

The Potch Campus has been an enclave of some kind. A comfort zone has been created and therefore any tampering with that brings about lots of fear.

I would have been overambitious to expect that I would just come in with changes and they are acceptable to everyone.

The fears that I have picked up, and I think I am very correct on that one, are justifiable. It has nothing to do with me as a person. It has to do with a system that made us who we are.

We come from a system where trust is not interracial

trust. It is something, like any other trust, one must work for. It is not something that is just automatic. You've got to earn it. And I think with our different backgrounds, black people still look at white people and say, 'Hey you know what, I don't know these people and I don't know what they think of me.' And the same with me. They say, 'Who is this guy and where does he come from?'

You've seen in open letters the whole concern about how I might be a political agenda and have revolutionary democratic ideas. All the issues you start to read will tell you, yes, indeed we've got backgrounds that drive suspicion. So, the suspicions that I picked up from the Potch Campus… I can tell you it took me quite a while to get to understand it until I started to realise they are as a result of the history of our country. That is exactly why diversity is important. So that all of these perceptions and all of these stereotypes must be addressed.

I said when I was inaugurated that the biggest challenge I have to deal with is to work on stereotypes because of the composition of the university. The stereotype that says white people are racist. That is a stereotype. And the stereotype that says black people are lazy. That is a stereotype. These are some of the things that came up within our own society. So I must now work with a university community that must be able to address some of these issues.

And as far as the issue goes about me and whether I was supposed to have been appointed on the basis of transformation. Again, this is the issue I always talk about, the stereotypes that I talk about. They say if you are black you are a person of transformation and then, supposedly, white people are not into transformation. That is a stereotype. Furthermore, if you are white, quality is just something that you are born with and that you commit yourself to and others don't. So we have created a dichotomy as if we cannot have transformation and quality. Actually, transformation can reinforce quality.

I have talked to researchers about their publications, for instance the fact that we lock ourselves to a language policy or a position that says we are going to publish in Afrikaans. That compromises us when it comes to publications and the impact factor gets affected. Because when we look at the impact factor of our publications, we are more local than international - although I am always very careful to say whatever is international is quality. I mean if we have to publish about the local situation, that is what we should be doing. Academics must look at the local relevance and also share and publish at that level. But if we publish local ones because of language, then that leads to a position that compromises us and limits us. So, when you look at and compare the two campuses, Mafikeng and Vaal, in terms of impact factor in publications, Potch and Mafikeng, the impact of Mafikeng is much higher because they go international.

As I've mentioned, one of the benefits of the merger was that Mafikeng's research increased. It was a big surprise for me when Mafikeng became more productive than Potchefstroom. Because research wise Mafikeng was at 1.16 articles per academic staff member and Potch was at 0.93, you see. Vaal is doing well. It is at 0.83. These are very good stats that show that the core business was at an upward incline. And for all the campuses.

But again, working on the stereotypes. You know Mafikeng is a historically black campus. I used to say when I was there, 'Guys you know what, for you to do anything good and for anybody to believe it, you have to do it 10 times better because it is a historically black campus. In a religious sense I always talk about what good can come out of Nazareth. That's always there. Can there be anything good coming out of Nazareth? You have got to work against perceptions. You have got to work against stereotypes to prove that indeed there is quality in what you do.

Returning to the model for a second. It served a good purpose. While it was competitive, it helped to some extent. But at some point now we need to collaborate more than we compete. Because only then can we become more than the sum of our own parts. It becomes more sustainable and the equity and sharing of resources becomes almost obvious. So that is what we are looking at in moving forward.

And really coming very direct to your question about the challenge and perceptions around my appointment. It is something I had anticipated.

At the end the whole issue was about race. And it is normal, because I have heard black people say, 'It is now time for a black vice-chancellor.' But for me it was not about an alternating system of black and white. It is about whether we are going to get a quality person, a person that can drive this institution to another level.

And I do not want to claim because of transformation that I will be able to do that.

But I can tell you I have been through a process which helps me to understand. I am a product of inferior education

in this country. I was just the other day sharing with people on Facebook a picture of the tree that I used to attend under when I was doing my grade one. The school was here and the tree here, and that big tree is still there. And when I saw it, I took a picture of that against the school.

We used to go to school with the platoon[3] system. I reminded people how we would go in the morning, and in the afternoon we would have to go to the toilets quickly and exchange uniforms. So I would actually take my cousin's uniform, put it on, then they take my clothes home.

You see this is what I am talking about. If you come from that background you really have passion and you do understand when somebody really struggles to achieve. This is not to say you cannot be sympathetic to that situation. In management you must run the institution to be sustainable, but your efforts will also be driven by your experience. You become biased. I tell people my mother was a subject of serious abuse in her marriage and I've witnessed it and for that reason I am very sympathetic towards women. People must understand that. I've got a soft heart towards women because of what my father took my mother through. I was still young, but it is still in my memory.

Having gone through poverty help me to look at things in a much more balanced and understanding way. At the same time I do not tolerate and accept excuses using poverty as a reason for failure. I always tell people it is not a licence for stupidity. I can say it without necessarily being insensitive because I know what I am talking about. I want people to be able to use their experience to be more determined. But to use that as an excuse for a failure to perform we eventually start to blame apartheid for it.

I don't like that blame game, I discourage it completely, even amongst orphans…others will always blame their parents for not making it, but that's another point…people do not get to appreciate that we may all reach the same altitude but we come from different depths.

And it pains my heart when I start to hear people say, 'No, it is because everything I have done for you…that it came to you on a platter. It was because of affirmative action.' I am not apologetic about affirmative action, not at all. But I want to say, 'Look we cannot just use it all the time to say there is no quality. Look somebody said to me I was a political appointee and I had to question that. Because I wanted to know, because political appointments are made by the Minister [of Education]. The unfortunate thing is almost a year later and in terms of moving forward I am still suffering the consequences of all those perceptions. And I must be honest with you, there were some, what do you call them… there were some deals that I was supposed to sign and agree to before the appointment...

You know what? Agree to become the VC, but then you must also agree that the other one becomes the Vice-Principal and with these conditions and this and that. That, for me, was almost boiling down to watering down the position of VC and I refused. I could not agree to such deals. But I can tell somehow the same thing was repackaged and was sold to Council and hence it is still a big battle now. A year later there are still debates and arguments about the appointment of the VC and the Vice-Principal as a package. I never wanted to succumb to that. I wanted to become the VC with all the rights and privileges pertaining to it, and the authority of the VC. Otherwise without the authority of the VC there was no way I could take ownership of my own failures or the successes of the university. And it was going to make my management very difficult if I could not put together my own management team…. That is why I could not settle for any deal. This is where I am.

You got to keep watching your back. And not only that. Again, as I said, there are elements of sabotaging. That comes automatically in a case where there is a polarity in terms of support. I just hope that at some point it will get to an end, otherwise my whole term is going to be polluted by that, and therefore, it will of course be energy sapping. It does draw your energy. Instead of having a team that works towards a common goal you have agendas that you have to keep watching at all times.

On apologising for the Nazi salute…

So let's be honest and apologise where we need to apologise. Having apologised to the students and the parents of those students who were in the papers during the Nazi salute story got me into big trouble. I said that the kids were in the media. If I am the parent and my daughter is seen doing the salute it has got to be traumatising for that kid. It is important for the university to go and apologise and close that chapter. And say zero tolerance. Never again will you see that happening to your kids. So I had to come out like that. But the minute you do that, obviously, because you are new management, a polarity develops with the old management.

So there was this polarity as well. People would say, 'No, no, no, this guy comes and is offending and insulting our traditions'.

And there was no way I could speak in defence of the traditions. Definitely not. We had to agree and say, 'Look guys, this is it, we cannot have that'.

Look, my approach in this and Theuns' approach will not be the same because I come from one background and he comes from another. I see students marching in a line and it is too militaristic, but Theuns comes from the military conscription background, so it might be a reminder of good old days. So we differ.

And therefore our resistance and tolerance to certain things will also not be the same. So that is how it must be understood. I could not really accept it.

The kids would walk, start singing, start shouting and follow each other throughout the day. I said, 'No man, there must be a better way of giving them an orientation than that'. And of course if you look at this country, the history in the country, look at the orientation programmes of historically black universities, and historically Afrikaner universities, they are completely different. In a historically black university, when a first year comes, the political structures and everybody, see a comrade, somebody who is going to help them fight the system.

So there is no way that they can subject the first year to anything like humiliation. But what I have seen of the orientation, ontgroening, was about juniors respecting the seniors. At no black university you will find that. You are not a junior, you are a comrade. You are a klipgooier (stone thrower).

On getting rid of initiation practices…

I think we can do better. It is about what we bring in that will determine the new culture of the university. And that must now be worked out…to be sensitive to human rights.

At the moment we just give a lecture, but we are not bringing in anything to replace that. That becomes a problem as well. Don't take out something and then not give a replacement. If you don't give a replacement then you are making student life dull. Because that is exactly what I was told. It reminded me what I experienced when I arrived at Mafikeng. This is very malicious. They say, 'No he is cutting all the cultural things, he doesn't want this, he doesn't want us to do this any more'.

When I arrived at Mafikeng they said you know the new VC is so strict, he is actually banning alcohol and he is even banning sex. Now you can't say that to the students. If you do that, that's malicious. So as as I started and I appeared before students, they just saw this person who was coming with a very funny agenda.

So I think here are also the same malicious intentions. This VC wants to determine how we must have fun. You can't do this, you can't do that. And I said, that's not an issue. All we are saying is human rights. When you plan your activities and want to have fun, it must be done within broad principles . They were shocked. They were really shocked to hear that I am not planning to dictate how they must have fun. I said we will just caution you and tell you of the rules. But some of the traditions and practices from the past are insensitive. They should expect to be treated with zero tolerance.

■■■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cornia Pretorius has worked as a journalism lecturer as well as a commentator, consultant and writer in the field of education. She is also a wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend to many and enemy of some.

Pretorius, who studied at the former PU for CHE, worked in Pretoria and Johannesburg before returning to Pochefstroom in 2010 to join the North-West University's School of Communication Studies. She taught journalism to honours students and was twice named the Lecturer of the Year by LetWel, the association for students in the Faculty of Humanities. She also served on the board and advisory committee of *Wapad*, the student newspaper on the campus. She resigned in 2014, but rejoined the NWU again in 2017. Pretorius was commissioned by the Institutional Office to do this book, which doubles as the empirical research for a Master's degree focusing on journalistic history writing.

As a reporter, Cornia Pretorius worked for the dailies *Beeld* (1995-1998) and *ThisDay* (2003-2004) and the weeklies *Sunday Times* (1998-2001) and the *Mail & Guardian* (2006-2009), where she edited Higher Learning and the Teacher, both supplements published by the *Mail & Guardian*.

Pretorius has won local and international awards for education reporting. She served on the Association for the Development of Education in Africa's working group for communication and education for four years to promote the quality of education reporting on the continent. She also spent six months at Oxford University in Britain as a fellow of the international news agency Reuters.

Pretorius has worked as a freelance journalist and consultant for various organisations and has edited publications on higher and vocational education. She has also been a commentator on education issues on local and international radio stations, as well as television.

She is married to the journalist Willem Kempen and they have three daughters: Hannia (13), Gheerde (10) and Franka (8). During 2015 she received treatment for and recovered from breast cancer.

In future she would like to meditate more, plant herbs, coach high jump, start a sustainable recycling project, do volunteer work and write books for children and teenagers.

SKETCHING THE FUTURE

The illustrations in this book were done by an artist from Promosa on the outskirts of Potchefstroom, North West.

Pogiso (Pjay) Motubatsi, 34, is responsible for the pencil drawings of all the rectors of the former PU for CHE and UNW (see Chapters 3 and 5).

Motubatsi, a self-trained artist, has been drawing since the age of 10. Apart from his skill as an illustrator, he is also a talented cartoonist.

He looks to international artists and trends for inspiration and dreams of having the opportunity to study art and graphic design at a first-rate art school. He's currently unemployed but is always busy with some kind of artistic endeavour.

Motubatsi's cartoons have been published in the *NorthWest Independent*, a local newspaper in Potchefstroom, and he has won several art competitions. He has been commissioned to do illustrations for businesses and private art collections. He has also mastered design software such as Adobe Illustrator and hopes to also learn more about animation software in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several groups of people supported me as I literally and figuratively stumbled into the unknown territory of history writing. The responsibility has been a burden, which often felt unmanageable.

My goal was to respect the past and all of those who were part of it, whether they supported the merger or not. I was guided by various clues that I could access in the time available. There were many people who helped me in my detective adventure and others who supported me.

But first, let me thank those who initiated and supervised the project.

Thank you Dr Theuns Eloff for the opportunity to frankly tell the story of North-West University's merger. Prof Dan Kgwadi, you wanted the project to continue in the same vein when you took office. Both of you were brave to entrust a journalist with this task.

Many people helped the book to materialise.

Prof Piet Prinsloo, you provided direction, shared your institutional memory and helped with access to invaluable resources. You have been incredibly patient. Thanks to you and your assistant Pauline Kühne.

Prof Johannes Froneman, you were my sounding board and you pushed me forward when my courage was failing me. Prof Johann Tempelhoff, your incisive comments and creative input came at a time when I was stalling.

Prof Marlene Verhoef, my deepest gratitude goes to you for your leadership and compassion. Judy Heymans, you opened the door to many offices when I needed help at all hours. Thank for your ear - and your tissues.

My fellow detectives.

I don't know what I would have done without you. You understand the importance of resources such as historical documents, pictures. Ria Adelaar and Gerda Beukman in the Ferdinand Postma library on the Potchefstroom Campus and Annette Kelner, Maggie Gey van Pittius, Maryna Venter in the archive on the Potchefstroom Campus. Kristina Travis from the Mafikeng Campus, you will be missed. I have rarely encountered a group of people so friendly, helpful and efficient.

I also want to thank Lester Mpolokeng on the Mafikeng Campus for help with interviews. A special thank you to Prof Martin Oosthuizen, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: teaching-learning, as well as Jan-Hendrik Viljoen and Ronell Pietersen - and the statistics team – in the Institutional Office, for helping us to understand some of the important figures.

I am also indebted to the long list of critical readers who engaged with the whole text or sections thereof. I want to mention two by name. Prof CFC van der Walt, you provided incredibly helpful insights. Prof Maarten Venter, I appreciate your comments. Prof Lizette Rabe, Jan-Jan Joubert and Ahmed Essop – I am grateful for your willingness to review the manuscript.

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Pjay Motubatsi for drawing all the former Vice-Chancellors of the UNW and the PU for CHE. What a talent you are!

There is also a group of general helpers. Some organised my research, some drove me around, some edited my writing and some packaged the tale into a book. Janli Sontag and Mareli Rall, your valiant efforts at transcribing were appreciated.

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Clairwyn van der Merwe, I wish we had more time to benefit from your efficient and imaginative editing skills. You are superb. Thank you for the many hours you worked on this book.

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Karin Panaino Peterson, I appreciate your eyes. No-one can complete a big project without family and friends. I don't feel as if my words do justice to the immense appreciation I feel.

My husband Willem and children Hannia, Gheerde and Franka whom I kicked out of the house often so that I could work. I am sorry for the many times you had to do fun things without me. You were all amazing. Thank you Katy Williams, our family help, for lending a hand on so many occasions so that I could make progress.

My parents Christa and Johann Pretorius for your love, amazing support and help with my children during this year in particular. My mother-in-law Tersia Kempen who left home in the Western Cape twice for long periods to take care of my three children while I was working and receiving medical care. I am deeply grateful to you. The rest of the family, thank you for nudging me along.

A special thanks to friends for flowers and lunches and hugs to dry my tears of despair during the writing of this book. Prim, you are always there when I am in doubt. Monako, I appreciate your ear. Karen, your encouragement as a fellow writer helped a great deal.

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Lastly and importantly, thank you to everyone who was willing to be interviewed for the book, and equally important, those who chose to remain silent. The stories you told – and did not want to tell – provided the colour and texture, which I tried to capture in the book.

THEN AND NOW

Herewith the people who feature throughout the book with a description of what has become of them

Kader Asmal Minister of Education from 1999 to 2004, worked at the University of the Western Cape after 2004. He died in 2011.

Nasima Badsha Deputy director-general of higher education in the Department of Education is the chief executive officer of the Cape Higher Education Consortium.

Sibusiso Bengu was Minister of Education from 1994-1999. After his term as Minister he became the South African Ambassador in Germany. He has retired.

Akbar Bootha Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Administration and Finance of the UNW is now the director of the school of accounting on the Mafikeng Campus.

Sanette Boshoff Director of higher education management and support, is the head of academic planning at the University of Pretoria.

Annette Combrink was the Rector of the NWU's Potchefstroom Campus from 2004 to 2009. She was elected by the convocation as a member of the NWU Council in 2015.

Theuns Eloff Vice-Chancellor of the NWU from 2004-2014, is now the chairperson of the FW de Klerk Foundation and serves on the boards of several companies.

Ahmed Essop Former chief executive officer of the Council on Higher Education, is now a consultant with an associate research attachment at the University of Johannesburg.

Lesole Gadinabokau Founding staff member of Unibo and later acting Vice-Chancellor, is an honorary member of the South African Football Association, and retired.

Jakes Gerwel was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape from 1987-1994. Thereafter, from 1994 to 1999 he was the director-general in the Office of the late President Nelson Mandela. He died in 2012.

Johan Graaff First staff member of Unibo, later moved to the University of Cape Town's department of sociology where he became senior lecturer. He is retired.

Dan Kgwadi Rector of the NWU's Mafikeng Campus from 2005, succeeded Theuns Eloff as NWU Vice-Chancellor in 2014.

Jacques Kriel Founding Vice-Chancellor of Unibo, has subsequently worked at Wits, the former Medunsa (now the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University) and abroad as a consultant physician. He is doing research on themes related to neurophilosophy.

Saki Macozoma, chair of the National Working Group, has retired.

Eric Mafuna, a facilitator during the merger, is CEO of the African Leadership Group.

Nelson Mandela was president of the RSA from 1994-1999. He died in 2013.

Lucas Mangope was the president of Bophuthatswana, an "independent" homeland of the RSA, from 1977 to 1994. After democracy he was the leader of the United Christian Democratic Party until 2011. He is retired.

Tanyani Mariba, former Rector of the Vaal Triangle Campus, has retired.

Gulam Mayet was a member of the NWU council, has retired and lives in the UK.

Litha Nyhonyha, chairman of the NWU Council from 2004-2005, is the owner of Regiments Capital.

Japtha Ngonyama, a member of the Mafikeng Campus SRC from 2002-2003, works at Sanlam in Bloemfontein where he is a manager. He hopes to start his own business in future.

Naledi Pandor, Minister of Education from 2004 to 2009, was moved to the Ministery of Science and Technology. After a stint as the Minister of Home Affairs Pandor resumed her position as the Minister of Science and Technology from 2014.

Sipho Seepe, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Vista University, is a political commentator and special advisor to the Minister of Public Service and Administration.

Lydia Sebego, chairperson of the NWU Council in 2006, is director-general of the North West Province government.

Bob Smith, who left the London School of Economics to join Unibo, later went to the University of Bristol Graduate School of Education. He also worked for organisations such as UNICEF and the World Bank. He is retired.

OJJ Tabane, politician, facilitator and consultant, has his own business.

Kristina Travis was the Mafikeng Campus Archivist until her retirement on 30 September 2015.

Carools Reinecke was the Rector of the PU for CHE from 1988-2001. He is retired but is still a research fellow on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Johan Rost, former executive director: finance and facilities in the Instituitonal Office, has retired.

Herman van Schalkwyk, former Rector of the Potchefstroom Campus, is the CEO of the Suidwes Group, an agricultural firm based in North West.

Louis van der Ryst, Institutional Director of Physical Infrastructure and Planning,has retired.

Chris (CFC) van der Walt, former institutional registrar of the NWU, consults on legal and higher education governance and management matters and lives in Potchefstroom.

Francois Venter, former Dean of the faculty of law on the Potchefstroom Campus and a former chairperson of the Afrikanerbond, has retired but remains a research fellow on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Maarten Venter, director of projects in the NWU Institutional Office, has retired.

Leon Wessels, merger negotiator, former member of the NWU Council [27 June 2002] and chairman of the 2014 task team which investigated initiation practices, remains involved in work about human rights.

Marinus Wiechers Former Council member of Unibo and later Vice-Chancellor of Unisa (1994-1997), is a constitutional commentator, legal advisor and artist.

Molapo Qhobela, a senior official in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) at the time of the mergers, is the CEO of the National Research Foundation.

Piet Prinsloo has retired from the university, but is still conducting historical research.

Phumzile Mmope, former executive director of corporate affairs and relations at the NWU, is working at Stellenbosch University as their Senior Director: Corporate Marketing.

Ngoato Takalo, former vice-principal of the NWU.

Pansy Tlakula, former chair of the Independent Electorial Commission (IEC), is chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and its special rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa.

ENDNOTES

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34. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1, 1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier}.
35. *Government Gazette*, no. 23549, notice no. 855, 21 Jun. 2002 (Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education).
36. Ministry of Education, Media statement, "Transformation and reconstruction of the higher education system", 9 Dec. 2012.
37. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector, Vol. 2, 2000-2002, {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor}, pp. 406-409 {Ministry of Education, Letters to Dr. L. Wessels, chairperson of the PU for CHE council and Adv. P. Tlakula, chairperson of the UNW council, 9 Dec. 2002}.
38. K. Asmal, A. Hadland and M. Levy, *Politics in my blood: A memoir*, pp. 281-282.
39. PPA, Email correspondence, D. Parker, Email communication, 5 Feb. 2014 {At the time of contact Deputy Director-general of higher education and training in the Department of Higher Education}.
40. Sol Plaatje University at http://www.spu.ac.za. (Accessed 2 Nov. 2015).
41. University of Mpumalanga at http://www.ump.ac.za/history.htm. (Accessed 2 Nov. 2015).

42. E. Gillard, S. Saunders, J. Terblanche and M. Sukel, "A review of four case studies in restructuring the South African Higher Education System", (Paper by the Higher Education Merger Study Group), undated, pp. 2, 5, 7.
43. K. Asmal, A. Hadland and M. Levy, *Politics in my blood: A memoir*, p 276- 282.
44. By 2015 there were 26 higher education institutions in South Africa (Source: Universities SA).
45. Higher Education South Africa (Hesa), I*nto Higher Education: A guide for schools*, 2nd ed., (National Information Service for Higher Education, Pretoria, 2006), pp. 28-29.

CHAPTER 2

1. PPA, NWU, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector, Vol. 1-2003 {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor}, p. 21 (Report: Workshop on creating institutional options for the proposed merger of the Universities of North-West and Potchefstroom, Bakubung, Pilansberg, 7-8 Aug. 2002).
2. PPA, A.L. Combrink, Onderhoud 1, 16 Nov. 2013 {Voormalige Rektor Potchefstroomkampus}.
3. PPA, Email correspondence, A.A.I. Bootha, 15 May 2014. {Former Director, School of Accounting, Mafikeng Campus; former UNW Deputy Vice-Chancellor}.
4. PPA, Archive of NWU Institutional Office NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001 {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor}, p. 62 {Collaboration between institutions of higher education in the North West Province, 31 Jul. 2001}.
5. Prof. C. Reinecke was the rector of the PU for CHE from 1989 to 2001 (See endnote 8, In U Lig, p. 72).
6. PPA, Anon. 1 Potchefstroom, Interview, 16 Nov. 2013 {Former senior manager of PU for CHE and NWU, information in author's archive}.
7. PPA, NWU, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001 {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor), p. 210.
8. E.S. van Eeden (red.), *In U lig: Die PU vir CHO van selfstandigwording tot samesmelting 1951-2004* (NWU, Potchefstroomkampus, 2006), p. 781.
9. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001 {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor), p. 62 {Collaboration between institutions of higher education in the North West Province, 31 Jul. 2001}.
10. The forum was named the Vaal Triangle Region Tertiary Education Forum (VTRTEF).
11. Archive of NWU Institutional Office {C.F.C. van der Walt} Integration of policies, rules and procedures, 20 Oct. 2011.
12. PPA, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001 {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor}, p. 173, {Report on progress with academic collaboration in the North West Region}.
13. SA Ministry of Education, National Plan of Higher Education, Feb. 2001, p. 80.
14. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001 {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor}, p. 62 {Collaboration between institutions of higher education in the North West Province, 31 Jul. 2001}.
15. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001, {From the archive of J.Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor}, p. 42 {Report of discussions between the University of North-West, Technikon North-West and the PU for CHE on collaboration in the North West Province, 23 Jul. 2001 at 11:00 at CSIR, Pretoria}.
16. PPA, Interview, C.F.C. van der Walt, Maart 2016
17. Council on Higher Education (CHE), "Towards a new higher education landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21ste century", (Report of the Size and Shape of Higher Education Task Team, Pretoria, 2000).
18. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001, {From the archive of J. Potgieter, Office of the Vice-Chancellor} p. 62 {Collaboration between institutions of higher education in the North West Province, 31 Jul. 2001}.
19. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001: memorandum of agreement, p. 82.
20. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001, p. 206 {Letter from Technikon North-West, 8 Apr. 2002}.
21. PPA, Archive of NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector. Comments by interested parties. Memorandum of clarification, p. 149 {South African Vice Chancellor's Association, Circular 111/2002, Aug. 2002}.

22. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector. Vol. 1-2002, p. 246 {Regionale samewerking 2002-04-18}.
23. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector Vol. 1, 2000-2001, p. 180 {Background document on academic collaboration in the North West Region}.
24. PPA, C.F.C. van der Walt, Onderhoud, 12 Feb. 2013 {Voormalige NWU Institusionele Registrateur}.
25. PPA, NWU Institutional Office, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector. Comments by interested parties p. 177 {South African Vice Chancellor's Association, Circular 111/2002, Aug. 2002}.
26. PPA, A.L. Combrink, Onderhoud 2, 4 Jan. 2014 {Voormalige Rektor Potchefstroomkampus}.
27. Archive of NWU Institutional Office {J. Potgieter}, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the Higher Education sector. Comments by interested parties. Memorandum of clarification, p 149 {South African Vice Chancellor's Association, Circular 111/2002, Aug. 2002}.
28. PPA, Anon. 5, Interview, 29 Aug. 2012 {Former Senior employee, Mafikeng Campus}.
29. PPA, C.F.C. van der Walt, Onderhoud, 12 Feb. 2013 {Voormalige NWU Institusionele Registrateur}.

CHAPTER 3

1. PPA, Speech, T. Eloff, Potchefstroom Campus, 20 May 2014.
2. B. Spoelstra, "Het die 'van' van die Universiteit waarde?" in *Die Kerkblad*, 22 Mei 2002, p. 26.
3. For the purposes of this discussion Anti-British refers to resistance against imperialism. Anti-English refers to dominance of the English language.
4. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…! Die Puk tot 1951: Wording, vestiging en selfstandigheid,* (PU vir CHE, Potchefstroom, 2003), pp. 3-4.
5. *Ibid*., p. 9.
6. E.S. van Eeden (red.), *In U lig: Die PU vir CHO van selfstandigwording tot samesmelting 1951-2004,* (NWU, Potchefstroomkampus, 2006), p 495.
7. *Ibid*., p. 496.
8. PPA, Lesing, M. du Preez (in sy hoedanigheid as Buitengewone Professor by die Skool vir Kommunikasiestudies) Potchefstroomkampus, 25 Apr. 2013.
9. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad...!* pp. 9-11.
10. PPA, Photograph of timeline in NWU Archive, Potchefstroom Campus, 2014.
11. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…!* pp. 64-71.
12. J.D. du Toit was also known as Japie du Toit or Totius.
13. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…!* pp. 79-80.
14. *Ibid*., p. 86.
15. *Ibid*., p. 108.
16. *Ibid*., p. 138.
17. South West Africa became independent in 1990 and the name changed to Namibia.
18. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…!* p 138.
19. *Ibid.*, pp.141-142.
20. *Ibid*., p. 209.
21. TUK later became the University of Pretoria or Tuks.
22. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…!* pp. 215-222.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 274-278.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 312-328.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 332-333.
26. *Ibid*., pp. 467-471.
27. The University of Fort Hare was known as the South African Native College.
28. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…!* p 377.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 488-492.
31. *Ibid*., pp. 494-511.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 602.
33. *Ibid*.,pp. 618-619
34. E.S. van Eeden (red.), *In U lig: Die PU vir CHO van self-standigwording tot samesmelting 1951-2004,* p. 57.
35. *Ibid*., p. 74.
36. P.F .van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad…!* p 548.
37. *Ibid*., p. 548.
38. *Ibid*., p. 550.
39. *Ibid*., p. 495.
40. *Ibid*., p. 495.
41. *Ibid*., pp. 495-496.
42. *Ibid.* p. 490.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 496.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 492.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 491.
47. *Ibid*., p. 497.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498.
49. *Ibid*., p. 498.
50. *Ibid*., p. 493.
51. *Ibid*., p. 498.
52. *Ibid.,* p. 491.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.
54. *Ibid*., p. 67.
55. *Ibid*., pp. 70-72.
56. E.S. van Eeden (red.), *In U lig: Die PU vir CHO van self-standigwording tot samesmelting 1951-2004,* p. 124.
57. P.F. van der Schyff, *Wonderdaad*…! pp. 74-75.
58. *Ibid*., pp. 76-77.
59. *Ibid*., p. 509.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 71-72.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
62. E.S. van Eeden (red.), *In U lig: Die PU vir CHO van self-standigwording tot samesmelting 1951-2004,* p. 494.

CHAPTER 4

1. PPA, J.W.N. Tempelhoff, Onderhoud, 24 Mei 2013 {Navorsingshoof en Professor in Geskiedenis, Vaaldriehoekkampus}.
2. Mokadi was the Vice-Chancellor of the Vaal Triangle Technikon (1996-2006), later renamed the Vaal University of Technology. He was fired for corruption, fraud and nepotism (Source: Mail & Guardian, 16 Jul. 2006).
3. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 1, 2 Mei 2013 {Voormalige Rektor van die Vaaldriehoekkampus}.
4. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *North-West University (NWU): A merger and incorporation story, 2004-2014* (draft), 27 Jun. 2015, {VTC archive, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Collaboration between the Vaal Triangle Campus (PU for CHE) and Vista (Sebokeng Campus) in the Vaal Triangle, 30 July 2001} p. 117.
5. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 1, 2 Mei 2013 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus}
6. Beeld-span, "Tien beseer in geweld op kampusse, duisende rande se skade aangerig" in *Beeld-argief* by http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/1996/05/17/1/15.html (Geraadpleeg 3 Nov. 2011).
7. E.S. van Eeden (red.), *In U lig: Die PU vir CHO van selfstandigwording tot samesmelting 1951-2004*, (NWU, Potchefstroomkampus, 2006) pp. 464-465.
8. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 1, 2 Mei 2013 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus}
9. *Ibid.*
10. E.S. van Staden (red.), *In U Lig: Die PU vir CHO*… p. 444
11. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 3, 19 Aug. 2015 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus, opname in skrywer se argief}.
12. *Ibid.*
13. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 1, 2 Mei 2013 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus, opname in skrywer se argief}.
14. *Ibid*.
15. E.S. van Staden (red.), In U lig: Die PU vir CHO… p. 444.
16. *Ibid*., p. 63.
17. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 3, 19 Aug. 2015 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus}
18. E.S. van Staden (red.), In U lig: Die PU vir CHO… p. 462.
19. *Ibid*., p. 474.
20. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 3, 19 Aug. 2015 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus}, opname in skrywer se argief}.
21. E.S. van Staden (red.), In U lig: Die PU vir CHO… pp. 451-454.
22. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 3, 19 Aug. 2015 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus, opname in skrywer se argief}.
23. E.S. van Staden (red.), In U lig: Die PU vir CHO… p. 462.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 462.
25. *Ibid*., pp. 462-463.
26. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 3, 19 Aug. 2015 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus}
27. E.S. van Staden (red.), In U lig: Die PU vir CHO… p. 451.
28. *Ibid*., p. 464.
29. PPA, T.J. Mariba, Interview, 2 May 2013 {Former Rector Vaal Triangle Campus}., recording in author's archive}.
30. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no. 136 of 2009 (Report of the Ministerial Task Team), pp. 3-64.
31. NWU, *Moving Forward: A review of North-West University's first ten years* (International audit report), published, April 2014.
32. PPA, T.J. Mariba, Interview, 2 May 2013 {Former Rector Vaal Triangle Campus}.

33. PPA, T. Theron, Onderhoud, 2 Mei 2013 {Waarnemende Vise-rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus (2016-), voorheen Uitvoerende Dekaan: Fakulteit Geesteswetenskap}.
34. *Ibid*.
35. PPA, J.W.N. Tempelhoff, Onderhoud, 24 Mei 2013 {Navorsingshoof en Professor in Geskiedenis, Vaaldriehoekkampus}.
36. PPA, E. Steyn, Onderhoud, 3 Mei 2013 {Kampusregistrateur, Vaaldriehoekkampus}.
37. PPA, P.J.J. Prinsloo, Onderhoud 2, 3 Maart 2014 {Voormalige Rektor Vaaldriehoekkampus}.
38. NWU, Annual report, 2014, p. 92.
39. PPA, L. du Plessis, Onderhoud, 2 Mei 2013 {Acting Rector Vaal Triangle Campus (2015-)}.

CHAPTER 5

1. . PPA, Email correspondence, B. Smith, 2 Sep. 2014 {Former Education Professor at Unibo}.
2. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
3. J. Cowley and T. Gouws, "The *episteme* of academia in Africa: The developmental history of the University of Bophuthatswana/North-West and the city of Mmabatho as an exemplary case" in *New Contree*, 40(16), 1996, p. 189.
4. PPA, "University of Bophuthatswana, Its aims, goals and structures", undated, {From the personal archives of J. Kriel}, p 6.
5. Wiechers is a constitutional law expert and was Vice-Chancellor of Unisa from 1994-1997
6. PPA, M. Wiechers, Onderhoud, 17 Sept. 2015 {Voormalige rektor van UNISA en staatsregkundige}.
7. PPA, J. Kriel, Onderhoud, 2 Sept. 2014 {Stigtersrektor van Unibo}.
8. PPA, "University of Bophuthatswana, Its aims, goals and structures, undated, {From the personal archives of J. Kriel}, p. 6.
9. J. Cowley and T. Gouws, "The *episteme* of academia in Africa: The developmental history of the University of Bophuthatswana/North-West and the city of Mmabatho as an exemplary case" in *New Contree*, 40(16), 1966, p.184.
10. PPA, "University of Bophuthatswana, Its aims, goals and structures", p. 8.
11. J. Cowley and T. Gouws, "The *episteme* of academia in Africa: The developmental history of the University of Bophuthatswana/North-West and the city of Mmabatho as an exemplary case" in *New Contree*, 40(16), 1996, p. 189.
12. PPA, "University of Bophuthatswana, Its aims, goals and structures, p.13.
13. PPA, K. Travis, Interview, 6 Oct. 2015 {Former Mafikeng Campus Archivist}.
14. PPA, J. Graaff, Onderhoud (telefonies), 8 Sept. 2015 {Voormalige Unibo akademikus}.
15. PPA, Email correspondence, B. Smith, 10 Sep. 2015 {Former Unibo Professor in Education}.
16. PPA, S. Seepe, Interview (telephonic), 28 Oct. 2015 {Former acting Vice-Chancellor of Vista University and Rector of the Sebokeng Campus; Unibo alumnus}.
17. PPA, J. Graaff, Onderhoud (telefonies), 8 Sept. 2015 {Voormalige Unibo akademikus}.
18. PPA, L. Gadinabokau, Interview, 28 May 2013 {Former Unibo academic and senior manager}.
19. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
20. PPA, S. Seepe, Interview (telephonic), 28 Oct. 2015 {Former acting Vice-Chancellor of Vista University, Rector Sebokeng Campus and Unibo alumnus}.
21. PPA, L. Gadinabokau, Interview, 28 May 2013 {Former Unibo academic and senior manager}.
22. PPA, G. N. Pandor, Interview, 11 April 2013 {Former Minister of Education, information in author's archive}.
23. *Ibid*.
24. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
25. J. Cowley and T. Gouws, "The *episteme* of academia in Africa: The developmental history of the University of Bophuthatswana/North-West and the city of Mmabatho as an exemplary case" in *New Contree*, 40(16), 1996, p.190.
26. PPA, L. Gadinabokau, Interview, 28 May 2013 {Former Unibo academic and senior manager}.
27. NWU, "NWU Mafikeng Campus: Innovation through diversity", (brochure to commemorate the 30th birthday of the campus, Mafikeng), published, 2010.
28. J. Cowley and T. Gouws, "The *episteme* of academia in Africa: The developmental history of the University of Bophuthatswana/North-West and the city of Mmabatho as an exemplary case" in *New Contree*, 40(16), 1996, p. 190.

CHAPTER 6

1. M. MgGhee, "Future of campus in the balance", in *Citizen*, 29 Oct. 2004, p. 6.
2. PPA, Mankwe: Mankwe Staff Letter, 2nd draft, Sept. 2004, p. 2.
3. Pre-service teacher training refers to the education and training provided to student teachers.
4. PPA, Mankwe: Mankwe Staff Letter, 2nd draft, Sept. 2004, p. 2.
5. PPA, Mankwe: Mankwe Staff Letter, 2nd draft, Sept. 2004, p. 4.
6. C. Pretorius, "Ouditverslag dui op gebreke van kolleges" in *Beeld-argief*, 19 Maart 1996, http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/1996/03/19/6/6.html. (Geraadpleeg: 8 Nov. 2014).
7. The Department of Education was split into the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2009.
8. C. Pretorius, "Asmal hits back at Zuma" in *Mail & Guardian*, 18 April 2008, p. 2.
9. The rationalisation and redeployment of educators, including lecturers at teaching colleges, aimed to redistribute state-paid teachers according to a set teacher: learner/student ratio to bring about greater equity and reduce the government's spending on salaries. It emanated from an agreement between the Department of Education and teachers' unions.
10. UNW Council, Minutes, 1 Dec. 2000.
11. UNW Council, Minutes, 13 Apr. 2000 (Report from Senate, 7 April 2000).
12. PPA, Email correspondence, A.A.I. Bootha, 5 Aug. 2014 {Former Director School of Accounting Mafikeng Campus and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of UNW}.
13. UNW Council, Minutes, 13 April 2000 (Report from the Senate, 7 April 2000).
14. PPA, Mankwe: Mankwe Staff Letter, 2nd draft, Sep. 2004, p 2.
15. PPA, Email correspondence, A.A.I. Bootha, 5 Aug. 2014 {Former Director School of Accounting Mafikeng Campus and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of UNW}.
16. NWU Council, Minutes, 23 Aug. 2005 (Letter from L. Nyhonyha to E. Molewa).
17. UNW Council, Minutes, 28 Nov. 2003 (Reports from Committees, 18 Sept. 2003).
18. PPA, Mankwe: UNW Mankwe Campus, Special Investigation Report, undated.
19. PPA, M.J. Venter, Onderhoud 2, 19 Mei 2014 {Voormalige Uitvoerende Raadgewer van Vise-kanselier T. Eloff, konsultant Menslike Hulpbronne}.
20. UNW Council, Minutes, 19 Sept. 2003 (Mankwe Workshop on Strategic Plan,13-14 Sept. 2003).
21. PPA, Mankwe: NWU Institutional Archive, Management Information, 2000 – 2010.
22. M.J. Venter, Onderhoud 2, 19 May 2014 {Voormalige Uitvoerende Raadgewer van Vise-kanselier T. Eloff, konsultant Menslike Hulpbronne, opname in skrywer se argief}.
23. PPA, Mankwe: NWU Council, Minutes, 28 Nov. 2003 (Reports from committees).
24. PPA, Mankwe: Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Memo (M.J. Venter to T. Eloff), 10 Apr. 2007 {From the archive of M.J. Venter, information now in author's archive}.
25. PPA, M.E. Mafuna, Interview, 28 Jan. 2014 {Facilitator during establishment of the NWU}.
26. PPA, Mankwe: Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Memo (M.J. Venter to T. Eloff), 10 Apr. 2007 {From the archive of M.J. Venter, information now in author's archive}.
27. PPA, Fokusgroep, Onderhoud, 24 Mei 2013, {Voormalige werknemers van Vista-Universiteit se Sebokengkampus}.
28. Vaal Triangle Campus Archive, The incorporation of the students and staff members of the Sebokeng Campus of the Vista University into the envisaged Vaal Triangle Campus (VTC) of North-West University, 1995 – 2003.
29. Council on Higher Education (CHE), "Towards a new higher education landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21ste century", (Report of the Size and Shape of Higher Education Task Team, Pretoria, 2000).
30. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story, 2004 – 2014* (draft), 24 Jun, 2015, pp. 120 – 122.
31. *Government Gazette*, no. 23550, notice no. 862, 24 Jun. 2002.
32. N. Maake, *Barbarism in higher education: Once upon a time in a university*, (Ekaam Books, Johannesburg, 2011), p 52.

CHAPTER 7

1. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1, 1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier NWU}.
2. Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 2000-2002: newsletter, p 249 {Regionale samewerking/voorgestelde samesmelting, 27 Jun. 2002}.

3. Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 2000-2002: Minister of Education, Press Statement, 30 May 2002, p 217.
4. PPA, N. Takalo, Interview, 22 Apr. 2013 {Former Vice-Principal NWU and Vice-Chancellor UNW}.
5. Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 2000-2002: Confidential process document: PUCHE and UNW Co-operation/merger, 2 Jun. 2002, p 268.
6. PPA, D. du Plooy, Onderhoud, 20 Aug. 2013 {Voormalige NWU-raadslid}.
7. *Government Gazette*, no. 24549, notice no. 855, 21 Jun. 2002 (Transformation and restructuring: A new institutional landscape for higher education).
8. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1,1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier, opname in skrywer se argief}.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 2000-2002: letter from the Principal regarding the "merge" with the UNW, p 100.
11. PPA, L. Wessels, Onderhoud, 27 April 2011 {Voormalige raadsvoorsitter PU vir CHO en NWU-raadslid}.
12. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story, 2004 – 2014,* draft, 24 Jun. 2015, p. 75.
13. A. Rademeyer, "Pityana ingehuldig, maar staat maan oor regstappe" in *Beeld-argief*, 25 Jan. 2002, http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/2002/01/22/4/3.html. (Geraadpleeg 9 Aug. 2013).
14. A. Rademeyer, "RAU skop vas teen saamsmelt met TWR" in *Beeld-argief*, 8 Okt. 2002, http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/2002/10/08/4/4.html. (Geraadpleeg 9 Aug. 2013).
15. A. Rademeyer, "RAU doen dalk regstappe: Teleurgesteld met regering se samesmelting-plan" in *Beeld-argief,* 12 Okt. 2002, http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/2002/12/10/2/4.html. (Geraadpleeg 9 Aug. 2013).
16. PPA, N. Takalo, Interview, 22 April 2013 {Former Vice-Principal NWU and UNW Vice-Chancellor}.
17. PPA, Anon. 5, Interview, 29 Aug 2012.
18. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story, 2004 – 2014*, draft, 24 Jun, 2015, p 79.
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20. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story, 2004 – 2014*, draft 24 Jun. 2015, p 82.
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25. PPA, F. W. de Klerk, E-pos kommunikasie, {Voormalige SA President en voormalige Kanselier van die PU vir CHO}.
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3. PPA, Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 2000-2002: letter, p351 {Theuns Eloff writes to staff of the PU for CHE, 14 Nov. 2002}.
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5. PPA, Email correspondence, A.A.I. Bootha, 29 Aug 2012 {Former Director School of Accounting, Mafikeng Campus, former UNW Deputy Vice-Chancellor}.
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17. PPA, C.F.C. van der Walt, Onderhoud, 12 Feb. 2013 {Voormalige Institusionele Registrateur}.
18. PPA, S. Langtry, Interview, 1 Aug. 2013 {Former Registrar Potchefstroom Campus and UNW merger negotiator}.
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25. PPA, N. Takalo, Interview, 22 April 2013 {Former Vice-Principal NWU and UNW Vice-Chancellor}.
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29. PPA, Anon. 4, Interview, 29 Aug. 2012.
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CHAPTER 9

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6. *Die Kerkblad*, "Die CHO bly", berig op 19 Jun 2002.
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8. N. Jackson, "Potch-universiteit verloor dalk naam" in *Beeld*, 15 Jan. 2003.
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12. PPA, NWU, Joint Oversight Committee (JOT), Minutes, 6 Jun. 2014.
13. PPA, N. Takalo, Interview, 22 April 2013 {Former Vice-Principal NWU and UNW Vice-Chancellor}.
14. PPA, F. du Preez, Onderhoud, 23 Aug. 2013 {Voormalige direkteur in die kantoor van Vise-kanselier T. Eloff}.
15. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1, 1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier, opname in skrywer se argief}.
16. PPA, S. Langtry, Interview, 1 Aug. 2013 {Former Registar NWU Potchefstroom Campus and member of the UNW merger negotiation}.
17. PPA, A. Essop, Interview, 21 Nov. 2012 {Former senior official Department of Education}.
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19. PPA, S. Boshoff, Onderhoud, 19 Aug. 2013 {Voormalige amptenaar Department van Onderwys}.
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21. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1, 1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier}.
22. PPA, J. Blaauw, Onderhoud, 12 Feb. 2013 {NWU Hoof van Taalpraktyk, opname in skrywer se argief}.
23. PPA, J. Blaauw, E-pos kommunikasie, 12 Feb. 2004 {NWU Hoof van Taalpraktyk, inligting in skrywer se argief}.
24. PPA, K. Travis, Interview, 28 May 2013 {Former Head Mafikeng Campus Archive}.
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26. PPA, T. McLachlan, E-pos aan die voormalige Institutionele Registrateur van die NWU, 20 Jan. 2004.
27. V. Eastes, E-pos aan personeel van die Potchefstroomkampus, 2 Feb. 2004.

CHAPTER 10

1. V. Mecoamere, "Varsity council head named" in *Sowetan*, 5 Nov. 2003, p 6.
2. PPA, Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 2 - 2003: letter to personnel, 17 Sept. 2003, p 189.
3. PPA, NWU Institutional Office Archive {F. du Preez and K. Travis}, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Meetings of the Joint Operational Team (JOT), 2002 - 2003: Letter to K. Asmal, 21 Jul. 2003, p 136.
4. *Government Gazette*, no. 25737, notice no.101 of 1997, the PU for CHO and UNW,14 Nov. 2003.

5. PPA, NWU Institutional Office Archive {F. du Preez and K. Travis}, NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Meetings of the Joint Operational Team (JOT), 2002 - 2003: the merger process between 8 Sept. and 31 Dec. 2003, p 275.
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7. PPA, Archive of the NWU Institutional Office: Office of the Vice-Chancellor {J. Potgieter} NWU Merger & Incorporation Story, Restructuring of the HE sector Vol. 1. 2004: Minutes of the Interim Council Meeting, 9 Jan. 2004, p 18.
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2. Thompson, "Universities' merger on track" in *Citizen,* 12 Jan. 2004, p 6.
3. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story, first draft,* 30 Jul. 2013, p 268.
4. *Ibid.*
5. PPA, Anon. 5 Vaaldriehoek, Onderhoud, 2 Mei 2013.
6. PPA, P. Mmope, Interview 1,1 Sept. 2013 {Former Institutional Executive Director: Corporate Affairs and Relations}.
7. M.J.Venter, "Can the centre hold?: Managing a university through a merger" (Paper delivered at the Tshwane University of Technology conference on mergers of higher education Institutions) 9 Oct. 2009, pp. 10, 11, 12.
8. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no. 136 of 2009, 4 Febr. 2009 (Report of the Ministerial Task Team).
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10. NWU Council, Report of the independent investigation task team on the welcoming and introduction of first year students at NWU (presented by chairperson Dr Leon Wessels), unpublished, 22 May 2014.

CHAPTER 12

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2. PPA, Anon. Council 1, Interview, 19 Nov. 2013.
3. PPA, Anon. 6, Interview, 29 Aug. 2013.
4. PPA, O.J.J. Tabane, Interview, 22 Aug. 2013 {Former council member }.
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6. PPA, A.L. Combrink, Onderhoud 2, 4 Jan. 2014 {Voormalige Rektor Potchefstroomkampus}.
7. PPA, C.F.C. van der Walt, Onderhoud, 12 Feb. 2013 {Voormalige NWU Institusionele Registrateur}.
8. PPA, Mayet, Interview, 25 Sept. 2013 {Former member of the NWU Council}.
9. PPA, L. Sebego, Interview, 21 Aug. 2012 {Former Chairperson NWU Council}.
10. PPA, Anon. Council 2, Interview, 28 May 2013.
11. PPA, M.E. Mafuna, Interview, 28 Jan. 2014 {Fasciliator during establishment of the NWU}.
12. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier}.
13. PPA, Anon. Council 3, Interview, 23 Aug 2013.
14. PPA, Mayet, Interview, 25 Sept. 2013 {Former member NWU Council}.
15. O.J.J. Tabane, Interview, 22 Aug. 2013 {Former member NWU Council, recording in author's archive}.
16. PPA, Anon. Council 2, Interview, 28 May 2013.

CHAPTER 13

1. PPA, R. Stumpf, Interview, 20 Nov. 2012 {Higher education consultant and former Vice-Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University}.
2. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier}.
3. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no. 136 of 2009, 4 Feb. 2009 (Report of the Ministerial Task Team).
4. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1, 1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier}.
5. PPA, N. Badsha, Interview, 13 March 2013 {Former Deputy Director-General of Higher Education}.
6. RAU merged with the Technikon Witwatersrand to become the University of Johannesburg.

7. Absa (Amalgamated Banks of South Africa was created when Allied, United and Volkskas groups merged in 1991 and later with Bankorp (including Allied Bank and Bankfin) in 1992.
8. PPA, M.J. Venter, Onderhoud 2, 1 April 2014 {Voormalige Uitvoerende Raadgewer Vise-kanselier T. Eloff}.
9. PPA, Verslag: M.J. Venter, PU vir CHO, Bestuurstruktuur ter oorweging, 13 Feb. 2002.
10. PPA, Report: M.J. Venter, A Management Model for the NWU, 23 Jul. 2003.
11. PPA, Report: M.J. Venter, An approach to strategies for the NWU as divisionalised organisation, 13 Jul. 2009.
12. PPA, M.E. Mafuna, Interview, 28 Jan. 2014 {Facilitator during establishment of the NWU}.
13. PPA, S. Seepe, Telephonic interview, 28 Oct. 2013 {Former acting Vice-Chancellor Vista University, Rector Sebokeng Campus and Unibo alumnus}.
14. PPA, Anon. Council 1, Interview, 19 Nov. 2013.
15. PPA, R. Stumpf, Interview, 20 Nov. 2012 {Higher education consultant and former Vice-Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University}.
16. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story, first draft*, 30 Jul. 2013, pp. 224 – 226.
17. C. Nel en S. Cilliers, "NWU: Solidariteit oorweeg hof" in *Beeld*, 20 Maart 2015.

CHAPTER 14

1. M. Qhobela, Interview, 26 Aug. 2013 {Former senior official in Department of Education, information owned by author}.
2. R. Kettles, Interview, 22 Oct. 2015 {Chief Strategy Officer in the office of the Vice-Chancellor and former Registrar at the Mafikeng Campus}.
3. Medunsa and the University of the North were later unbundled. It basically means they demerged.
4. S. Boshoff, Onderhoud, 19 Aug. 2013 {Former Official in the Department of Education and currently head of academic planning at the University of Pretoria}.
5. C.F.C. van der Walt, Onderhoud, 12 Feb. 2013 {Voormalige Registrateur van die NWU Potchefstroomkampus, inligting in besit van skrywer}.
6. M. Qhobela, Interview, 26 Aug. 2013 {Former senior official in Department of Education, information owned by author}.
7. Goverment Gazette, notice no. 795, no 27872, 8 Aug. 2005.

CHAPTER 15

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2. The research for this book did not identify the creator/s of the word "Potchefication". Further work on the history of the merger could perhaps attempt to identify the person.
3. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no.136 of 2009, 4 Feb. 2009 (Report by the Ministerial Task Team).
4. *Baasskap* can be translated as domination or hegemony.
5. PPA, Fokusgroep, Onderhoud, 24 Mei 2013, {Voormalige werknemers van Vista-Universiteit se Sebokengkampus}.
6. PPA, N. Vermeulen, Onderhoud, 2 Mei 2013 {Direkteur van Akademiese Administrasie, Vaaldriehoekkampus}.
7. PPA, T.J. Mariba, Interview, 2 May 2013 {Former Rector Vaal Triangle Campus}.
8. PPA, H. van Schalkwyk, Onderhoud, 20 Jan. 2014 {Voormalige Rektor Potchefstroomkampus}.
9. PPA, D. N. Kgwadi, Interview 2, 23 April 2013 {NWU Vice-Chancellor, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.

CHAPTER 16

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2. PPA, North-West University (NWU), "Moving Forward: A review of North-West University's first ten years," (International audit report, published), April 2014, pp. 29-31.
3. *Ibid*.
4. PPA, Mankwe: M.J. Venter, North-West University (NWU), An approach to strategies for the NWU as a division-alised organisation, 13 Jul. 2009.
5. The Higher Education Qualifications Framework
6. PPA, North-West University (NWU), "Moving Forward: A review of North-West University's first ten years", pp. 29-31.
7. PPA, North-West University (NWU), Evaluation of the NWU's Management Model, Sept. 2008.
8. Prof Susan Visser is the Acting Vice-Rector: Research and Planning on the Potchefstroom Kampus.
9. PPA, Email correspondence, A. Bootha, 29 Aug. 2012, {Former Director School of Accounting Mafikeng Campus and UNW Deputy Vice-Chancellor}.
10. PPA, M.J. Venter, Interview 2, 19 Mei 2014, {Former special advisor: Institutional Office}.

11. PPA, M. Mbao, Interview, 25 Nov. 2013, {Executive Dean, Faculty of Law, Mafikeng Campus}.
12. PPA, North-West University (NWU), "Moving forward: A review of NWU's first ten years", pp. 29 – 31.
13. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no.136 of 2009, 4 Feb. 2009 (Investigation by the Ministerial Task Team into the NWU).
14. Council on Higher Education (CHE), Audit Report on North-West University: Report of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) to the North-West University, Executive Summary, (published), (Pretoria, Sept. 2010).
15. PPA, Report: M.J. Venter, North-West University, An approach to strategies for the NWU as a divisionalised organisation, 13 Jul. 2009.
16. Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM)
17. PPA, Anon. Vaaldriehoek 2, Onderhoud, 27 Aug. 2013.
18. PPA, Anon. Mafikeng 4, Interview, 29 Aug. 2012.
19. North-West University (NWU), "Moving Forward: A review of North-West University's first ten years pp. 29-31.

CHAPTER 17

1. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
2. FET colleges have been renamed Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.
3. D. Macfarlane, "NWU campus move in limbo" in *Mail & Guardian*, 10 Nov. 2005, p. 7.
4. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
5. PPA, M.J. Venter, Onderhoud 2, 19 Mei 2014 {Voormalige spesiale raadgewer, Institusionele Kantoor}
6. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
7. PPA, Mankwe: North-West University, Progress report on the implementation of the Council decision with regard to Mankwe, 18 Nov. 2005
8. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 2, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
9. *Ibid.*
10. PPA, Mankwe: Letter from M. Marais to M.J. Venter, 14 Jun. 2004
11. PPA, F. du Preez, Onderhoud, 23 Aug. 2013 {Voormalige Direkteur in die kantoor van die Vise-kanselier, T. Eloff}.
12. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}
13. NWU Council, Minutes, 18 Jun. 2004.
14. PPA, Mankwe: Letter of the Department of Education to the Vice-Chancellor, 14 Oct. 2005.
15. PPA, Mankwe: Staff letter to NWU Institutional Office, Sept. 2004.
16. Prof. Chris (CFC) van der Walt was the Institutional Registrar of the NWU.
17. PPA, M.J. Venter, Onderhoud 1, 1 April 2014 {Voormalige spesiale raadgewer, Institusionele Kantoor}.
18. NWU Council, Minutes, 26 Nov. 2004.
19. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
20. Further Education and Training (FET) colleges have been renamed Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.
21. PPA, Mankwe: NWU, Progress report on the implementation of the Council decision with regards to Mankwe, 18 Nov. 2005
22. NWU Council, Minutes, 2 - 3 Sept. 2005: Special meeting.
23. PPA, Mankwe: NWU, Progress report on the implementation of the Council decision with regards to Mankwe, 18 Nov. 2005.
24. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 18

1. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
2. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no. 136 of 2009, 4 Feb. 2009 (Investigation by the Ministerial Task Team into the NWU).
3. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
4. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
5. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no. 136 of 2009, 4 Feb. 2009 (Investigation by the Ministerial Task Team into the NWU).
6. A. Rademeyer, "Noordwes-universiteit se studente moet die kampus dán verlaat," in *Beeld*, 8 Maart 2008.
7. T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
8. L. de Beer, "Oproerige studente op waarskuwing vryglaat" in *Beeld*, 26 Sept. 2008, p 19.

9. PPA, Anon. Student, Interview, Feb 2014.
10. T. Eloff, Onderhoud 2, 3 Des. 2012 {Voormalige Vise-kanselier NWU}.
11. P.J.J. Prinsloo (compiler), *NWU: A merger and incorporation story*, 2004-2014, draft, 24 Jun. 2015, p 318.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 319.
13. PPA, D. N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {Vice-Chancellor of NWU, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.
14. Higher education is a national competency.
15. PPA, G. N. Pandor, Interview, 11 April 2013 {Former Minister of Education}.
16. Dr. Joe Phaahla was the Director-General of the Department of Sport and Recreation at the time of investigation. In 2014 he became the Deputy-Minister of Health.
17. *Government Gazette*, no. 31863, notice no 136 of 2009, 4 Feb. 2009 (Investigation by the Ministerial Task Team into the NWU).
18. PPA, T. Eloff, Onderhoud 1, 1 Des. 2012 {Voormalige NWU Vise-kanselier}.
19. PPA, N. Cloete, Onderhoud, Jan. 2014 {Head of Centre for Higher Education Transformation}.
20. *Ibid.*
21. PPA, G. N. Pandor, Interview, 11 April 2013 {Former Minister of Education}.
22. PPA, M. Qhobela, Interview, 26 Aug. 2013 {Former senior official in Department of Education}.
23. PPA, M. Metcalfe, Interview, 22 Aug. 2013 {Former Director-General of the Department of Higher Education}.
24. NWU, Minutes of 21st Council Meeting, 19 Sept. 2008.
25. PPA, G.N. Pandor, Interview, 11 April 2013 {Former Minister of Education}.
26. PPA, D.N. Kgwadi, Interview 1, 23 April 2013 {NWU Vice-Chancellor, previously Mafikeng Campus Rector}.

CHAPTER 19

1. PPA, E. Steyn, Onderhoud, 3 Mei 2013 {Registrateur Vaaldriehoekkampus).
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CHAPTER 25

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CHAPTER 26

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12. *Ibid.*
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EPILOGUE

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3. Platooning is when one building is used for two schools and two sets of teachers. A primary school, for instance, may use the school building in the morning and a secondary school in the afternoon. When a school building cannot accommodate all its learners because of sheer numbers it can also use the platooning system. The learners of foundation and intermediate grades (grade 1-4) will go to school in the morning and senior grades in the afternoon (grade 5-7). (Source: Oxford Dictionaries, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/platoon)

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H. Booyens, Facebook, 8 Sept. 2013 Skermgreep in besit van skrywer.

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