Organisational Development as a Restructuring Tool in Higher Education: The case of the Student Administration Department at the University of the Western Cape

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DEDICATION

To my late Mother, Thelma Frances Forbes, whose innumerable sacrifices inspired me to greater achievements. Her unfailing love and encouragement has spurred me on to higher academic levels.

To my husband, Alfred, and my darling daughters, Megan and Jade, whose constant and unshakable support has made my dream a reality. To my sister-in-law, Edwina, for always willingly and lovingly taking care of my girls. A mere

"Thank You" seems totally inadequate.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this whole thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Magister Public Administration at the University of the Western Cape.

I further testify that it has not been submitted for any other degree or at any other University or institution of higher learning.

Signed:	<u></u>
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ABSTRACT

In the quest for greater efficiency and responsiveness to a rapidly changing higher education environment, complex organisations like the University of the Western Cape have to constantly review their structures to assess their continued suitability and possible change and adaptation accordingly. In order to stay competitive, to meet the demands of new legislation, to stay abreast with external developments and in the light of severe financial constraints, UWC recognised the need for change. Organisational Development (OD) defined as a set of social science techniques, designed to plan and implement change in work settings for purposes of enhancing the personal developments of individuals and improving the effectiveness of organisational functioning, was recognised by UWC's Human Resources Department as an ideal tool in which planned change could be realised. This study has attempted to trace the organisational development process within the Student Administration Department, at the University of the Western Cape, started in 1999.

The aims of the study were: (i) To trace the organisation development process started in the Student Administration Department in 1999, (ii) To examine the benefits of the organisation development process, (iii) To highlight the shortcomings of the organisational development process, and (iv) To propose

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recommendations, if necessary, on improving administrative processes in the Student Administration Department.

Firstly the study highlighted the general forces behind the need for change within an organisation and it explored the ideal qualities of OD as a change management tool. One of the reasons why OD is used for example, could be discussed in terms of the open problem-solving climate it seeks to create throughout the organisation. However, the OD practice is also beset with many problems as retrenchments and fear of change, possible consequences of OD, inevitably affect the lives of people.

Secondly, factors contributing to change in higher education such as global changes, national changes and regional changes, were also explored. The most significant change that touched the globe to date is the rapid development of information technology where the deployment of such technology can be the best way to boost education and enable disadvantaged communities to become part of the economy and thereby the first world. National changes that occurred, was the deconstruction of the legacy of the systematic exclusion of Black Africans from the South African education system. Here UWC took the lead in dismantling apartheid in higher education by implementing an "open" admissions policy which provided access to growing numbers of African students. A multitude of new educational policies and analyses has also been introduced since 1994 which had a powerful impact on the functioning of higher education

institutions in South Africa. Further challenges faced by UWC, highlighted in the study, were the mounting student debt and an enrolment-driven funding formula which did not serve the institution favourably.

The study concludes by proposing recommendations in addressing key problems revealed. (i) That a communication strategy be evolved through which interaction between management and workers can be facilitated. (ii) That teambuilding exercises be embarked upon to restore the levels of trust. (iii) That the organisation development process be evaluated so that corrective action could be taken if necessary. (iv) That a proper change strategy be developed.

(v) That staff development policies be put in place and (vi) That a training

programme be established to equip management with the proper tools to adequately deal with change.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introducing the study

This study proposes to critically trace the organisation development (OD) process within the Student Administration Department, at the University of the Western Cape, started in 1999.

Beckhard (1989:33) contends that an OD programme firstly involves "the systematic diagnosis of the organisation, the development of a strategic plan for improvement, and the mobilization of resources to carry out the effort." A "total organisational change" is called for which implies the revamping of a system (system can refer to part of an organisation and not necessarily the entire organisation), which is relatively free to determine its own plans and future within very general constraints from the environment. He further emphasizes the importance of top management's commitment to the change intervention and its outcomes. It is also imperative to determine what an ideal, "healthy" organisation would look like. The above implies that OD is a long-range perspective and that no "quick-fix" strategy exists (Rothwell et al, 1995: 7).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Organisations change for two reasons either because they want to or because they have to. In recent years for example, campus governance has changed so radically that no one can accurately predict what it will be like in years to come (Mabille, 1997: 1). Many universities and technikons face a funding crisis as enrolment levels dip

dramatically, particularly at historically black universities. The Council of Higher Education for example reported in the year 2000 that there were at least 100 000 fewer students in tertiary education institutions than was predicted in 1995. It further maintained that the majority of the students appear out of step with South Africa's economic realities as most still graduate in humanities, rather than science and technology. Parliament, in the light of this, warned of an impending collapse of university and technikon education (Merten, 2000). The Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, indicated that under his leadership, because of the aforementioned problems in the South African higher education sector, technikons and universities will not receive additional resources and his ministry will be looking at rationalising tertiary institutions (Ngobeni, 1999).

Consequently, in the quest for greater efficiency and responsiveness to a rapidly changing higher education environment, complex organisations like the University of the Western Cape have to constantly review their structures to assess their continued suitability and possible change and adaptation accordingly.

The University of the Western Cape recognised the need for change. Factors like new legislation, external developments and severe financial constraints all contributed towards organisational change. Questions around "how to change", "what to change" and "what tools to use to affect change", arose. Greenberg and Baron (1997:563) contend that organisational development, defined as a set of social science techniques, designed to plan and implement change in work settings for purposes of enhancing the

personal developments of individuals and improving the effectiveness of organisational functioning, is a planned way of implementing change.

The Executive Management at the University of the Western Cape, on recommendation of its Human Resources Department, recognised that organisational development (OD) would be an ideal tool to facilitate change and embarked on various OD programmes. The Student Administration Department is but one of the departments at the aforementioned higher education institution which underwent an organisational development process. Whether the OD processes proved successful, has now to be determined retrospectively.

THE HYPOTHESIS

The implementation of OD has contributed positively to efficiency and the way in which changes were managed in the Student Administration Department of the University of the Western Cape.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study were:

- (i) To trace the organisation development process started in the Student Administration Department in 1999.
- (ii) To examine the benefits of the organisation development process.
- (iii) To highlight the shortcomings of the organisation development process.
- (iv) To propose recommendations, if necessary, on improving administrative

processes in the Student Administration Department.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative approach to research. It evaluated literature on the activities of the Student Administration Department. It drew upon both primary and secondary data. Primary data included original documents like university reports, correspondence and university policy. Secondary data consisted of books, journal articles and newspaper articles.

The researcher made use of a structured questionnaire, administered to all staff employed in the Student Administration Department, to glean information, which the primary and secondary data did not reveal. The target group to whom the questionnaire was administered, consisted of 26 staff members of the Student Administration Department. Only 10 (ten) questionnaires were returned and on those, in conjunction with documentation perused throughout the study, the researcher will report.

An unstructured interview was randomly administered to staffers of the Student Administration Department by way of convenience sampling. This implies that Student Administration Department staffers were interviewed as the researcher came across them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Change is sometimes necessitated by conditions outside of the organisation's control for example the economy, social pressure or government regulations. This kind of

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change is referred to as unplanned change. In the private sector however companies change because they "want to make things better" that is, they want to develop a competitive advantage by making changes that put them ahead of their competitors (planned change). Therefore it is not unusual for organisations to plan systematic changes in their policies, reward structure, goals and management styles (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 550 - 551). The practice of "developing an edge over competitors" has spilled over to academic institutions like the University of the Western Cape, who has to position itself in a way so that it is able to compete effectively and successfully with former "advantaged" institutions in the Western Cape Province for example the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch, for shrinking government subsidies, students and staff.

Organisations may change with respect to their organisational structure (responsibilities and procedures used), the technology used on the job and the people who perform the work. Change is likely to occur whenever the benefits associated with making a change (i.e dissatisfaction with current conditions, the availability of desirable alternatives, and the existence of a plan for achieving that alternative) outweigh the cost involved. However, most people find it difficult to accept that they have to alter their work methods. For this reason, social scientists have developed various methods known collectively as organisational development techniques to implement needed change in a manner that is both acceptable to the employees and which enhances the effectiveness of the organisation involved (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 545).

The OD process according to Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:250) consists of three components and is underpinned by action research. The three components are the diagnostic component, the action (intervention) component and the process maintenance component. The diagnostic component is aimed at diagnosing the present state of the organisational system. The valid and reliable data collected through this diagnosis is the basis for the action component. Corrective action taken on the basis of the diagnosis is achieved through OD interventions. These interventions are numerous and could focus on improving the effectiveness of individuals, small groups, work teams or larger work groups, intergroup relations and the total action and support on management's part. It also entails the making and implementation of tough and sometimes not very favourable decisions. It is a complete strategy for change that encompasses theory, practice methods, and values (Interview with an employee, December 2001).

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However, when applying the OD process to the public sector it is required that the particular effects of the public sector context be considered and that the OD process be adapted to the particular circumstances. If this is done in a systematic and sensible way OD can make a positive contribution to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public bureaucracies (Fox et al, 1991: 250).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study determines what benefits the University of the Western Cape derived from the organisational development process within the Student Administration Department. It highlights the negative and positive aspects of OD and suggests corrective action where necessary and therefore serves as a guide on restructuring, particularly to other departments within the University of the Western Cape.

DELIMITATIONS OF CONCEPTS

Organisation Development (OD)

Organisation Development is an approach to dealing with a variety of problems that occur in the daily running of an organisation or department or division. It is a planned process aimed at improving effectiveness of the entire organisation or a section thereof, such as a department or division.

Change

It implies movement toward a goal, an idealised state, or a vision of what should be and movement away from present conditions, beliefs or attitudes. (Rothwell, 1995:9)

Organisational Change

Organisational change refers to planned or unplanned transformations in an organisation's structure, technology, and/or people. (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 546)

Student Administration

Student Administration refers to the "lending of support" to the academic mission of the university in terms of admissions, registration, records and examinations.

Restructuring

Refers to the rebuilding or reorganisation of an organisation.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organised as follows:

Chapter 1:

An introduction to the Study, the Problem Statement, the Hypothesis, the Objective of the Study, the Methodology, a Literature Review, the Significance of the Study, and the Delimitations of Key Concepts.

Chapter 2:

This chapter reviews the concept "Organisational Development."

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Chapter 3:

This chapter provides an overview of Restructuring in Higher Education in the South African context.

Chapter 4:

This chapter traces the organisational development and change management processes employed in the Student Administration Department of the University of the Western Cape.

Chapter 5:

This chapter proposes recommendations and concludes the study.



CHAPTER 2

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWED

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions, beset with all kinds of problems today, are no longer readily able to respond to new challenges as vigorously and effectively as it did in the past. Universities for example have been inundated with suggestions on how to treat one or the other problem rather than focusing on how to ensure that the institution adequately treats the cause of the problem and remedy the situation in its entirety. Because of the complex nature of higher education institutions, social scientists suggest that change ought not to come from around the edges of an institution, but rather from some of the core activities (Tierney, 1998: 3). Could OD prove to be the ideal change management tool to cure the difficulties experienced by South African higher education institutions currently?

DEFINING THE NEED FOR CHANGE

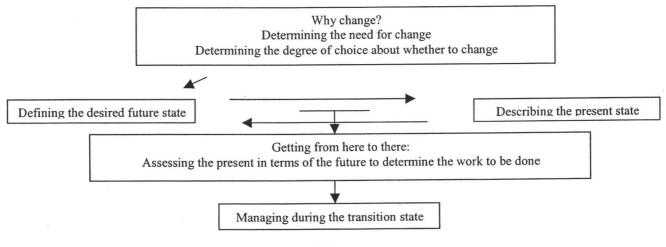
The forces requiring change in large systems today tend to emanate outside the organisation. Changes in legislation, market demand resulting from worldwide, nation-wide and regional competition, availability of resources, development of new technology, and social priorities frequently necessitate that institutional managers redesign the organisational structure and procedures, redefine their priorities, and redeploy their resources (Beckhard & Harris, 1987: 30).

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Managing change is however not a neat sequential process. The initial tasks of defining the future state and assessing present conditions according to Beckhard and Harris (1987: 30) demand simultaneous attention. As such, organisational change must start by defining the need for change. *Figure 1* below, illustrates the change management process. It indicates how one would move from the present state to the desired state. What tools to apply to affect the required changes therefore proves essential.

As a consequence of the demands of a changing environment, organisation development has emerged. A need arose for organisational processes and structures, which are far more flexible and responsive to change than traditional bureaucratic structures (Friedlander & Brown, 1989: 41). The "ideal bureaucracy" or bureaucratic structure according to Max Weber for example had the following features namely: a) an overall division of labour; b) a defined authority hierarchy of superior-subordinate relationships; c) a formal set of rules and procedures; d) impersonal general interactions; and e) selection and promotion based on merit (Robbins, 1980: 39). These features created perceptions of bureaucracies as rigid and difficult to change.

Figure: 1 The Change Management Process



ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT DEFINED:

The words organisation development according to French, Bell and Zawacki (1989: 5) refer to something about organisations and developing them. Edgar Schein in French, Bell and Zawacki (1989: 5) holds that "an organisation is the planned coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility." French, Bell and Zawacki (1989: 5) further maintain that "organisations" are "social systems" possessing characteristics; and OD is directed toward organisations or major subparts of them.

Numerous definitions have been designed to describe what the term organisation development refers to. French, Bell and Zawacki (1989: 6) recorded the following definitions of organisation development put forward by various authors:

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"Organisation development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organisation wide, and (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organisation effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organisation's 'processes,' using behavioral-science knowledge" (Beckhard, 1969: 9).

"Organisation development (OD) is a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organisations so that they can

better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself" (Bennis, 1969: 2).

"Organisation development is the strengthening of those human resources processes in organisations which improve the functions of the organic system so as to achieve its objectives" (Lippitt, 1969:1).

"OD can be defined as a planned and sustained effort to apply behavioural science for system improvement, using reflexive, selfanalytic methods" (Schmuck and Miles, 1971: 2).

Upon perusal of the many descriptions and definitions of organisation development the authors, French, Bell and Zawacki (1989: 7) surmise that: "Organisation development is a process of planned system change that attempts to make organisations (viewed as social-technical systems) better able to attain their short- and long-term objectives. This is achieved by teaching the organisation members to manage their organisation processes and culture more effectively. Facts, concepts, and theory from the behavioral science are utilized to fashion both the process and the content of interventions."

BASIC ELEMENTS OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OD consists of basic elements which are:

Planned change

A major force behind organisational change is planned change which involves activities

that are intentional and purposive in nature and designed to fulfill some organisational

goals. A great deal of organisational change comes from the strategic decision to alter

the way an organisation does business or the very nature of the business itself. Four

examples of planned organisational change can be identified namely: changes in

products or services, change in organisational size and structure, changes in

administrative systems and the introduction of new technologies (Greenberg & Baron,

1997: 550). In essence the planned change effort would target the organisation and

not individual workers. Data will be collected to identify existing problems after which a

thorough diagnosis will be made on what improvement plans and goals would prove an

appropriate invention. Furthermore, it would be expected of individual workers to act as

change agents and the long-term implementation effort of an invention, would be

continuously evaluated. Corrective action would be taken where deviation from specific

targets takes place.

Total system involvement

OD represents a total system approach. One that is integrated in nature. Instead of

concentrating only or mainly on the human system of an organisation, it also recognizes

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and takes account of the two other major systems of an organisation namely the technical or task system (work flow/the job) and the managerial or administrative system (organisation structure, policy and procedure). Since total organisation effectiveness and change depend upon the interaction of all three of these major subsystems (human, technical and managerial) with each other and with the external environment, no one system should be overemphasized and the other two ignored (Abramson, 1978: 20).

Top management involvement

OD does not necessarily always have to start "at the top". Although, the ideal situation of course would be full understanding and commitment to the OD effort and goals by the person or persons in charge. This is however not an essential criterion for a successful OD effort. An OD effort can begin at lower levels in the organisation and work out very well but two conditions must be met. Even though the top person does not have to be the change manager, someone in a strategic position in the organisation must feel the need for change and want to do something about it. The second condition that must be met is that top management must give its permission for the OD effort to get started. The build-up of top management's understanding and support may well come about gradually over a period of time, especially if the top echelon sees concrete results in performance and health emerging from the OD effort in one unit or part of the organisation (Abramson, 1978: 23).

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ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

Over the years, many different techniques for implementing planned organisational change (referred to as OD interventions) have been used by specialists attempting to improve organisational functioning (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 563). Some of the well-established OD techniques developed over time, will now be reviewed.

a) Survey Feedback

Survey feedback is an OD technique in which questionnaires and interviews are used to collect information about issues of concern to an organisation. This information is shared with employees and then used as the basis for planning organisational change (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 563). This technique thus implies two-way interaction between management and employees.

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b) Team Development

Flippo (1984: 220) holds that the dominant technique in the arsenal of the OD consultant is team development which entails a type of sensitivity session conducted for the members of an operating unit, off-site, away from the job. The services of an outsider is called in to facilitate three functions namely: (1) contacting all members separately to determine what they feel are the major obstructions to effective functioning of the unit, (2) feeding this gathered information to the convened group in a manner that preserves the confidence of information contributors, and (3) serving as a catalyst in the ensuing discussion, which is designed to encourage honest feedback, leveling, and candor. With the support of the consultant, the supervisor for example may be

expected to demonstrate openness to constructive comment and suggestions concerning how the unit's collaborative processes are functioning.

c) Intergroup Activities

Intergroup activities are activities designed to improve the effectiveness of interdependent groups – groups that must work together to produce a common output. They focus on joint activities and the output of the groups considered as a single system rather than as two sub-systems. When two groups are involved, the activities are designed intergroup or interface. When more than two groups are involved, the activities are called organisational mirroring (An Overview of OD Interventions, undated: 151).

d) Management by Objectives IVERSITY of the

This is a technique by which managers and their subordinates work together to set and then meet organisational goals. It consists of three crucial steps namely: (1) developing an action plan; (2) implementing the developed plan and (3) evaluating the results of the set plan (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 568 – 569).

e) Organisational Transformation Activities

This involves large-scale system changes. In essence, activities designed to fundamentally change the nature of the organisation. Almost everything about the organisation is changed; its structure, management philosophy, reward systems, the design of work, mission, values, and culture. Total quality programmes are

transformational; so are programmes to create high-performance organisations or high-performance work systems. Socio-technical systems theory and open systems planning provide the basis for such activities (An Overview of OD Interventions, undated: 152).

Further families of OD interventions such as: a) Grid Organisation Development Activities, b) Life- and Career-Planning Activities, and c) Strategic Management Activities have also provided assistance to organisations in addressing their specific problems effectively (An Overview of OD Interventions, undated: 145).

REASONS FOR USING OD

The reasons why OD are used could be discussed in terms of the problems it endeavours to solve. These problems include for example goal displacement where organisational goals are displaced by personal goals and the inappropriate application of rules and regulations. Employee alienation has been identified as a further problem as well as executive centralization and concentration of power. Another reason why OD is used is to alleviate the problem of top-down information flow and insensitivity to the problems of clients and employees (Fox et al, 1991: 242).

Furthermore, OD aims to create an open problem-solving climate throughout the organisation and it seeks to locate decision-making and problem-solving responsibilities as close to sources of information as possible. In this way, trust will be created among individuals and groups in the organisation. OD further seeks the establishment of a

management style relevant to current objectives rather than past practices or strict rules and regulations and it searches for an increase in self-control and self-direction for people within the organisation (Kramer, 1997: 60).

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF OD

French et al (1989: 641) hold that the OD practice is beset with many problems and issues because it inevitably affects peoples' lives, sometimes very deeply. The authors maintain that one would like to think that OD affects people positively. However, questions of ethics, of values, of what is helpful and what is hurtful, do arise. Furthermore, when applying an OD intervention "hidden agendas" should be guarded against and this pose a challenge. In some instances, certain forms of OD also brings about deep changes to an organisation's culture.

UNIVERSITY of the STEPS IN THE OD PROGRAMMESTERN CAPE

Albrecht (1983: 150 – 153) felt it appropriate to devise the following steps which he perceived as crucial to an organisational development programme, in order to ensure successful change management within an institution.

Step 1:

The chief executive officer, with the consensus of the management team, engages a management consultant to help the organisation.

Step 2:

The consultant meets with the management team, gets agreement on the general approach to the OD process, draws up a contract specifying what the consultant will do, what management will do, estimates the duration of the OD programme and its costs.

Step 3:

At the consultant's request, management should appoint an OD task force/team of approximately 6 people for example, the head of the human resources department, and a manager out of each department affected by the OD process.

Step 4:

With the assistance of the consultant, the members of the task team undertake a team-development process to prepare themselves for their new roles. Its outcome should be a well-developed set of goals, roles and working relationships, and a general plan and time line for the conduct of the OD programme, divided into the four stages of assessment, problem-solving, implementation and evaluation.

Step 5:

The task team presents the general plan and time line for the OD programme to top management for approval. The budget should also be approved for the programme's first phase. Future funding will depend on management's evaluation of results.

Step 6:

The assessment phase begins with a series of task force meetings and top management meetings for the purpose of pooling observations. The purpose of the fact-finding process (where the organisation's internal and external environment will be investigated) will reveal where the starting point of the OD process will be.

Step 7:

The problem-solving phase begins with a concentrated workshop. With the consultant coordinating the workshop activity, the management team and the OD task team go through all the findings of the assessment phase, identify the changes they want to make in the institution, organize them in priority order, and develop specific plans for the various change-projects that will be necessary.

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Step 8:

The implementation process includes all the high-priority change projects identified during the problem solving phase, as well as some others added later as the OD programme proceeds.

Step 9:

The evaluation phase is an effort in which the people on the OD task force review the status of all change projects under the OD plan against their original objectives, and report the status and accomplishments to top management. They make a formal presentation to the management staff and offer a plan for extending the OD effort

further, this time in certain selected areas of high payoff. Further long-range solutions if any, will be put in place.

Step 10:

After the initial thrust of the first year or so, the OD task team continues to facilitate the continuation of the change projects. It makes evaluation process nearly continual and reports status to top management on a regular basis. At a certain point OD as an ad hoc proposition, begins to blend with the ongoing management process.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Ramirez (1994: 1) concludes that: "Organisations, groups members, and the world that touches them are in a constant state of change. Without the benefit of forecasting and strategic planning, any organisation will be des-fined simply to muddle through from crisis to crisis. The principles and practices of organisational development allow an organisation to gain a better understanding of itself and its future, and to establish a course of action that will lead it closer to its mission."

This chapter highlighted forces behind the need for change within an organisation. It explored OD's ideal qualities as a change management tool. Besides identifying specific OD techniques, the elements of OD, and the reasons why OD could or should be employed to affect change, negativities surrounding an OD intervention was also alluded to. It also listed a systematic framework which proves crucial in rendering an OD attempt successful. The chapter further showed that the OD process is unique in its

approach due to the values it adheres to and the particular process it utilizes. OD is thus a distinctive intervention strategy whereby the general environment is altered to emphasize collaboration, competence, confrontation, trust, candor, and support. This leads to enhanced proficiency to improve organizational quality, vitality, productivity, and service.

The following chapter will examine the restructuring process in the higher education system in South Africa, with specific emphasis on the factors contributing to the need for restructuring.

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CHAPTER 3

RESTRUCTURING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION:

"A century ago, advances in machine technology made farming so highly efficient that fewer hands were needed to plant and reap the harvest. The displaced laborers fled to nearby cities, seeking jobs in newly opened factories — ironically, taking advantage of opportunities created by some of the same technologies that displaced them from the farm. The economy shifted from agrarian to manufacturing, and the industrial revolution was under way. With it came drastic shift in where people lived, how they worked, how they spent their leisure time, how much money they made, and how they spent it. Today's business analysts claim that we are currently experiencing another industrial revolution — one driven by a new wave of economic and technological forces. A great deal of transformation is occurring — that is, planned or unplanned transformation in an organisation's structure, technology, and/or people" (Greenberg & Baron, 1997: 545 – 546).

Often repeated, sometimes unsettling and rarely understood, the word "change" holds different meanings to different people as so aptly illustrated in the above quotation. It is often perceived as a threat to stability and more often than not hampers continuity. Change creates anxiety, uncertainty and stress, even for those managing change. Most

often than not, people who are fully committed to change may experience stress. Seldom are there any guarantees that the new approach will work, that it will deliver the goods. Those who want change to be successful many a times find themselves working long hours, dealing with problems, trying to overcome the doubts of others, and doing everything necessary to see the changes through (Carnall, 1991: 91).

The South African higher education system has seen profound global, national and regional changes in recent years. The factors contributing to these changes will now be explored.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION GLOBAL CHANGES

The most significant change that touched the globe to date, is the rapid development of information technology. In most instances, policies and procedures come and go. Scientific discovery however is irreversible and changes the condition of man for all time. Potter (2000: 20) holds that the technological change is so profound and predicts that it will continue for at least another thirty years. It is his view that through the virtual proximity produced by information technology and communications, the world has telescoped to a global village. The Internet revolution for example is largely credited for stimulating the rapid success and rise of globalisation (Fakir, 2001: 131). The deployment of technology is one of the best ways to boost education and to enable the disadvantaged to become part of the economy and thereby of the first world. In developed countries around the world, innovations in information technology and

communications are significant. They make processes, life and business easier, faster, better and more fun. In a country like South Africa, new developments in technology can be a lifeline, which will enable the disadvantaged to leapfrog from a position of weakness into a position of strength (Joffe, 2000: 33 - 34).

NATIONAL CHANGES

a) Democratization

South Africa's transition to democracy has been a journey of almost mythical proportions. Since officially discarding apartheid in 1994, several attempts at addressing social inequalities have been embarked upon at national government level. In 1993 just before the first democratic elections the National Education Policy Initiatives (NEPI) was tasked with deconstructing the legacy of systematic exclusion, particularly of Black Africans, from the education system (Report of the Gender Equity Task Team, 1997: 25). As a response, the University of the Western Cape for example, acted upon this challenge and under the leadership of Professor Jakes Gerwel (Vice-Chancellor for the period: 1987 – 1994 at the University of the Western Cape) took on the endeavour of dismantling apartheid in the South African higher education system by implementing an "open" admissions policy which provided access to growing numbers of African students (Bisseker, 2000: 1).

b) Radical educational policy changes

A multitude of new educational policies and analyses has been introduced since 1994.

The White Paper on Education and Training (1995), but one of the policies developed,

has as it main tenets:

- A just and equitable system that provides high quality education to all learners, regardless of age.
- Education and training that has as its end goal the empowerment of people to participate in democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression and community life.
- Assisting citizens to build a nation that is free of all forms of discrimination.

 Further, reports attempting to address the core problems facing the higher education system are:
 - The National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) Report (1996)
 - The Education White Paper (1997)
 - The Institutional Planning process (1998)
 - The Council on Higher Education Report (2000)

(Reddy, 2001: 68)

WESTERN CAPE

These radical educational policy changes have a powerful impact on the functioning of higher education institutions in South Africa. For example, whilst an increasing mix of race and gender within the student populations at many universities is a desirable outcome, it brings with it a myriad of demands on hosting institutions. Such demands cover ground from diverse academic training needs to culture-related tuition which, in turn, calls for diversity in staff (academic and administrative) and their areas of expertise (Alt, 2002: 16). OD as a change management tool, would prove useful in accommodating these changes by devising means for higher education to adapt to new

legislation.

c) Mounting Student Debt

When observing registration numbers at universities across South Africa, it is clear that there is an increase in the number of historically marginalized people entering these institutions. For example in 1984, the ratio of White to African headcounts in higher education as a whole was 69:18. By 1988 it was 58:29 and in 1993 46:41. Thereafter, White students were in the minority (42% compared to 45% Africans in 1994) (Cooper & Subotzky: 2001: 13). In most instances however, these economically disadvantaged students, are unable to settle debt, which in the end accumulates and spirals out of control and more often than not, leaves the institution in a huge financial dilemma. These students are predominantly first-generation university attendees and their parents in most instances occupy the lower rungs of the South African socio-economic The implication is that even though black (African, Indian and Coloured) students suffered various forms of discrimination under apartheid, they are still discriminated against due to their financial status. As a consequence, because of the inability of most African students to settle student debt, institutions like the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa) and the Universities of Transkei, Fort Hare, North-West, Zululand and the North (historically disadvantaged institutions) are in desperate need of government grants to stay afloat. Ngobeni (1999: 1) reports that the six historically disadvantaged universities currently in crisis have incurred huge deficits and have accumulated student debt totalling more than R250-million in the past three years. In the light of reduced government subsidies the universities are relying on student fees to finance their institutions. However, as alluded to earlier on in the text, most students do not have money to pay. Students who do manage to settle their fees largely use government loans. But when they complete their studies, they often struggle to find employment, and so are unable to repay their loans.

Where black students cannot settle student debt, white students in most instances are able to do so due to their advantaged socio-economic status privied by apartheid. The funding formula, to which this author will now turn, is another factor that has contributed towards the current problems.

d) Funding Formula

Funding to universities and technikons is largely based on an enrolment-driven formula, otherwise known as base formula funding, which is a common funding mechanism in many higher education systems internationally. The same funding formula applied today, was also utilised prior to 1994. Insofar as universities are concerned, the formula is supposed to indicate a subsidy amount equal to 80% of a standard unit cost per successful student in a discipline. However, it has never been funded in full. For example in 1995, for most universities, it covered 62% of the 80%, or, in other terms, approximately 50% of that standard unit cost. In common with many formulas worldwide, it gives half credit for registering a student and half when the student passes. This works to the disadvantage of the historically black universities (HBUs) now generally known as the historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs) as they have overwhelmingly taken on the burden of the at-risk students produced by a profoundly

flawed schooling system, where scholars in the rural areas for example were taught by unqualified school teachers and where the focus of the curriculum was more on arts and culture and not science and technology. Therefore HDUs inevitably have higher failure rates. Another element of the formula relates to research productivity. Again, the HDUs are at a disadvantage. Forced by the factors mentioned earlier, they are unable to compete in research productivity. They also have substantially poorer staffing ratios than their better established fellows and further lack the same level of infrastructure. To complicate matters, the formula has not always been applied uniformly. Some universities were, for a while, arbitrarily treated differently from others. UWC was the most adversely affected university in the country on this count. At the worst point, UWC received approximately a third of the amount of the standard cost unit (Ridge, 1996, 4). In the year 2000, Tembile Kulati (special advisor to the Minister of Education at the time) reported that the Department of Education recognised the shortcomings in the funding formula and established a Finance Reference Group whose brief was to advise government on the development of a new funding formula. Currently the higher education sector still awaits the new funding formula.

REGIONAL CHANGES

a) Cooperation/Rationalisation

Reddy (2001: 77) contends that the time has arrived to modernise the Higher Education System consistent with international global trends and local and national realities. He has found that Section 6 of the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) noted that:

there has been little or no co-operation in relation to broader policy goals such as

reducing programme duplication, building academic and administrative capacity, enhancing responsiveness to regional and national needs and laying the basis for new institutional and organisational types;

- there is "unmitigated competition" for example in the Western Cape Province between the Dentistry Faculties of the University of Stellenbosch and UWC, which seems to be exacerbating instead of reducing programme overlap and duplication;
- institutions claim to be committed to collaboration.

The Education Ministry is however convinced that:

- institutional collaboration remains the only viable option to ensure effective implementation of redress measures. This cannot be left to voluntarism.
- Reducing the number of institutions through merges will play a key role in the transformation of the Higher Education System.

It will however not be easy to persuade institutions to give up the status of their institutions through mergers however beneficial it may seem. Staff unions appear to be opposing any merger primarily because of the possibility of retrenchments. The National Plan cautions that a merger process is complex and costly, and that time and human resources required are not to be underestimated.

An alternative way of considering regional cooperation, does exist. For example, the merging of higher education institutions in the Durban area could result in two institutions, that is one technikon and one university. This would result in considerable rationalisation of programmes and elimination of overlap in the region. Reddy (2001: 80)

maintains that while it would take time and effort to create such integrated institutions, the historically advantaged/disadvantaged divide would be transcended and much of the suspicion and historical baggage would be swept away. Historical baggage in this context refers to the fact that racial divisions were prominent between historically advantaged institutions (whites only) and historically disadvantaged institutions (African blacks, coloureds and Indians). These divisions were sharpened with the advent of legislated apartheid after 1948. Afrikaans institutions provided intellectual backing for the new ideology. English institutions protested against apartheid at every stage. Alternative traditions were alive in both groups of institutions. The former Natal province for example could open a desperately needed medical school only if it was prepared to accept it as segregated. This medical school produced most of South Africa's black Similarly, Rhodes University accepted the segregated Fort Hare as a doctors. constituent college. The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959 barred black In terms of its people from attending institutions designated for white people. provisions, a number of colleges designated for specific apartheid categories were established the following year: Western Cape for Coloured people, Salisbury Island (now Durban-Westville) for Indians, Zululand for Zulus, the North for the North Sotho, Ndebele and other groups of the far north, and so on (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001: 5-6). Today, in all South African universities it is increasingly clear that the burden of undoing the educational effects of the apartheid past has to be shared. Constructive cooperation as well as competition between different types of institutions may be a consequence.

To facilitate the above suggestion, Cabinet, on 29 May 2002, approved the

Government's groundbreaking proposals for the transformation and reconstruction of higher education. The Ministry of Education maintains that these proposals herald the way for a system that is equitable in its distribution of resources and opportunities, academically and financially sustainable and productive so that is can more effectively meet the teaching, skills development and research needs of our country. proposed new system will comprise of 21 higher education institutions, consisting of 11 universities and 6 technikons and 4 comprehensive institutions. Most of the historically disadvantaged universities will either be merged with each other, or merged with a Technikon. An example of the proposed merger can be found in the Limpopo Province where the University of the North, the University of Venda and the Medical University of Southern Africa will form the basis of a new institution which will be developed as one of the flagships of the reconstructed education system. Before the finalisation of each of the proposed mergers, by law, a three-month period is allowed for comments and further engagement between the Ministry of Education and higher education sector stakeholders (Press Statement by the Minister of Education on the Transformation and Reconstruction of the Higher Education System, 2002: 1 - 6). To facilitate the proposed mergers, which appears to be an assault of black institutions notwithstanding the stated rationale that the mergers would strengthen them, OD would prove a useful change management tool.

b) Competition for students

An effective and efficient Student Administration Department, lies at the heart of any university as it is the department that is responsible for the recruitment, admission, and

registration of students. If this department does not function optimally, vigorous rejuvenation is required. To compete effectively for students regionally, nationally and internationally, the University of Cape Town for example, renamed its Student Affairs Department to the Student Development and Services Department (SDSD) to ensure the kind of services needed by a world-class African University. This department's functions were carefully restructured and now range from financial aid to health services. It aims to contribute significantly to the University of Cape Town's mission of producing well-rounded graduates who will contribute to the development of South Africa in either the private or public sectors (Nuttall, 1999: 24 – 25).

The university sector now also has to compete for the "weaker" white students who may have studied a Bachelor of Arts degree with the knowledge of securing a civil service job, prior to 1994. However, today, the public sector playing fields are no longer accessible to white South Africans only. Therefore, these "academically weaker" white students enrol in one of the many private colleges which have mushroomed in recent years on the promise of a more job-orientated education for those with an ordinary matric pass (Merten, 2000).

Afrikaans universities on the other hand, have attracted increasing numbers of black students, particularly since 1995. One reason being that Afrikaans universities are regarded as better equipped and their degrees held in better esteem by future employers (Merten, 2000). Consequently, a decline in enrolment at former black universities came about. Also, it would appear however, that private colleges remain

the biggest competitor for business in the South African higher education sector, with their hands-on approach to education and training. Experiential training for example is embedded in their curriculum, which immediately equip students with a knowledge of the marketplace, organisational structures and employer's expectations. The student is thus provided with practical and creative scope, and potential for advancement and personal growth in the chosen field of study.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored various factors contributing to change in the higher education sector in South Africa. Global changes such as advancements in the areas of information technology and how it impacted upon education, were highlighted. National changes in terms of new legislation, student debt and the funding formula affecting higher education, were also scrutinized. This revealed major discrepancies between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged institutions worthy of note. Further factors identified contributing to higher education change were regional cooperation and the competition for students. Again, one could see how apartheid benefited historically white institutions to the detriment of black higher education institutions. It can be concluded that changes globally, nationally and regionally has undoubtedly had an effect on the higher education sector in South Africa.

The following chapter will trace the OD process in the Student Administration Department at the University of the Western Cape, started in 1999.

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CHAPTER 4

TRACING THE ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCRESS IN THE STUDENT ADMINSTRATION DEPARTMENT

INTRODUCTION:

This chapter seeks to trace the OD process within the Student Administration Department, at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), started in 1999. Firstly, the researcher will take a look at the evolution of UWC. This will set the tone for discussions on factors contributing towards the need for change and why OD was perceived as the ideal tool to facilitate the change process at the aforementioned institution. The outcomes of the OD process will also be scrutinized.

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UWC: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDERN CAPE

Evolution of UWC

In 1959, Parliament adopted legislation establishing the University College of the Western Cape as a constituent college of the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria. It was an apartheid institution for people classified as "Coloured". The new college was entirely under white control, with coloured people given only an advisory role. In 1970, the institution gained University status and its independence. It was now able to award its own degrees and became known as UWC (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1).

The University of the Western Cape has a history of creative struggle against oppression, discrimination and disadvantagement. UWC's key concerns with access, equity and quality in higher education arise from extensive practical engagement in helping the historically marginalized participate fully in the life of the nation. In the early 1970s, protest action by students and black academic staff led to the appointment, in 1975, of the first black Rector. The new, freer climate was hospitable to intellectual debate and internationally respected scholarships. There was a rapid rise in enrolment (from 2073 to 7701 in ten years), the original four faculties grew to eight (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1).

In its mission statement of 1982, titled *UWC Objectives*, the university formally rejected the apartheid ideology on which it was established, adopting a declaration of non-racialism and "a firm commitment to the development of the Third World communities in South Africa" (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1). Through the University of the Western Cape Act of 1983, the university finally gained its autonomy on the same terms as the established ('white') institutions (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s an unambiguous alignment with the mass democratic movement was forged and a new edge was introduced to the academic project. Under the banner of "an intellectual home of the left", (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1), space was created for curriculum renewal and for innovative research and outreach projects. The university

formalised its 'open' admissions policy, providing access to a growing number of African students, and paving the way for rapid growth. By 1996 Africans constituted more than half the student enrolment (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1).

The 1990s were characterised by a sense of rich achievement. UWC was able to play an important role in the emergence of the new democratic order. After the 1994 elections, many of its senior academics and alumni found themselves in public office at all levels, a number in the national cabinet. Through its activism and struggle against apartheid, UWC set the agenda for transformation in higher education (University of the Western Cape, Information to international students, 2000: 1).

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Client base

From the start, UWC had a strong rural network. Many of its students came from the severely impoverished areas in the Cape countryside. This implied that they came from disadvantaged schools and were at once confronted with serious pedagogical problems upon entering black universities like UWC, which were "downgraded" and "underfunded" since its inception. These students, until the mid-1980s, could draw on state bursaries, and hence UWC were not faced with accumulating debt. However, since the end of the 1980s, students have seen bursary money and loans dwindle and have had to rely on their own resources. A further limit on student resources was witnessed by the impoverishment of their parents and guardians who have been unable to procure bank loans. Consequently, these students have relied on loans from the inadequate

subsidy that black universities receive from the government (Lets break the nauseating campus cycle, 1998).

Government Subsidy

Government subsidies, which are based on the number of students enrolled at a tertiary institution, are heavily relied upon by UWC, who faced a decline in enrolment figures in the year 2000. As government grants dry up in real terms, fees are increased and collection methods tightened which implies that many students from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot afford to go on to tertiary studies (Merten, 2000). For example since 1998, the University of the Western Cape has toughened its stance on student debt. It had managed to inculcate amongst its students a culture of paying debt which had topped R83 million in that year. It refused to graduate students with outstanding fees and demanded an up-front payment of R2000 upon registration (Bisseker, 2000: 79).

The threat of losing competent staff members, is a further constraint posed by the reduction in the government subsidy. UWC staffers for example are afforded an opportunity to upgrade their qualifications through "free" tuition but at the end of the day leave the institution due to inadequate compensation and the lack of career development.

The role of the Student Administration Department

In the light of fiscal resources becoming more restricted at UWC, the administration and

management of Student Administration programmes, services and activities at this institution have grown increasingly complex. Besides the fact that Student Administration professionals today, work directly with students, they are also required to manage facilities and budgets, participate in policy decisions influencing the life of the institution, plan new construction projects and numerous other functions which will be discussed later on in this chapter, as well as deal with emerging campus crisis such as the proposed mergers announced by the Ministry of Education and approved by Cabinet on 29 May 2002. This seriously impedes the productivity levels of staff. Consequently the following question arises: "What changes need to implemented to ensure that the Student Administration Department becomes an effective component of UWC?" Before exploring this question however, we need to assess what exactly the functions of the Student Administration Department entail.

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Functions of the Student Administration Department

The Student Administration Department consists of four departments namely:

- Student Examination
- Student Records
- Student Admissions and
- Student Registrations

The *Model of the Student Administration Department* before restructuring in 1999, took the following form:



A condensed list of each department's functions, is listed below.

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The functions of the **Student Admission Department** is wide-ranging. Responsibilities encompass the processing of application forms for undergraduate, post graduate and foreign students. It ensures that the necessary processes are in place for the selection of students into specialized or professional courses and further liaises with departments and faculties and other tertiary institutions regarding the admission or readmission of students. Dissemination of all relevant information to prospective students is another function the department takes responsibility for.

The **Student Registration Department** is responsible for functions such as the processing of course changes, applications for rebate and adjustments to registration.

It ensures that the operational and administrative efficiency of the registration of students and all related activities, are adhered to. Further functions it performs are the provision of statistical data on registration particulars, as well as the creation of course codes and credit points for courses. The functions of the Student Administration Department Help Desk, also falls within the ambit of the Student Registration Department.

Joint responsibilities which the Student Admission and Registration Departments are responsible for ranges from the arranging of meetings between faculties, academic departments and support services (eg. IT, Finance, Financial Aid, Residence Administration), to resolving problem areas or the discussion of policy issues, related to Admissions and Registration. The compilation and updating of general information brochures for Student Administration Department is another function the aforementioned departments take responsibility for.¹

The **Student Examination Department** is liable for diverse functions such as ensuring that examination time-tables are available to students and staff for mid-year, final and re-evaluation examinations and the receiving and printing of examination papers and the appointment of invigilators and the processing of claim forms. The department further secures venues for examinations and handles examination enquiries. Requesting mark adjustments and the processing of requests for the remark of examination scripts, are further functions the department performs. The department is also responsible for the graduation process and all tasks associated with it.

¹ Undated Job description of Manager: Student Admissions and Registration.

Major functions of the **Student Records Department** are the keeping of records for each individual student and the regular auditing of each file for outstanding documentation. It further issues academic records and certificates of conduct to students, other institutions and donors. Microfilming of records is another unique function the department performs.

Further responsibilities of the Student Admission and Records Departments include Scholarships and fellowships, where they assist the Deputy Registrar with the compilation and dissemination of information and application forms regarding such.

Staff Development and Training:

The manager of the Student Examinations and the Student Records Departments ensures that staff receives the necessary training according to needs identified and in terms of what the budget allows. Furthermore, he/she makes recommendations to Deputy Registrar regarding staff development and training.²

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE NEED FOR OD

Fiscal constraints

Mounting student debt and a reduction in the government's subsidy was crippling UWC financially (Jawoodeen,1998). Newspaper articles flashing negative publicity about activities on campus was a common phenomenon pre 1999. Headlines such as: "Union to fight UWC retrenchments" (Singh, 1998) and "UWC Axes Profs" (Botha, 1998) arouse no amazement amongst newspaper readers, as the university's financial woes

² Undated job description of the Manager: Student Examinations and Records.

became common knowledge. Continuous disruptions on campus where disadvantaged students annually tried to register at the cash-strapped institution, further tarnished UWC's already bleak image (Electronic Mail and Guardian, 1998). Another cause for concern arose in 1998 where Nehawu (the workers union) blamed the university's financial difficulties on Professor Cecil Abrahams, the rector and vice-chancellor at the time, and further accused him of maladministration.

Voluntary Severance Packages/Retrenchments

Due to severe fiscal constraints the university realised it would have to cut costs on academics and administrative personnel to survive. In certain cases management offered some workers voluntary severance packages and in others staff were retrenched. This resulted in the loss of 40 academics and 420 support staff, a R36 million reduction in the pay-roll (Bisseker, 2000). Five of the administrative staff members in the Student Administration Department took up this severance package offer. The Head of the Student Administration Department was promoted, creating a vacancy, and a further three staff members took ill due to extensive psychological strain brought on by uncertainties surrounding their future at the University. Confusion, disorganisation and lack of direction caused major unhappiness and demotivation among staff.³

Institutional difficulties

Further institutional difficulties identified by the Registrar, Dr Julian Smith, at the time,

³ Letter from Concerned Staff members to Rector, 3 May 2000.

(1999) were:

- Uneven institutional response to importance of delivering quality services to customers.
- Extensive curriculum changes.
- Transformation, democratisation, transparency, accountability, inclusivity, cogovernance.
- Increasing staff expectations versus increasing institutional expectations.
- The quest for greater decentralisation driven demands.
- Imperatives of greater efficiency and improved quality service.

The university's financial problems, the vacancies created due to staff taking the offer of voluntary severance packages and further institutional difficulties, had a major impact on the functioning of the Student Administration Department. How the University employed OD as a restructuring strategy to adequately deal with the above difficulties has now to be determined retrospectively.

THE ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Step 1:

The Executive Management of the University of the Western Cape, appointed Mr Anwar Van der Schyff in 1999 as facilitator or OD consultant to assist with the Restructuring of the Student Administration Department.

Step 2:

The consultant met with the management team to get consensus on the general OD process. No records are available on the consultant's envisaged duration of the OD programme and costs implications.4

Step 3:

An OD task team was appointed consisting of the Consultant, the Acting Head at the time (1999) of the Student Administration Department, and a representative from each of the following departments: Examinations, Admissions, Registrations and Records.⁵ This was done as staff raised concerns about a "top down" restructuring approach by management. It was hoped by broadening the consultative process that staff would be afforded a better opportunity for participation and thereby develop a clearer understanding of the process and its expected outcomes as well as accept coresponsibility for the implementation and management of a preferred restructuring model⁶.

Step 4:

The working group was tasked to come up with a restructuring model covering all the important principles of the functioning of the Student Administration Department'. Examples of these models had to be discussed with staff in order to determine the preference. Management then had to take the final decision. Although the OD phases

⁴ Letter from concerned staff to the Rector dated 3 May 2000.

⁵ Letter from concerned staff to the Rector dated 3 May 2000.

⁶ Memo address to Staff member in the Student Administration Department from the Acting Registrar, dated 26 April 2000.

⁷ Letter of concerned staff address to the Rector dated 3 May 2000.

of assessment, problem-solving, implementation and evaluation, form a core part of the restructuring process, no formal plan around this process was available. The timeframe attached to activities were as follows: a) Student Administration Restructuring Model to be presented to the Executive Forum by 28 February 2000. b) Student Administration staff members to be briefed on the Student Administration Restructuring Model prior to 28 February 2000, and c) Implementation date – 1 March 2000.

Step 5:

The assessment phase:

- Relations amongst staff appeared strained. The attitude of some staffers proved problematic too.
- Uncertainties prevailed around the changing of job titles.
- Questions arose around how duties will change.
- The role of the suggested IT advisor needed clarity.
- More clarity was needed around various positions for example, the three heads to be reported to by lower level staff.
- Answers were sought as to whether restructuring will prove beneficial to all staff in relation to job advancement or improvement or just to the new Section Heads.
- Staff members wanted to know whether they had a choice about restructuring.
- Problems with job evaluation based on previous experience.
- The relationship with faculties.

 An organisational structure which retains most aspects of the current structure, would be preferable.⁸

In general, the overall situation appeared strained and fear of the eminent changes, appeared tangible.

Step 6:

The problem-solving phase:

Staff agreed that the institution faced a new reality which required adaptive behaviour.

Accordingly, a number of meetings were held in this regard which included:

- a) General staff meetings.
- b) Working group meetings.
- c) A workshop on relationship building.

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It was agreed that change could be facilitated by way of an integrated model, which is a way of organizing work so that people are able to acquire and use a greater range of skills and it allows for the broadening of an employee's skills beyond the boundaries of his/her current job. The key features of the integrated approach are:

- Functional integration.
- Improving individual, team and organisational functioning.
- Imparting skills and knowledge to enable continues improvement.
- Widespread participation and involvement.
- Dealing with a range of "people" problems in the organisation.

⁸ "Nine years of Student Administration: An Overview" from the desk of the Registrar, 24 November 1999.

Improving organisational effectiveness by improved organisational processes.

Consensus was further reached on the criteria for a preferred restructuring model. It was agreed that this model would:

- Encourage competent teamwork and contribute to functional integration;
 cross-functional team approaches; cross-functional communication; and the rational use of resources.
- Allow for the identification of policies, practices and norms in Student Administration which shall be modified in line with the clear vision regarding customer care.
- Produce systems to achieve quality performance and quality assurance.
- Allow for measurement and audit of processes and procedures, with a view to ensure accountability and productivity.
- Encourage feedback, recognition and reward.
- Create promotional opportunities.
- Formalize ongoing staff development and training.
- Be able to respond to the pressures of decentralization.
- Be able to allow for further modification as the need may arise.

The integrated model required adaptive behaviour where staff were required to take on specific roles. Values would be reprioritized and issues would be depersonalized. A second important component of the integrated approach was that of reward. The following criteria for reward/remuneration were identified:

- a) Increased complexity of the job including integration of functions and multiskilling.
- b) Career progression linked to respective "bands" in terms of key performance areas (KPAs) and outputs achieved.
- Increments linked to developments, cross-functional performance (KPAs and outputs).
- d) Cost saving linked to posts not being filled.
- e) Movement of staff members with the structure placing them within different job functions.
- f) Skew ness in salary scales being addressed.
- g) The preferred model would strongly be underpinned by information technology support. The establishment of a post in Student Administration in this regard would be considered.

The working group proposed the following process as a means of making progress in the OD endeavour.

- Identify structures and the departmental reporting lines (head count to be made).
- Finalise structure and levels.
- Finalise head count of new structure.
- Compile job descriptions for each of the proposed jobs in the new structure.
- Grade jobs.
- Seek approval of Executive Management.
- Identify criteria to match current head count for new structure.

- · Filling of posts in new structure.
- Identifying current head count.
- · Selecting staff for positions.
- Implementation
- Evaluation of each member's performance on a regular basis.

On 24 November 1999 the Working Group presented to the Registrar and the Deputy Registrar their recommendations for a preferred model. They identified **model A** as the model that met the needs and the criteria as set out earlier on. (See organogram, Pg 52).

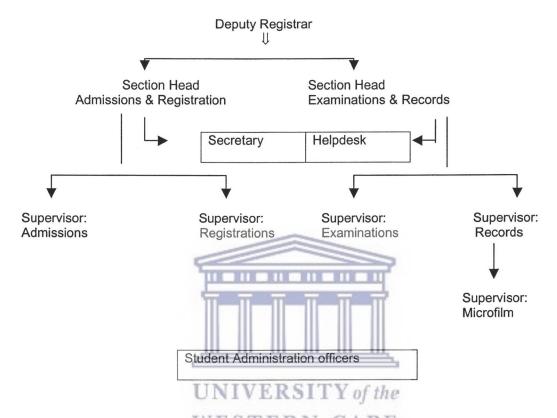
The main features of the model were:

- a) To collapse the current four sub-sections (Admissions, Registration, Examinations and Records) into two viz, Admissions/Registration and Examinations and Records.
- b) To create three levels in which jobs are graded ("banded"). At the lower level there are Student Administration Officers (grades 13 11). This implies that there will be no staff below level 13. At the middle level and overseeing the Administrative Officer are Supervisors (grades 10 9) and at the higher level there are two Section Heads (grades 8) each overseeing a section⁹.

⁹ Correspondence address to staff member of the Student Administration Department form the Acting Registrar dated 26 April 2000.

MODEL A¹⁰:

STUDENT ADMINISTRATION ORGANOGRAM



The Executive Management of the University, on 1 July 2000, implemented the restructuring model which collapsed the sub-sections Admissions, Registrations, Examinations and Records, into two divisions namely Admissions/Registrations and Examinations/Records as illustrated above.

OUTCOMES OF THE OD PROCESS

The purpose of this section is to present the data with brief discussions as to the interpretation and implications of the research findings.

¹⁰ Undated structure of the Student Administration Department from the desk of the Deputy Registrar.

The need for change

All staff members were in agreement that the need for change existed. This was largely attributed to the number of vacancies created by those accepting voluntary severance packages or promotion, and others who left the Department due to ill health¹¹. Responses recorded on why restructuring of the Department was necessary are, and the researcher quotes:

"Enhance productivity/Movement of Staff/Promotion"

"To promote efficient client service/To reduce the risk of losing students and to have a better understanding on how other departments operate."

"Yes, workload had increased after voluntary retrenchments."

"UWC overall does not have a overall promotion policy - meaning people stagnate."

"To improve service delivery."

"We needed some changes."

"To build relations and cost-saving."

"To counter staff shortage thru multiskilling."

In reality, the workload of most staffers increased, only some staffers got promoted and relations amongst staffers in certain departments appeared more strained than ever before. The discontent expressed by a number of staffers around the inadequate financial compensation received after restructuring, should still be addressed (unstructured interviews – March 2002).

¹¹ Correspondence to the Rector from concerned staff dated 3 May 2000.

Consultative process

Even though 100% of the respondents to the questionnaire concur that they were informed about the restructuring or OD process to be embarked upon, they did not fully comprehend what the change process would entail. Though their fears were highlighted at discussion forums and through various correspondence, no real plan of action was put into place to address or alleviate the fears expressed. 50% of respondents argued that they did not have adequate input into the restructuring process. The situation for staff was that management developed a restructuring model, presented it to staff members and resorted to bullying tactics when staff expressed misgivings about the model. Endorsement from all staff members was not secured. One OD technique in the form of a team development exercise 12 around obstacles in the restructuring process in the researcher's opinion is totally inadequate. 70% of the respondents to the questionnaire concurs that this OD technique did not fulfill its purpose of encouraging constructive comments on collaborative processes.

Job integration and multi-skilling

Job integration and the multi-skilling of staff in the Student Administration Department were further outcomes of the OD process. Job integration for example refers to the process where functions are added to a particular job to reduce monotony and multi-skilling. It refers to the process whereby staff members are expected to perform, or rotate to more than one job (Carrell et al, 1998: 115). Therefore supervisors and Student Administration officers in the Examination Section were expected to perform

¹² Correspondence from Acting Registrar Academic to all staff member in student administration dated 26 April 2000.

cross functionally in the Records Section and vice versa while the supervisors and Student Administration officers in the Registration Section were expected to perform cross functionally in the Admission Section and vice versa.

Developmental plans linked to key performance areas (KPA's), were jointly drawn up by Section Heads, the Deputy Registrar and Supervisors and were linked to outputs achieved by staffers.

It was envisaged that the developmental plans be implemented in the form of three phases namely:

PHASE 1: Where training would take place with extensive coaching and feedback — linked to specific key performance areas (KPA's) and outputs in cross functional areas. Regular assessments would take place and evaluation reports would be drawn up and submitted to the Deputy Registrar/Registrar. Outcomes achieved and progress would be monitored (evaluated) by the Section Heads, the Deputy Registrar and Supervisors. Rigorous performance assessment would take place to ascertain increment in terms of cross functional KPA's and outputs achieved.

PHASE 2: The initiation of the second phase would include further cross functional development and input (performance in other sections) with further development in the remaining sections. Performance assessment would ascertain increment and progression.

PHASE 3: This phase would acknowledge the growth and movement within respective bands to justify grade allocation and associated increment. The process of integrating jobs guarantee that staff members are multi-skilled (a broader skills base). Other career possibilities include promotion possibilities linked to performance outputs, horizontal movement to other sections (Admissions, Examinations, Records and Microfilm, and Registration) and upward mobility (promotion linked to career development). The above is largely dependent on individuals taking responsibility for their own growth in the process that would unfold.

Career path/progression for the Section heads, Supervisors and Student Administration

Officers would be based on the regular assessment and questions will be posed around critical areas such as:

- Performance Development System: What did the employee accomplish in the Performance Period? What concrete results did s/he achieve with regard to the outcomes in the identified key performance areas? What did s/he deliver to the bottom line?
- Core Behaviours: How did they do it? For example: What competencies did they demonstrate in executing those outcomes and what are their strengths and weaknesses in this regard?
- **Developmental Index:** What do they need to do differently, develop, train for or whatever other intervention is appropriate in that context in order to

perform better in their current jobs and prepare themselves for their future iob¹³?

The above process is similar to performance contracts currently entered into between workers and government in the South African Public Sector.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter started off with the exploration of UWC's rich history from its inception as an apartheid institution to its transformation into a national asset preoccupied with key issues of access, equity and quality with one of its main aims being the assistance of students to reach their full potential especially those from disadvantaged communities.

As the focus of this study was specifically on the OD process in the Student Administration Department, the department's functions and its impact on UWC in its entirety, were perused.

Furthermore, the factors giving rise to the need for change in the Student Administration Department such as financial constraints, institutional difficulties and the offering of voluntary severance package to staff were explored. It proved quite interesting to note that each factor had a common threat namely "financial constraints".

The outcomes of the OD process worthy of note are the fact that staff were in agreement that the need for change existed but disagreed on the consultative process

¹³ An undated report by Anwar Van Der Schyff, consultant/OD facilitator entitled: Summary of the Job Description and Multiskilling process in Student Adminstration.

embarked upon. The research further revealed that the change strategy was merely reactive and brought upon by financial constraints. A further outcome of the OD process was the implementation of a job integration and multi-skilling process which impacted on the way the Student Administration staffers perform their tasks. The next chapter will propose recommendations to the problems discussed in this chapter.



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study traced the OD process within the Student Administration Department, at the University of the Western Cape, started in 1999. It explored the concept of OD and found that OD had as its underlying purpose the improvement of the way in which the Student Administration Department was functioning.

Changes in the internal and external environment of higher education institutions in South Africa were explored. This revealed that global changes, specifically changes in technology could boost education and enable disadvantaged communities to become part of the economy of the first world. At a national level, South Africa's transition to democracy brought with it profound changes in the admission policies of higher education institutions for example, making it easier for black students to enroll at historically white institutions. Furthermore, crippling effects were suffered by historically disadvantaged institutions, brought on by mounting student debt and a reduction in government subsidy. A further factor contributing to change within the higher education landscape, worthy of note, is the regional cooperation between higher education institutions in specific provinces.

The rich history of UWC's evolvement was also explored and provided great insights into the hardships historically black institutions had to endure. The study highlighted the fact that financial difficulties in the end, forced the institution to retrench some of its staff members and offer others voluntary severance packages. This created vacancies in

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the Student Administration Department for example and impacted negatively on the psychological state of remaining staff members. To address this matter, among others, changes needed to be affected.

OD was identified as an ideal change management tool by the UWC's Human Resources Department. How this process evolved, step by step, was the main focus of this study. The OD process revealed key problem areas for which the following section would provide recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication

The key problems, "why a need for change exist, the consultative process and the change strategy" highlighted by the research could be effectively dealt with through communication. Communication is a key part of getting off on the right foot when change is imminent. Staff should be told the specifics of the change process – the who, what, when and how – and they should know how it will affect them and how they can prepare for change. When top management preaches co-governance and their deeds prove inconsistent with their words, they can seriously undermine any change process. Managers may find that they can communicate support for a new programme and answer employee concerns. Effective communication with managers and employees is needed to educate them about the reasons behind the upcoming changes and how those changes will affect their careers.

Furthermore, to minimize the potential for change-related crisis, whatever is going to change must be understood and communicated. It is worthwhile to examine and share information about what will stay the same and what will change (Freda et al., 1999). Especially concerns raised around job titles, job descriptions, reporting lines, promotion and job evaluation. It is imperative for those issues to be addressed individually and in as much detail as possible. In this instance, the Human Resources Department's services could be called upon.

Team-building exercises

Smooth transitions and improving employees' working relationships can be facilitated through team-building exercises and role clarification, both of which are based on good communication. In the light of existing tension amongst staffers, this would be an ideal tool. (Freda et al., 1999) It is imperative that the levels of trust amongst the workers of the Student Administration Department be restored.

Change strategy

The change strategy embarked upon by UWC was merely reactive. If financial constraints did not force the university to cut its staff compliment, no dramatic changes would have occurred accept for embracing new technology. A clear example of reactive behaviour on the part of the university is broad principles on a restructuring process which were drawn up by the Human Resources Department of the University of the Western Cape, mere days before the implementation of the new restructuring model in

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the Student Administration Department¹⁴. It is my opinion that organizational change are attention to process and the focus on goals and organisational values. Planned change, is what organisational development is about.

Evaluating the OD process

It is the researcher's view that the OD exercise be reviewed. For every failed part of the process an alternative strategy should be devised. It is not to late to take corrective action. Proper job evaluation exercises could be drawn upon to adequately address workers' concerns around being overworked and underpaid. No external evaluator should be called upon as adequate human resource skills exist in the Industrial Psychology Department of the University, to take on this task.

Staff Development Policies

The university could source money for training purposes or to top up staff salaries. This will surely boost staff morale.

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Training for Management

"Bullying tactics" employed by management, could be corrected by providing management with adequate training on how to deal with change. For example the executive job is typically open-ended, fragmented, interpersonal, verbal and active. In many instances, the manager may devote more than one-half of her or his time to contacts with subordinates, the remainder being allocated to persons outside of the

¹⁴ Broad principles on restructuring exercises, Human Resources Department, University of the Western Cape, dated 28 June 2000.

chain of command, so that skills of persuading, negotiating, coordinating and facilitating are called for. Given the open-ended, complex and variable nature of management's tasks, (Flippo, 1984: 204) training could be provided where the decision making skills or interpersonal skills or negotiating skills for example should lack.

CONCLUSION

Major change is impossible unless the chief executive officer of the organisation is an active supporter of it. It is important for individuals in the upper levels of the organisation to demonstrate support for, and understanding of, the need for change. They can do this by supplying pressure to change as well as offering support in the form of time, financial resources, and decision-making authority. Of course some individuals need more help accepting change than others. But everyone in the institution needs to become a change agent. All people in the system must take it upon themselves to initiate action along the guidelines of the organisation's strategic plan and vision.

The proper management of change determines how well an organisation absorbs and adapts to change. Companies that establish a structure for managing, adapting to, and implementing change will be successful. The organisational members, especially top management, should acknowledge the effects of change and display behaviours that complement the vision of the organisation. Organisations must adapt to impending changes if they are to continue to be viable, productive and efficient. Management should not wait for change to happen. When one knows what and when events will occur, one can control and adapt to change (Freda et al., 1999).

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Not only will the restructuring of the Student Administration Department benefit the university as a whole, it can be used as a model on which restructuring of other departments within the university can be based.

The hypothesis that OD has contributed positively to efficiency in the Student Administration Department is only partially true, as not all the objectives OD set out to achieve was realized. However, the researcher contends that the Student Administration Department is able to reach its "desired state" if everyone in the Department takes on the role of change agent and actively play their part.

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25 January 2002

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently working towards a Master Degree in Public Administration, School of Government, University of the Western Cape, and the focus of my research is on the Organisational Development process undertaken in the Student Administration Department. Permission to undertake this study was granted to me by the Acting Registrar, Mr O N Gelderbloem, on 20 November 2000. A copy of this questionnaire accompanied my request to do research.

Can I kindly request that you take a view minutes of your time, to complete this questionnaire, PLEASE? I assure you that your responses will be held in the strictest of confidence. Please return the completed questionnaire to me as soon as possible or by 8 March 2002 by return email to: hendrickser@ctech.ac.za or Fax: 460 3700.

Your assistance towards successful completion of my Masters degree is sincerely appreciated.

	t Number: 9043859
SECTIO	ON A:
1.	In which Department do you work?
2.	How long have you been working for the university?
1-24 months	1-5 years
SECTO	<u>N B:</u>
3.	Were you informed about the restructuring of the Department?
Yes	No UNIVERSITY of the
4.	If your answer is yes, were there any specific goals/objectives set?
Yes	No
5.	List any 3 of these objectives.
6.	Why in your opinion, was restructuring of your department necessary?
7.	Were you invited to attend workshops on restructuring of the department?
Yes	No
8.	In your opinion, did the workshop fulfill its purpose?
Yes	No
9.	Did you have any input towards the restructuring process?
Yes	No

10.	If yes, list any 3 of these contributions.
11.	After restructuring, did you benefit in terms of work satisfaction?
Yes	No
12.	After restructuring, did you benefit financially from the process?
Yes	No
13.	How committed is top management to the restructuring?
14.	Were mechanisms put in place for you to cope with the change in work operations?
Yes	No
15.	If yes, state the mechanisms.
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