# TRANSFORMATION AMONGST STAFF AND STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

BY

HILDA ANDREWS

8742142

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# KEYWORDS

1. South Africa
2. Higher Education Act 1997
3. Employment Equity Act 1998
4. Transformation
5. University of Cape Town
6. Staff & student representivity
7. Leadership
8. Institutional Culture
9. Autonomy & accountability
10. Evaluation

# ABSTRACT

This research is an evaluative case study of transformation in a Historically White University (HWU) in South Africa (SA). The research occurs within the context of redress against the inequality and exclusion created by the legacy of apartheid. It takes into account the consequent socio-economic disparities, which are reinforced by the continued limited access to equal opportunity for historically disadvantaged people today. The case study will consider representivity amongst the staff and student population at the University Of Cape Town (UCT), as key indicators of change. The study will examine organisational design and the impact it has on limiting greater equal access and participation amongst staff. It will consider factors, based on staff perceptions, of what the obstacles and opportunities to change are. The study will furthermore examine the equality of access and admission of new first time entering undergraduate students and the impediments of the process involved. The socio-economic context and the impact this has in delivering adequately prepared high school leavers to universities is examined. The study will reflect on the experiences and reported perceptions of students in respect of the institutional culture at the UCT.

Transformation in this context is underpinned by the Higher Education Act (1997) and the Employment Equity Act (1998). The aim of the research is to evaluate transformation strategies applied by a case study university in South Africa in relation to these laws.

The concept of transformation is broad and will focus on representivity based on South African demographics. The study will show that the institution can and must find measures internally, within its organisation design, institutional culture and leadership style of justifiably bridging the divide amongst its population to efficiently meet its goals and contribute towards social redress. This can be achieved by greater diversity management, instituting capacity building, encouraging reconciliation amongst its community, opening up participation towards being more inclusive and investing in change principles and practice.

During apartheid extreme socio-economic disparities emerged in South African society creating a dearth in skills and underdevelopment of the economy. This has resulted in the need for fundamental change to occur through institutions of higher learning, for the effective rebuilding of society and the economy. HEIs are renowned for their role in developing people to meet the needs of society while retaining autonomy from the state and perpetuating academic freedom.

The objectives of the study are to:
- Describe the UCT transformation, specifically equity policy and planning in respect of staff recruitment and new undergraduate student first year admission.
- Assess their effectiveness in transforming the UCT community to be more representative

- Identify strengths and limitations in effecting equity and diversity
- Identify challenges for the institution in transforming its constituency
- Provide recommendations on prospects to enhance transformation amongst staff and students of the UCT community.

The research will be both qualitative and quantitative. It will be based on desk research and include a literature review, Internet search as well as an analysis of key organisational and policy context documents such as reports, projections and surveys. Semi-structured interviews will be held with a sample of staff of the university considered to be influential change agents by virtue of the designation they hold. Student views and perceptions will be established through focus group discussion. This method of triangulation will validate the understanding and core assumptions made of the case study functions, initiatives and programmes underway in respect of staff recruitment and retention as well as first year student admission to enrolment.

Confidentiality of data gathered and anonymity of respondents was ensured by not requiring any personal details from the survey instruments used with staff and students. The sole purpose of using the data gathered for research was communicated to the respondents on the front page of the survey instruments. The choice of also not answering questions raised was respected.
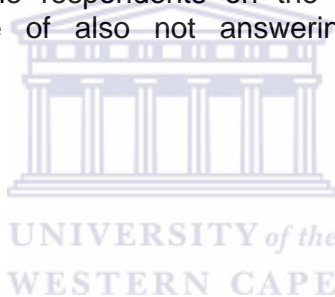
**DECLARATION**

I declare that *Transformation amongst staff and students at the University of Cape Town: Challenges and Prospects,* is my own unaided work and that all the sources I have consulted and referred to have been indicated and acknowledged through complete referencing as shown in the text. I declare that this mini-thesis has not been submitted at any other university, college or institution of higher education for any degree or academic qualification.

Hilda Andrews                                        May 2008

# DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This mini-thesis is dedicated to the staff and students of the University of Cape Town whose commitment towards transformation often goes unnoticed.

In particular I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor for his patient guidance, advice and support, and my family and friends for their support and interest shown in my goal to accomplish the research.

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| CHE | Council for Higher Education |
| CHET | Centre for Higher Education Transformation |
| CHED | Centre for Higher Education Development, UCT |
| DoL | Department of Labour |
| DVC | Deputy Vice Chancellor |
| EEA | Employment Equity Act 1998 |
| EEP | Employment Equity Plan (UCT) |
| HBU | Historically Black University |
| HDI | Historically Disadvantaged Institution |
| HEA | Higher Education Act 1997 |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| HESA | Higher Education South Africa |
| HE WP | Higher Education White Paper 1997 |
| HR | Human Resource |
| HWU | Historically White University |
| IT | Information Technology |
| NCHE | National Commission on Higher Education |
| NPHESA | National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa |
| PASS | Professional Administrative Support Staff |
| SA | South Africa |
| SAUVCA | South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association |
| UCT | University of Cape Town |
| US | University of Stellenbosch |
| USA | United States of America |
| UWC | University of the Western Cape |
| VC | Vice Chancellor |
| WITS | University of Witwatersrand |

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# CHAPTER 1
# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South African society was divided politically, economically and socially based on colour by its adoption of oppressive apartheid laws in 1948 (Sehoole, 2005a). The legacy of apartheid has left South African society in a state of extreme inequality economically and socially (Albertyn, Goldblatt & Roederer, 2001:1). Many political reforms have been introduced since the transition to democracy in 1994 including a constitution incorporating the Bill of Rights that now ensures equality for all South African citizens. Given the need to redress inequalities of the past, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are seen to have a primary role in transforming society to be more equitable.

In general, transformation refers to changing, in order to improve appearance, substance and usefulness (Chambers, 1966:1168). Transformation as a concept is relative and variable. The South African Promotion of Equality and the Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000) makes reference to the need to eradicate barriers and obstacles that unfairly discriminate on the basis of race, gender, class and other grounds of inequality to effect transformation (Albertyn, Goldblatt & Roederer, 2001). The act furthermore provides for the creation of positive measures that promote equality of all groups and enhances full participation of all persons in society. With the preceding foreground, transformation in the South African context becomes more specifically defined.

In the global HEI context, transformation has often been analised as having occurred due to government reforms aimed at improving access (Shattock, 2003). In South Africa HEI transformation has a specific goal focussed on the need for social redress and rebuilding society (Fourie, 1999; NCHE, 1996). Social redress therefore requires transformation to be far more strategic and is likely to promote significant challenge for HEIs in South Africa. Part of the challenge stems from the fragmented status of education post apartheid as

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well as the consequent inequality evident in HEI in respect of resources, institutional culture, governance and leadership, and the lack of student and staff diversity generally.

The state's transformation objectives towards rebuilding South African society have fundamentally prescribed the direction of reform in HEIs. Historically known for the "public good" HEIs perpetuate, they have a particular role and responsibility towards the transformation of society (Jonathan, 2006:13). Transformation through access to HEIs is especially significant in South Africa due to the legacy of exclusion which has resulted in a dire shortage of skills and the consequent need to revamp the economy (Qunta, 2007a). Unequal access to HEIs has meant a disproportionate participation rate across a diverse population and presents a particular challenge for transformation. It is generally held that historically marginalised and excluded groups need to benefit from redress and equity planning as established through legislation such as the 1997 Higher Education Act (HEA) and 1998 Employment Equity Act (HEA) .
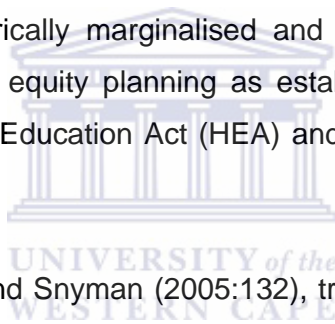
According to Finestone and Snyman (2005:132), transformation should occur in a context which recognises and embraces diversity, multi-culturalism and be focussed towards the eradication of all forms of social discrimination. The mini-thesis explores the challenges and prospects for transformation amongst staff and students at the University Of Cape Town (UCT) as a case study based on the imperatives outlined above.

The mini-thesis draws in particular on two laws and their related policies identified as enabling HEI transformation and employment equity specifically. The first is the 1997 HEA, which sets out to restructure the provision and focus of HEIs generally towards redress and the overall needs of the economy. The second is the 1998 EEA, designed to ensure equal opportunity is created and positive measures adopted to redress unequal access to jobs.

This chapter identifies the research problem and key research questions. It explores the purpose, objectives and significance of the study. The limitations

of the study are clarified below. The chapter also explains the research methodology applied and includes a brief outline of the literature reviewed. The chapter concludes with an outline of the organisation of the study.

## 1.2    RESEARCH PROBLEM AND KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Chisholm (2003) one of the manifestations of apartheid was the exclusion of the majority of the population from essential quality education and equal access to state resources and opportunities which in 1994 culminated in a depleted, fragmented system. Based on the literature reviewed, the status of learning and teaching in previously marginalized communities continues to present a major challenge by failing to deliver the required skills for the economy, more than a decade into the new democracy.

Within the HEI context, one of the main challenges is to implement several corrective measures in order to redress the inequalities of the past. Clearly articulated aims and objectives underpinned by strategic rolling plans to improve access for designated[1] groups to participate more equally is therefore critically important. Another challenge would be for the HEIs to enhance opportunity to develop and succeed academically, professionally and more equitably, as well as to be accountable to its whole internal and external constituency, as opposed to a historically dominant minority group.  Within such plans there needs to be monitoring and continuous evaluation of the impact of its commitment toward achieving such goals. Overall there should be institutional and leadership commitment to transformation.

HEIs are not disconnected from the rest of society or the world.  The external context, global and domestic, together with the internal institutional environment is therefore significant to the HEIs realisation of transformation and their inherent need to remain autonomous while striving for academic freedom. Compliance with state reform measures has the potential to compromise HEI sustainability and purpose. Such compromise is evident in the paradox of HEIs perpetuating their key tasks of learning, teaching and

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[1] The Employment Equity Act 1998 defines these to include Black people, that is, African, Coloured and Indian, as well as women and persons with a disability.

research on the one hand, and rebuilding society to transform inequity and realise representivity on the other. The challenge is for HEIs to sustain academic freedom and institutional autonomy while taking responsibility for reconciling communities through redress measures. The thesis pursued here is that transformation is largely influenced by ideology and that dominance of the state or the institution's traditions of the past each present a challenge for the goals of redress and equality.

At UCT, a historically privileged White institution (HWU), transformation is a goal to which it has committed itself. Transformation is evidenced, for example, by statements of being "active in redress"[2]. One of the values adopted is to aspire to encompassing an ethos, which achieves social transformation[3]. It is also apparent in the numerous polices that UCT has adopted in the pursuit of equity amongst staff and students[4]. Representivity amongst staff and students therefore indicates an important area in which transformation should be achieved. The proportional count of staff by designated group (as defined in the 1998 EEA) is thus seen as an important measure by which to establish the extent to which change is occurring. It is assumed that increased participation, achieved through increased representivity, contributes significantly towards addressing transformation intrinsically (Mama, 2002).

Despite UCT having aspirations and commitment to transform in ways which redress the imbalances of the past, progress has been slow, particularly with regard to representivity. This is most evident in the proportion of staff and students participating in the institution by population group. Staff and students of the institution hold a relatively strong view of being discriminated against on the basis of race and gender, established through an Institutional Climate Survey (Louw, J & Finchilescu, G, 2003). Of the 32% staff who participated, the general feeling communicated through this survey was that of a perceived lack of transformation. The research will therefore focus on the

2 UCT Mission Statement
3 UCT Statement of Values 2001 for the UCT and its members
4 www.uct.ac.za/about/policies/

4

implementation of equity policies, targeted equity plans, governance and leadership and institutional culture and design which appear to contribute towards the lack of transformation.

In 2006, there were 21562 students enrolled at UCT of whom 15413 were undergraduates. Of the total enrolment 41% were White, 13% Coloured, 7% Indian, and 18% were Black[5] African students and the remainder or 21% were international[6]. The male/female participation is not differentiated by population group. In overall terms there are more undergraduate females enrolled than males. In 1996 (when figures were aggregated to include international students), there were 16514 students of whom 26% were African, 14% Coloured, 6% Indian and 54% White[7].

Academic staff in 2005,[8] excluding undeclared and international categories, were 71% male, 29% female, 78% White, 7% Coloured, 6% Indian and 9% African. In 1996 (including international staff) 4% were African, 4% Coloured, 2% Indian and 90% White. Of the total academic staff, 36% were female and 64% male[9].

These indicators raise a concern therefore, as to what extent change is being realised amongst staff and students given the institutions commitment to transformation. This apparent disjuncture between institutional policy on the one hand, and actual implementation on the other, forms the basic research problem of this study.

Important research questions to consider here include:
- What strategies and programmes has UCT implemented to transform its student and staff participation to be more equitable in response to the imperatives of redress of the 1997 Higher Education Act and the 1998 Employment Equity Act?

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[5] The Employment Equity Act, 1998 distinguishes Black to include African, Coloured and Indian. Reference to Black includes all three groups therefore.
[6] Faculties Report 2002-2006, IPD. www.ipd.uct.ac.za/
[7] Hemis Report, Institutional Planning Department.
[8] Hemis Report, Institutional Planning Department.
[9] Hemis Report, Institutional Planning Department denotes academic staff in the category "Professional Staff".

- How are UCT's first time entering undergraduate student admissions and employment equity transformation strategies impacted by the institutional context?
- How are UCT's first time entering undergraduate student admissions and employment equity transformation strategies influenced and shaped by the external context?

## 1.3    PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to establish how UCT through its policies and planning initiatives, interprets transformation, in the context of redress and equality, and how it has been applied to diversify staff and students within the institution to be more representative of South African demographics[10]. The study examines the impact of internal and external factors on the institution's goals of transformation.

More specifically the objectives of the study are to:
- Describe UCT's transformation, specifically equity policy and planning in respect of staff recruitment and new undergraduate student first year admission
- Assess the effectiveness of these practices in transforming the UCT community to be more representative
- Identify  strengths and limitations in effecting equity and diversity
- Identify challenges for the institution in transforming its constituency
- Provide conclusions as well as recommendations on strategies to enhance transformation amongst staff and students of the UCT community

## 1.4    SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Changing the socio economic conditions of a majority, historically disadvantaged people, remains a critical political objective in South Africa

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[10] The assumption of the mini-thesis is that representivity is based on an apportionment premised on the four population groups categorised by government.  Currently the South African population is  80 % African, 9% Coloured, 9% White, and 2% Indian (Stats SA, 2006; Finestone & Snyman, 2005). Furthermore, the distribution of male and female population is 49/51 (Stats SA, 2006). To substantiate the mini-thesis argument, I use the South African demographics as a gauge by which to benchmark and measure change within the case study university.

today. For the decades of apartheid oppression and exploitation to be unravelled, corrected and healed, it is going to take more than the setting of policy and enforcement of laws. It is therefore imperative that sectors such as higher education become increasing effective in implementing change through institutional initiative such as improved opportunity to participate substantially, for both students and staff. Greater representivity of the respective population groups can lead to increased participation amongst a historically excluded population which in turn will likely transform the institutional culture.

It is hoped that the study will reveal opportunities and challenges that can help UCT to focus its transformation strategies more effectively. On the whole the constituency of the case study institution stands to benefit through having greater equality to participate and compete in a diverse, representative environment. The institution would effectively be advancing the goals of a democratic society that recognises the value of each and every member to make a contribution.

As a consequence of having identified challenges and prospects, recommendations can be made to improve the status quo so that the institution can make more effective interventions to support first time entering undergraduate historically disadvantaged students to gain access to and succeed in a HEI. Employment equity planning, student equity planning and institutional governance can be made more aware of the limitations and opportunities which exist within its concept and structures thereby driving change intrinsically. Enhancing participation in decision making; improved access for students and greater institutional commitment to mentoring and capacity building initiatives for example can emerge from such awareness. The likely benefit to the institution is the realisation of its stated equity goals, as well as improved participation, diversity and proportional representivity in line with the South African demographics.

## 1.5 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focus of the study is to evaluate transformation amongst staff and students using population group and numerical analysis. The analysis is

limited to South African citizens only by the four population groups comprised of White, Coloured, Indian and African people. The analysis does not include statistics of categories referred to as unknown or international in the institutions reports and plans, as relevant to the study.

Although the study is contextualised within broader transformation themes the scope is to compare and contrast the composition of staff and students with national demographics. The focus is an analysis of the case study university's interpretation and application of equity, equality, redress and transformation of higher education as set in South African law post 1994.

The key assumption of the mini-thesis is that representivity by population group enhances participation and diversity. Furthermore it can lead to greater equality and ultimately transform the institution recognising that policies cannot achieve this alone. The study is therefore limited in its objectives and does not include the much wider range of aspects which transformation is about such as class, gender or curriculum specifically.

While it is recognised that HEI members are affected by many specific contextual factors such as the organisation of academia, including the admission and recruitment processes, the appointment of teaching and support staff, the curriculum content, academic and research output, restructuring and others, limited reference is made to these factors. The study is limited to universities only though it is widely recognised that higher education encompasses other forms of tertiary institutions.

Staff are appointed in diverse roles from those of senior management, junior to senior academic staff and junior to senior technical and custodial or administrative support staff. The distribution of staff by job level and population group is the core focus of the analysis in respect of representivity in these categories. The focus is on key themes and concepts perceived to be relevant including: transformation; equality; diversity; governance and leadership; institutional culture and organisational design.

The scope of the study includes a global overview of HEI transformation generally with some consideration of the parallels with South African society providing an external contextual perspective. It also includes a brief historical overview of the South African HEI context and suggests the implications for the post 1994 transition towards a unified system. More specifically the focus is the contextual institutional challenges faced by the case study university in trying to effect change.

## 1.6    RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of the research includes a combination of methods used in what are typically described as desk research (Moore, 2006:106-111). It includes a literature review, Internet search as well as an analysis of key organisational and policy context documents such as policies, reports, projections, institutional surveys, and briefings. The research provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis using empirical data as an important measure of informing theories and assumptions of change (Neale and Liebert. 1980:2-14).

To focus the study of HEI transformation, a potentially vast area, a case study is used of UCT a Historically White University (HWU) untouched during the restructuring which resulted in the merging of 36 institutions to 23 in 2003 (Anderson, 2003). Case studies are useful in establishing a detailed understanding in complex circumstances (Moore. 2006:VIII). For purposes of this study the notion of representivity in diversity amongst staff and students at UCT sets the foundation and relevance to the analysis. Such an analysis draws on quantitative (what is evident) and qualitative (why it is evident) methods in determining whether UCT is transforming to become more representative of South African population demographics (Moore, 2006: 141; Grix, 2004:116-121).

In examining staff representivity and diversity, semi-structured interviews were held with a sample of nine staff members, identified due to their job designation or historic association with the university. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and notes were taken during the interviews. Of the nine respondents, five were male and four were female.   The racial

breakdown was 2 African, 2 White, three Coloured and two Indian. The sample included academic and non academic staff, and the status of the respondents ranged from senior academic to senior lecturer, as well as senior administrator to business analyst (pay classes 13-10). Six of the respondents hold seniority as academic Dean, Director or head of department serving in leadership positions in their respective areas. Six respondents were former students of the institution thereby providing a specific experiential history of perceived change. The remaining three were identified due to their long and extensive   experience at UCT, which provided a historical perspective that some of the newer section heads lacked.

Staff were asked a range of questions which are outlined in Appendix 1 of this study.  Not all questions were asked to each respondent.  The questions selected depended on their particular areas of specialisation.  Contributions and views are included in this study as they were shared with the author, but normally in a paraphrased form rather than as direct quotations. The perceptions, experiences and knowledge of the respondents helped to correlate assumptions of the researcher and the findings of the literature reviewed. Because the respondents selected were by designation or portfolio, the author acknowledges that this does not constitute a representative sample either by institutional reflection or national demographics.  The perception of the interviewer is that participation was free and open and often very revealing. Subsequent follow up information was sought through e-mail, though this drew a fairly limited response.

With respect to student representivity and diversity, a confidential semi-structured focus group discussion was held with six students resident in a senior[11] UCT facility. The sample included five African and one Indian student drawn from two (of six) faculties. All are seniors in terms of their academic standing. Four were South African, one Zimbabwean and one Mauritian. The focus group discussion was held in a private meeting room of the residence on 29 July 2007 for 90 minutes. The residence Deputy Warden who mentors

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[11] Residences have three tiers, 1st is juniors in catering, 2nd is senior undergraduate and postgraduate in self catering while 3rd is postgraduate students.

the students in the group sat in as an observer. The respondents were asked to disclose a first name, degree and duration of study at the university for background information. The researcher took notes during the discussion with the respondents consent. The focus group as a method contributes to the objective of analysis based on triangulation of the findings.

Secondary analysis based on concepts, policy, a critical literature review and statistics was used to ensure triangulation in the methodology (Moore. 2006:13). Triangulation is imperative as a methodology to institute focus and avoid bias. The secondary analysis includes the interpretation of reports, national statistics, institutional equity targets, and policy and planning documents.

## 1.7    LITERATURE REVIEW

A detailed review is provided in chapter two. The literature review is focussed within the policy framework of HEI reform in South Africa and the significance of the socio-political, economic factors of the county. It considers the global context comparatively and the specific role and purpose of HEIs in contributing to new knowledge and improved access for all. The literature review examines debates and themes relevant to the South African HEI transformation context identified through the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) as well as source documents specific to government laws and policy and the HEI UCT context. The literature review covers briefly some of the dominant theoretical trends, including the significance of academic freedom and institutional autonomy; the meaning and interpretation attached to transformation, equity, equality and redress; and the historical background in South Africa, in particular the legacy of apartheid education. It focuses furthermore on the significance of governance and leadership as well as institutional culture and design in HEI transformation.

Document sources consulted on the global and South Africa specific context include government policies, laws, journal articles, book chapters, books, newspaper articles and unpublished reports. The literature review also focuses on the status of education in South African society today, in particular

in relation to issues surrounding institutional culture; organisational design; and governance, accountability and leadership (Shattock, 2003; Chisholm, L. 2005; Van Wyk, 2006; Sehoole, 2005; Bargh et al. 2000; Daniel, Southall, and Lutchman, 2005).

**1.8     ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one provides an outline of core components of the mini-thesis. These include a brief background to the study, an identification of the research problem and key research questions to be investigated.  This chapter also states the purpose and objectives and addresses the significance of the study. The limitations, scope and focus are outlined here. It describes the research design and methodology applied and discusses briefly the literature review as well as the organisation of the study.

Chapter two covers an extensive literature review to establish a theoretical foundation relevant to the study of transformation amongst staff and students at the case study university.   This chapter outlines the key theoretical concepts of the study and identifies important themes and debates on HEI transformation within the global and South African context. Some of these debates include global HEI transformation and reform; the HEI South African apartheid legacy and policy context post 1994; conceptual understandings of transformation, equity, equality and redress;   institutional limitations to transformation including organisational design, governance and leadership as well as institutional culture.

Chapter three describes government policies, plans, and legislation with respect to higher education transformation and employment equity post 1994. It then describes the policy and planning context on equity and transformation as it applies to staff and students of the case study university.

Chapter four shows the research findings of the structured interviews and focus group discussion, triangulated with themes and debates identified through the literature reviewed. It also outlines transformation achievements, limitations, challenges and constraints identified through the study. The

chapter provides the statistical data findings for the numerical analysis of staff and student participation and representation in comparison with South African national demographics.

Chapter five draws conclusions, based on identified change, limitations and strengths internal to the institution. It makes recommendations with respect to identified obstacles and opportunities for change influenced and derived from internal and external contextual factors.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

Reforms in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are underpinned by significant global events and continuous societal demands and challenges. South Africa and its HEIs in particular, while unique in its socio-political transition from apartheid is not the only country undergoing transformation to become more relevant and equitable towards the broader needs of its society. Across the continents HEIs grapple to cope with continuous funding and governance changes as well as improving access, managing diversity and transforming historical institutional culture to become more diverse, demographically representative and inclusive.

In this chapter the literature reviewed relates to the three aspects of the research question being explored through this mini-thesis. The first attempts to establish what the case study university has done to transform its student and staff participation to be more equitable and representative of South African national demographics as defined by the 1997 Higher Education Act (HEA) and the 1998 Employment Equity Act (EEA). The second part of the research question investigates the impact of the external context on the case study institution's transformation by examining the trends which enable and impede HEI transformation on a macro level. Thirdly the research question considers the internal factors unique to an organisation that leads to or hinders HEI transformation.

In attempting to address these three questions, several themes and debates have been reviewed and have been divided into three main sections below. The first section examines the theoretical trends and issues identified in the literature as dominant features of HEI transformation. Theoretical views include neo-liberal and post-modern policy and practice from a global perspective as well as a discussion on the tensions faced by HEIs in perpetuating academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In the second part the meaning and conceptualisation of transformation and its components in

this context including redress, equity, equality and diversity are considered as relevant foreground to the interpretation of the research questions investigated.

The third section attempts to illustrate the extreme inequality in South Africa resulting from discriminatory apartheid laws and policies of the past that determine the extent of redress needed in order to bring about equality and transformation in society. Given the unique features of HEI transformation in South Africa, the chapter also considers the significance of institutional governance and leadership in HEI transformation and the implications for institutional culture and organisational design. The key challenges and prospects for HEI transformation identified in the literature review are outlined in a summary at the end of the chapter.

## 2.2 THEORIES AND DEBATES OF HEI TRANSFORMATION AND REFORM

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Two main theoretical frameworks are discussed in this section of the study. Each of these influences understanding of the dynamics and contradictions of HEI transformation and reform in ways that have challenged institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The first is the emergence of neo-liberal government policies. An example of this is the HEI mergers, a measure of reform stemming from shifting government focus and the transition from elite to a mass based system derived as in the example of Brazil, through affirmative measures. Construed as modernisation neo-liberal reforms have culminated in the notion of commodification. Second the concept of public managerialism is argued by the post-modernists as change without social progress and therefore seen as contentious. Lastly this section explores the inherent tensions between academic freedom and institutional autonomy in a transforming HEI. Brief consideration is given to the global trends and the complexities premised on the dominant influence of the state on HEI transformation perceived as common to the South African context.

### 2.2.2 Some theoretical concepts and challenges of HEI Transformation

The main theoretical frameworks encountered in the literature include neo-liberal and postmodernist theory which are outlined briefly for their relevance to the transforming HEI context in South Africa post apartheid. For example, institutional mergers in HEIs China, seen as government macro-management and professionalizing of administration were first introduced in the mid 1990's (Mok, 2005: 62). Similarly mergers are seen as relative to the conflict and socio-political context of that country for example, Serbia 1980's to 1990's (Cuckovic, 2006). Merging of HEIs has become increasingly popular as a restructuring strategy seen to promote efficiency, effectiveness, economy and competition (Mok, 2005; Jansen, 2004). It is assumed therefore that reform of the HEI sector in South Africa can largely be attributed to it being symptomatic of and therefore shaped by the country's economic, socio-political transition from apartheid to democracy during the mid 1990's.

The higher education global context seems characterised by similar trends of governments changing focus. These include the introduction of neo-liberal policies in respect of resource allocation as well as the need to cater to the whole populace as opposed to the elite. Some examples here include Australia, Japan, Serbia and China in the 1980's and 1990's (Zipin and Brennan, 2003: 351-370; Cuckovic, 2006; Amano & Poole, 2005: 685-711, Mok, 2003; Denman, 2005; Habib, 2003:238).

The literature reviewed on Brazil, New Zealand, China and others (Sobrinho, 2006: 91; Milliken, 2004; Curzon-Hobson, 2004; Cuckovic, 2006; Habib, 2003; Mama, 2002; Bundy, 2006; Zeleza, 2002) argues that this kind of HEI transformation conceptualised as modernization through expansion and a reduction in public spending culminates in commodification a form of neo liberalism. From these trends the traditions of HEIs appear to be shaped by reforms imposed. In global terms such reforms presents a significant external influence on institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

According to Cloete, (2002) and Curzon-Hobson, (2004:214-215) HEIs are being reformed and transformed (providing solutions relative to the socio political context) to provide professional training, new critical knowledge, linked to applied contexts through entrepreneurial activities, and serving as part of the ideological apparatus of society. These reforms appear to be largely shaped by arguments of what constitutes academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Sobrinho (2006:93) refers to Brazil's government introducing affirmative policies so as to reform from elite to providing HEIs for the public good, effecting greater social inclusion. Drawing on the experience of Brazil, a country which has its own relative socio-political tensions, it is suggested that transformation to enhance access and participation in South Africa can not be implemented without strategic corrective measures being devised on the part of government and the initiative of the HEI.

The comparative literature suggests that HEI governance globally has seen a growth in managerialism in recent years. Examples include Australia and China, where power shifted between the executive and academic domains (Zipin and Brennan, 2003: 362; Mok, 2003). Zipin and Brennan (2003:362) argue that managerial decision-making procedures or "proceduralism" has tended to predominate at the expense of academia and institutional autonomy. According to Hall et al (2002: 19) this claim results in little opportunity for evaluating the impact of change within the institution. The implication therefore is that proceduralism likely leads to a deviation from desired outcomes in transforming context.

According to some scholars, the postmodernists theorise that public managerialism has an impact on institutional autonomy and professionalism and that social change should not necessarily be construed as social progress (Milliken, 2004:10-13; Zipin and Brennan, 2003: 351-370; Holiday, 2004b; Reisz, 2006:73-84; Jansen, 2004). Their contention is that HEIs conforming through reporting and institutional audits limits its autonomy. It appears that increasing managerialism relative to shifting power within HEIs from faculty to

centralised university administration impedes transformation (Bentley, Habib and Morrow, 2006: 20). Such conformity by the HEI mitigates the need to benchmark against the social and economic inequality of apartheid, in order to measure progress while ensuring institutional autonomy.

HEIs play a vital role in society and are an important conduit for effecting equality through enhanced access and equal opportunity yet there appear to be several pitfalls along the way. It is suggested that the conceptualisation of the re-organisation of academia around the goals of transformation is fundamental, so as to ensure institutional autonomy and meet legal and government policy requirements for redress. The challenges and limitations are considered further in the section on governance and leadership in HEI transformation.

### 2.2.3  Academic freedom and institutional autonomy

From the literature reviewed, academic freedom as a controversial concept appears to prevail in a socio political / economic context. The perspectives shared below refer to academic freedom as being about critical academic engagement, necessarily objective and reflecting truth within institutional autonomy. It is also perceived to influence institutional climate yet is argued, should not be about bringing collective action to social issues.

Kors (2006) purports that academic freedom should teach and practice values of human dignity, that humans are free to define themselves and have individual rights and responsibility.  Some scholars argue that rights in this context are linked to contextual obligation and accountability (Asmal, 2002; Jonathan, 2006:21; Bentley, Habib and Morrow, 2006: 24). Van Zyl Slabbert advocates that: "… a university should not insist that its members take a collective stand on social issues." as it is contrary to academic freedom (cited in Smetherham, 2003). In considering the implications of the state's involvement in academia, Jansen (2004), argues that guarding against centralised authority is crucial. These views illustrate the contradictions which exist in transforming HEIs in South Africa. Comparing van Zyl Slabbert's view with that of Jansen it appears that academic freedom cannot be disassociated

from its socio-political, economic context but must in fact remain accountable. The challenge lies in the understanding of concepts like collective support and based on the literature, the inherent tension between rights and obligation in the application of academic freedom is noted.

Varghese (2004: 38), Kors (2006), Bently, Habib and Morrow (2006) locate the concept of academic freedom externally in the domain of institutional autonomy and internally as that of the model and climate for academic engagement that extends to all aspects of professional and student academic life. Based on these views it is suggested therefore that the 'climate', or institutional governance, participation and response, for example, determines the concept of academic freedom and its relative perpetuity.  Given the theories outlined above, it is implicit that academic freedom is dynamic and relative to the organisational design and leadership. The challenge for HEIs is seen to emerge in transforming the concept of and traditional authority held by senior academics and leadership staff of the institution. That is, social accountability is important and if only to the elite then 'positive' objectives of academic freedom for the prevailing economic, socio-political realities of South Africa are limited (Bentley, Habib and Morrow, 2006: 24).

Authors such as Hall, et al. (2002:87-88), Cuckovic (2006), Sobrinho (2006), Holiday (2004b) and Jonathan (2006) argue that institutional autonomy like academic freedom is relative to the socio-political context. The literature suggests that institutional autonomy is either derived from or constrained by funding mechanisms, particularly those generated by the need to attract third stream income to supplement public funding (Shattock, 2003: 147-148; Cohen, 2004; Bently, Habib & Morrow, (2006:26). This indicates that the HEI autonomy could be compromised by conditions attached to state funding, unless they can access funds through alternative sources such as donors and the private sector.  Furthermore some scholars note a tendency within HEIs to centralise authority away from faculties which in turn is dominated by traditional institutional culture and ideology (Bentley, Habib and Morrow, 2006: 20). The relevance of academic freedom and institutional autonomy for transformation becomes more evident later when the dominant role played by

senior leadership and academics in shaping the institutional culture is described.

Scholars such as Cross, (2004:390), Vokwara, (2005) and Winberg, (2006) argue that the meaning attached to key concepts such as those of diversity, social equality and representivity are relevant to change and therefore scholarship content and research. Based on this argument there is a need for active, critical engagement on the concept of difference, to incorporate it in academia through teaching, learning and participation. The literature shows that the curriculum is influenced by global and local factors such as market pressure, changing modes of knowledge production, moral, cultural concerns, technology, environment awareness and indigenous knowledge production (Cross, 2004: 392, Moore, 2001:1; Winberg, 2006:161; Pike and Kuh, 2006:427). A further transformation challenge is in the arena of the production of knowledge that is constantly changing (Waghid, 2002; Denman, 2005). The literature suggests that curriculum content is shaped by social and economic needs and global technological factors. It seems that the arena of higher education is vast and impacted by diverse, global and internal factors influencing the context, contributing complexity for reform and transformation. Reisz (2006:74) suggests that institutional autonomy is the pretext on which HEIs function. The implication noted is that while striving for institutional autonomy there are multiple competing influences determined by funding, global challenges and trends.

What is relevant to the limited study undertaken here is the perception that curriculum content and academia generally can impact on the levels of participation and accessibility crucial to transformation. Curriculum content and who teaches it can be prohibitive factors to transforming the institutions constituency to be more representative. For example Asmal (2002) suggests that if curriculum content continues to perpetuate dominant western thought in an African context, it will likely reinforce the notions of what is relevant, valuable and important[12]. Kors, (2006), Habib, (2003), Smit & Cronje, (1999)

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[12] See for example the debates on the relevance and significance of curriculum content in teaching about Africa Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town 1998.

and Jonathan, (2006:21) show that academia can lead to indoctrination and should in essence reflect intellectual pluralism so as to be open and diverse. Preventing indoctrination is a challenge in academia, showing the complexity facing HEIs to be unique and open so as to incorporate the need for redress given the past oppressive regime.

## 2.3 TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF TRANSFORMATION CONCEPTS AND DEBATES

### 2.3.1 Introduction

This section of the literature considers three main themes as relevant to the research questions posed. The first is the concept of transformation itself. Secondly, given the specific South African context, the concepts of redress, equity and equality are then interpreted for its relevance to the case study which follows in the next chapters. The third component explores the meaning of diversity in a HEI context and how this has potential to lead to exclusion. A contextual understanding and application of these concepts informs the analysis of what impacts on HEI transformation internally and externally.

### 2.3.2 Transformation as a concept

Transformation in the South African context is broadly seen as fundamental social change towards having access to all, for all; moving from a mono-culture to a discrimination free society and overcoming the inequality and oppression created by apartheid. To transform is defined by Geddie (1966:1168) as to change shape, appearance, substance or character. In the South African context it is argued that the term "transition" encompasses political, social, economic, cultural and educational structures of society (Fourie, 1999; Van Wyk, 2006). Van Wyk (2006) refers to "fundamental change" not just reform within HEIs. Fundamental change refers to structural change of a national system that takes place over time and can lead to a transformed system, from elite to a mass based plan. This conceptualisation of HEI transformation is consistent with the (UK Thesaurus[13]) definition that

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[13] UK Thesaurus. www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ILO-Thesaurus/english/tr5688.htm

transformation is a complete change, into something with an improved appearance or usefulness.

The literature reviewed confirms that transformation is about all aspects of life and how it is conceptualised including external factors, culture, discrimination and conditions in which it occurs (Mayet, 1997; Finestone & Snyman, 2005:132; Van Wyk, 2006:182; Pinskii, 2004). It is suggested that commitment needs to be premised by a common understanding in order to lead to effective transformation. Based on the literature the HEI approach to transformation should not be insular while it can and should be introspective.

Kezar & Eckel (2002), Mok (2005), Milliken (2004), Zipin and Brennan (2003), Hall, et al. (2002), Smit & Cronje (1999) and Waghid (2002) suggest that there is a range of stimulus for change which can include income disparities, technology, demographics, changing socio-political contexts, reduced state funding, expansionism, that is, the need for better training amongst the workforce as an example. This implies that transformation can be ongoing, continuous, deep, intentional according to Kezar & Eckel (2002) and largely determined by external forces such as the impact of globalisation and national directives according to Van Wyk (2006:181-199) and Zeleza (2002). Transformation is therefore a multi-dimensional concept and needs to be carefully conceptualised within a framework which articulates the ultimate goal and how progress is measured.

Based on their findings, Cross (2004), Ng & Burke (2004) and Holiday (2004a) suggest that an affirmative approach to transformation is commonly associated in institutions with redress, re-establishing value and respect and can serve to stigmatise those seen to 'benefit' from it. By contrast a transformative approach associated with deconstructing the underlying framework to reflect and value the diverse nature of the academic staff and student population is likely to prove more effective (Cross, 2004:402). The implication of these arguments is that the outcome or impact of transformation is relative to the approach adopted, informed by an interpretation of the concept of change within the institution and external context. Scholars such

as Mama (2002) and Vokwara (2005) advocate that change should not only be numerical but should be intrinsic and qualitative. The rationale based on the literature is that change should be comprehensive and not merely quantifiable as this alone will not equate to progress in transforming.

Scott (1997) and Taylor, Petit & Stackpool-Moore (2005) argue that transformation is a personal process to be undertaken in order to generate a shift in consciousness, best achieved through education and participation. Though based on rationality transformation is not rational in process and individual behaviour is linked to self-awareness (Scott, 1997: 411-412). From these views it is noted that successful transformation is implicit in the behaviour and experiences of the individual. People from diverse backgrounds and resources therefore can impact positively or negatively on the broader objectives of an HEI in its transformation if individual perspectives and commitment is not focussed on the broader goals. It appears that a focussed, proactive approach requires substantial development, monitoring, review and reconstructing of transformation plans so as to remain directed and purposeful.

### 2.3.3  Redress, Equity and Equality

Equity, equality and redress are concepts relative to socio political and economic contexts and should therefore always be evaluated within the limitations acknowledged, to the application thereof. The promotion of equality is mandated by the Constitution and legislated in South African law and refers specifically to:

> … the advancement, by special legal and other measures, of historically disadvantaged individuals, communities and social groups who were dispossessed of their land and resources, deprived of their human dignity and who continue to endure the consequences (Albertyn, Goldblatt & Roederer, 2001:125).

This definition by its nature has implications for HEI autonomy in that it constitutes very prescriptive challenges to be met in the form of advancement for designated groups.

Redress[14] means to restore, equalise, rectify or remedy. The implication is clear. According to Van Wyk (2006), Mangcu (2003:109), Roberts (2005), Erasmus (2005), Vokwara (2005) and Grimes (1999) race is central to redress in that it was used to signify difference and manifest in inequality in South African society. The discrimination engendered through apartheid is regarded as immense and will therefore require significant steps to overcome. In chapter four statistics are used to substantiate this further showing proportional participation within the case study university, as an example. Perpetuated inequality due to historic factors puts greater pressure on institutional leadership to implement and manage effective change, given the historical socio-economic factors.

Foster, Gomm & Hammersley (1996) indicate that equality, like diversity, appears to mean different things to different people. Fourie (1999:285) and Van Wyk (2006:183-184) claim that equality refers to the principle of sameness and is essential for equity which refers to fairness for all and promotes the concept of redistribution, or changing the way resources and power are distributed and owned. The assumption of the mini-thesis is that representivity amongst staff and students will essentially lead to equality and subsequent qualitative, intrinsic change. There appears to be an implicit partiality to effecting change in favour of those previously marginalized and oppressed (women and Black people see Moleke, 2003) by past discriminatory laws, policy and practice.

Hassim (2005: 340) distinguishes between formal equality, the achievement of equal rights and opportunities and substantive equality, which is the transformation of the socio-economic and political conditions that produce gender, race and class inequality. The importance of this distinction is that having equal rights and opportunities will not automatically equate to substantive change. Therefore, substantive change is a process to be identified and planned for. Equality in essence implies quantifiable yet often intangible facets and is therefore likely not readily achievable but remains

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[14] UK Thesaurus. www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ILO-Thesaurus/english/tr5688.htm

central to equity (Van Wyk, 2006:184). For example within a HEI the factors necessary to bring about redress and equality for all can be achieved by having established patterns of inclusion and diversity.

### 2.3.4  Diversity in HEIs – a global challenge

This section examines the concept of diversity. It also looks at limitations of how diversity has traditionally been managed and the impact of this on effecting transformation, redress and equality.

Diversity includes physical attributes or observable facets generally protected by law including: gender, race, ethnicity and age that create a perception of self which influences behaviour (Roberson, 2006; Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007:113; Cross, 2004:392).  Diversity largely that which is perceived also includes less tangible notions of difference that are cognitive and learned through culture and education. The mini-thesis focuses specifically on difference protected by law, including race and gender. The assumption is that participation and inclusion across the institution of staff and students defined by these broad categories will ultimately reflect representivity of the South African population demographics through diversity.

In a relatively individualistic academic context that is often resistant to change, diversity presents a particular challenge (Triandis, 2006; Pinskii, 2004). Triandis' (2006) theory of "cultural intelligence" argues that people choose an organization (in which they participate / belong) based on a cultural compatibility with their own values. Such attraction implies that those who leave a HEI do so as a result of incompatibility, likely due to a wide range of contextual and circumstantial reasons). Accordingly the culture of an organisation can lead to the exclusion of certain groups. Choosing an organisation can also be linked to aspirations which an individual has which are based on a perception they have of the institution. Triandis (2006); Vokwara (2005) and Robertson, (2006:14) suggest this is particularly significant in a transforming institution where the tendency of employers is to select employees based on the "in-group membership" premised on the dominant culture. The literature reviewed here points to complexities for the

selection and recruitment of staff and students if dominant historical cultural tradition dominates and is consciously pursued.

In addition the literature consulted highlight's the importance of inclusion and diversity management so as to ensure access to information and resources, as well as influence on decision-making thereby contributing to transformation, the redress of past discrimination and equality (Roberson, 2006:215 and Sanchez and Medkik 2004: 517-536). The significance, as clarified by the literature, is that representivity and diversity needs to be prevalent and carefully managed in all aspects of an organisation for intrinsic transformation to be evident.

Diversity management needs to be premised on an awareness and understanding of difference. The literature suggests that training plays a vital role in change. Diversity awareness around bias and stereotyping should be inherent in diversity training (Sanchez & Medkik, 2004; Triandis, 2006; Brislin & Worthley, 2006; Lea Lee & Janda, 2006; Kayes, 2006). Sanchez and Medkik (2004: 518) argue that culture can impact on effective communication and decision making as a fundamental part of individual value systems. Language for example has historically, and still today, constituted a major barrier to participation given the dominance of English and Afrikaans (in the South African HEIs) over the majority Nguni[15] language speakers.

Sanchez and Medkik (2004:520) suggest that the effectiveness of diversity training is usually limited by factors such as socialisation and what people do with new knowledge once it is acquired. Hence there is a need for a supportive work context for the ultimate goal of behavioural change to be effected. Based on the literature, transformation needs to be carried out in a supported context for example having adequate policy as well as monitoring and evaluation planning, so as to optimise advantage and prevent further discrimination or exploitation resulting. Sanchez and Medkik (2004: 533) and Cross (2004:399) contend that many employers resort to "quick fix" solutions

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[15] Refers to indigenous African languages spoken as the vernacular.

in respect of diversity awareness training but that in fact a more comprehensive and continuous process is necessary.

## 2.4 ISSUES AND DEBATES ON SOUTH AFRICAN HEI TRANSFORMATION AND REFORM

### 2.4.1 Introduction

In order to evaluate the case study university's transformation it is necessary to consider the broader HEI context as it has emerged post 1994 and the legacy of apartheid inequality which precedes it. Four main themes and debates are discussed here. First the deficit in skills and limited access to HEI for Black people is described in relation to the extreme discrimination legally enforced through apartheid. Second the evolving HEI policy context post 1994 is referred to briefly and described in more detail in chapter three. Third the significance of institution specific governance and leadership for HEI transformation is explored. Fourth, the enabling or challenging factors for HEI transformation, which emanate from institutional culture and organisational design, are considered.

### 2.4.2 A brief overview of the historical consequence of apartheid on education and skills

The implications for HEI transformation stem from the fragmentation of education in the apartheid era and the goal of redress as instituted through South African policy and law post 1994. The latter include the National Commission on Higher Education 1996; the Higher Education White Paper 1997; the Higher Education Act 1997; the National Plan on Higher Education South Africa 2001 and the Employment Equity Act, 1998.

South Africa was divided along racial lines more rigidly than before with the transition to apartheid in 1948, when the National Party won power from the United Party. The victory culminated in a legal segregation and oppressive exploitation of people along racial lines. Several laws passed at the time illustrate this, including the 1949 Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act; the 1950

Population Registration Act[16] and the 1950 Group Areas Act; the 1953 Bantu Education Act (Sehoole, 2005a:11-12). According to the literature education was an important mechanism through which apartheid ideology, premised on a perception of racial superiority, was enforced and entrenched (Chisholm, 2005:221; Sehoole, 2005a: 12; Erasmus, 2005).

During this phase there emerged a very distinct differentiation of education and resources provided according to population group with even greater marginalisation of Black people located in the rural areas (Sehoole, 2005a: 12-16; Chisholm, 2005). Due to the limitations the mini-thesis does not consider the specific institutional implications for staff and students who stem from rural areas. It attempts to provide some insight into the disparities created and the consequent need for redress from penal apartheid discrimination towards equal representation amongst the diverse population.

According to Roberts (2005:492), the need to evaluate progress in HEIs by population group is linked to South Africa having amongst the highest income differentials in the world today. This stems from the discriminatory practices of apartheid that engendered a major racial divide in wage earnings and marginal access to limited quality of education for the majority Black population. Improved access to quality education can therefore likely lead to improved income hence the importance of establishing the levels of participation in tertiary education and jobs at all levels of the institution.

Chisholm (2003:268-289) argues that the state of schools and the consequent poor output amongst Black public high school learners is regarded as a significant factor limiting the advancement of redress and equality as envisaged by the post apartheid democracy. Sehoole (2005a:11) cites this as stemming from the apartheid practice of having multiple education departments serving discriminately the South African population along racial lines. From the literature reviewed it is apparent that the period following apartheid has not led to adequate improvement of the quality of learning in

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[16] Racial categories designated at the time were: White, Indian, Coloured, African. This essentially reflects the intrinsic hierarchy instituted.

public high schools for Black learners thus impeding the opportunity for them to compete equally with historically advantaged White learners.

Chisholm (2005: 201-222) and Reddy (2006) argue that by 2004 improvements to overcome apartheid disparities of state deprivation and an appropriate culture of teaching and learning in disadvantaged schools, was marginal and mainly symbolic with limited capacity for implementation across the nine provinces of the country. Chisholm (2005: 201-222) notes that the poorest provinces Limpopo, Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, in the new dispensation continue to be those which incorporated the former homelands[17]. The quality of teaching and learning (teacher qualification, excessive teacher / pupil ratios, and unresolved language of instruction challenges) are amongst the most critical factors continuing to constrain educational progress today. There remains a continuous tension between intention and outcome.

Improved access to HEI will have positive outcomes for the economic and socio political transformation, yet it is argued that this relies not only on the institution facilitating that access but also on the successful output amongst high school learners with the preparedness to succeed (Reddy, 2004:5; 2006). According to Reddy (2006) low numbers of African learners partake in Higher Grade maths and science and consequently low numbers pass at this level, impeding potential entry into HEIs. This has serious implications for institutional transformation. For example, improved access cannot result, where traditional standard entry requirements remain unchanged, and the quality and output of historically disadvantaged schools has not improved effectively. See further the quantitative analysis of the 2006 first time entering undergraduate applicants discussed in chapter four.

Given that the output from historically disadvantaged schools remains marginal, historically disadvantaged high school learners' ability to compete at tertiary level continues to be impacted by their specific socio-economic context. Though the study does not elaborate specifically on the question of

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[17] Homelands were apartheid social and political enclaves constructed as African communities with separate bureaucracies.

language, it is important to note the impact this has had on participation due to the marginalisation of diverse language as communication tool and mode of instruction in favour of English and Afrikaans. Nguni languages are spoken by the majority of the population yet the medium of instruction in schools and tertiary institutions has historically been English and Afrikaans and continues to be the case (Yeld, 2005).

In the apartheid era the HEI system was based on differentiation according to race, ethnicity and region with consequent separate institutional governance, policy and funding enforced through what was known as homeland governments (CHE, 2006). These separate education systems culminated in unequal services and resources, institutional autonomy, curriculum content options and qualifications. The literature shows that ethnically divided universities, based on separate development with limited curriculum options for Black people, arose out of the adoption of the 1959 Extension of University Education Act (Anderson, 2003; Sehoole, 2005a; Jansen, 2003). This has meant that skills levels ascribed to qualification earned and access to HEIs generally have been marginal and limited for Black students in comparison with White students. For example, the Minister of Education, Ms Pandor notes that there continues to be a lower representation of women in the fields of science and engineering (Ndenze, 2004). Winberg (2006) claims that overall only one percent of the population hold degrees suggesting that the traditional discipline based knowledge transfer is limited and failing to address societal needs. The mini-thesis does not attempt to analyse knowledge transfer modes, the point substantiates the extreme gulf in knowledge and skills generally and the consequent implication this has for improved access to HEIs, more especially so for the historically excluded majority.

The readings show that key concepts such as academic freedom represented only variations of truth in South Africa given the fragmentation of its HEIs by the apartheid state (Waghid, 2002: 63; Sehoole, 2005a: 15-16; Jansen, 2003:291). As a consequence, racism is evident in the skewed staffing patterns, resource allocation, research and academic output.

Some scholars show that apartheid education placed Whites at a great advantage in the job market, particularly in senior, technical, managerial and leadership roles (Mangcu, 2003:106; Sehoole, 2005a: 95; Moleke, 2003:204; Qunta, 2007a). This privileged position was to some extent entrenched with the 1994 negotiated transition to democracy. The lack of investment in skills and limited opportunity to contribute knowledge on the part of Black people has impacted negatively on the ability of a majority people to compete equally. Such limitation highlights the serious need for redress and corrective measures to be applied in order to transform and realise equality.

As table 1 below shows, the Department of Labour (DoL) recorded the following variations in professionalism and skills levels in 2000:

Table 1 Professionalism and skill distribution by population group DoL 2000

| Occupational group | Population Group as percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | African | Asian | Coloured | White |
| Professional | 16.4% | 7.4% | 4.9% | 71.3% |
| Technicians | 27.8% | 8.6% | 8.6% | 55.1% |
| Clerical | 30.9% | 15.3% | 15.8% | 37.9% |
| Services | 44.3% | 16.2% | 17.3% | 22.2% |
| Craft | 49.0% | 2.6% | 8.8% | 39.6% |
| Operators | 83.6% | 2.3% | 9.3% | 4.9% |
| Unskilled | 89.4% | 0.6% | 9.6% | 0.4% |

Source: Cited in Moleke, 2003:207

The distribution of skills amongst professionals for example at 16,4% African compared to 71,3% White, is completely skewed if evaluated in relation to the population demographics where the majority are African and the minority White, Coloured and Indian / Asian. Moleke (2003:207-208) notes that by gender extreme inequality is also evident in the differentials of 71.9% male and 28.1% female in the professional category of the workforce. According to Moleke (2003:220-221) there is improvement in the distribution of graduates across the population groups. For example, graduates in 1998 included 49% Africans compared to 24% in 1991. The concentration of skill and knowledge amongst this group of graduates however still appears to be in more general

three year qualifications, lacking any form of specialisation (Moleke, 2003: 221).

## 2.4.3 The National Education Policy Context since 1994

The emerging HEI policy context post 1994 is briefly outlined here and covered in greater detail in chapter three. As noted earlier, various initiatives (such as the of the National Commission on Higher Education 1996; Higher Education White Paper 1997; Higher Education Act 1997; Employment Equity Act 1998 and National Plan on Higher Education South Africa 2001) were developed to analyse and identify the way forward in reconstituting HEI in South Africa given the disparities of the past. Some of the conceptualisation was around how to constitute one higher education system from the fragmented racist services of the past. Another policy challenge has been to enhance access and to better respond to the needs of society and the economy so as to improve and enhance skills levels.

The merging of HEIs is not unique to South Africa as shown earlier in the study. This was however one of the mechanisms employed by the new government and culminated in 2003 in the amalgamation of 36 public HEIs into 23 (HESA[18], 2006). According to Anderson (2003:386), the rationale for the mergers was premised on the need to affect greater social justice, cost effectiveness and institutional competitiveness by addressing the existing structural inequalities amongst HEIs.

According to Jansen (2003) and Anderson (2003:387) while the mergers affected most institutions through a distribution of more Black staff to Historically White Universities (HWUs) they failed to institute reform measures for the diversification of staff in HWUs, such as those unaffected institutions like the University of Cape Town (UCT), University of Stellenbosch (US) and the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS). The implication therefore is that HEI transformation post apartheid has largely been left to the initiative and

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[18] See Higher Education South Africa http://www.sauvca.org.za/hesa

commitment of the institution. Jansen (2003) argues that this will depend largely on the leadership quality in these HEIs.

According to Mok, (2003: 290-311) in his analysis of the transition in China, the mergers have been used by governments to macro manage HEI transformation. Mergers have been the initiative of government resulting in restructuring envisaged by global reforms not institutional needs or design. The limitation of this according to Jansen (2003), is that in the South African context it has been contrary to the drive towards massification envisaged as part of redress and will likely result in HEIs becoming increasingly middle class institutions of Black and White students.

### 2.4.4 Institutional Challenges: the significance of governance and leadership for South African HEI transformation

The final sections of this chapter takes into account the principles of what constitutes good governance and the power it has to impact on institutional goals, including those of transformation and redress. Governance is defined as having internal and external relationships and refers to the extent to which accountability is established. Furthermore it is understood that governance structures are derived from institutional culture and organisational design, with obvious implications for conceptualising and benchmarking change.

The governance structures ultimately determine the direction taken in all aspects of the HEI therefore primary change should be effected here in order to realise the representivity which is sought in the South African context. The literature shows that good governance in a transforming HEI involves competing priorities of efficiency and democracy premised on policy, procedures and oversight (NCHE, 1996:14; Hall, et.al. 2002). This emphasises the importance of leadership accountability. Good governance in its application appears relative to the interpretation of such concepts and may consequently not result in the adequate implementation advancing redress. Furthermore the literature suggests that governance is derived from both internal and external relationships and the power constituting this (NCHE, 1996:14; Hall, et.al. 2002). There appears to be a need for internalising the

concept of accountability both external and internally to its constituencies in a transforming context for governance to be directed towards redress.

The implication for institutional change is whether governance influences institutional culture or is shaped by it. Some scholars contend that structures and processes for governance exist within an organisation's culture and that faculty and management cultures are not aligned (Tierney, 2004: 214; Duderstadt, 2004:144; Zipin and Brennan, 2003:352). The postmodernist concept advanced earlier in the section, considered the implication of HEIs increasing tendency towards managerialism and the consequent challenge this presents for autonomy and academic freedom.

The international literature shows that there are variations of governance such as state participatory (Yonezawa, 2003 and Mok, 2003). They argue these are mostly influenced by external or global, social and political contexts in the 1960's and 1970's that impacted on participation rates and consequent income inequality. They argue further that new consequent challenges like self serving bureaucrats and ineffective management have emerged. The literature suggests that highly centralised management is less effective (Hall, et.al., 2002:15). Given the transformation agenda in South Africa, more especially the HEI 1997 and 1998 EEA, the concept off governance is a significant challenge for the institution.

Governance according to Hall, et al (2002:24) should be measured against benchmarks and performance indicators relating to such things as participation by race and gender, facilities, information technology (IT), throughput, curriculum transformation, and compliance with planning and budgeting processes so as to illustrate transformation. A contending view is that indicators do not necessarily amount to accountability as HEI authorities have learnt how to conform to the compliance measures instituted by government without transforming (Jansen, 2004). For example an HEI sets its equity goals and reports accordingly, motivating and substantiating its lack of effect in a justifiable manner. See chapter four findings and analysis for further elaboration on this. The implication for HEI transformation is that these

indicators are also relative to who defines them (Vokwara, 2005; Foster, Gomm & Hammersley, 1999: 45).

Leadership is generally regarded as pivotal in any organisational setting, more especially for good governance. The literature advances that specific characteristics, knowledge and ideological influence are important contributory factors to the relative success of leadership, more so in a transforming context. Some of the theories and attributes of what constitutes good leadership, seen as relative to a symbiotic relationship with followers, is outlined below.

According to some scholars leadership is about influence yet is distinct from management, organisational structures as well as teams and gives effect to change (Ivancevich et al., 1996:412; Shattock, 2003:91-92, Denton and Vloeberghs, 2002:91). According to Denton and Vloebergs (2002:91) transformational leadership requires the leader to deal with the tensions of transformation and to have specific characteristics and style in order to respond to the context. Other scholars substantiate that leadership in education borrows from business thinking and the conceptualisation thereof is relative to our individual socialisation (2004: 7-9; Zipin and Brennan, 2003: 358; Mok, 2003; Greenfield, 2004: 190; Mama, 2002; Sinclair, 2004:9). Based on the literature, leadership has key attributes derived from personal socialisation, education and training, ideology and how we conceptualise. Understanding leadership is therefore significantly linked to its relative socio cultural origins and the importance of this for governance and institutional culture.

Drawing on the concept of a transformational leader referred to above, those characteristics regarded as significant and important are outlined below (Denton and Vloeberghs, 2002; Bargh, et al., 2000; Ivancevich, et al., 1996: 413; Sinclair, 2004:14). These characteristics and styles include transformational leaders:

- identifying themselves as change agents
- being courageous individuals, demonstrating personal character

- believing in people
- being value driven
- advocating lifelong learning
- dealing with complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty
- having visionary attributes
- setting direction
- mobilizing individual commitment
- engendering organisational capability

In an HEI, leadership is typically devolved by faculty and department. The challenge therefore is for leaders at all levels within an HEI (from top management to Deans and staff) to be like minded in view of institutional goals and objectives throughout the institution, yet to have the courage and ability to challenge or agitate as change agents within it. Other scholars' views reinforce the concept of transformational leadership suggesting that attributes include communication through action and word as well as facilitating opportunity amongst followers to succeed (McCann, et al. 2006: 243; Brown, 2004; Ivancevich, et al., 1996: 498).

The literature illustrates the importance of the role students (and staff) play in influencing the effectiveness of leadership through pressure from below. Brown (2004:78) for example argues that students (and staff) can become critical of hegemonic structure and ideology and press for transformation. This can best be achieved through participation in organised staff or student bodies active on campus, where all are afforded the opportunity to participate.

In his analysis of the United Kingdom HEI system, Glatter (2006:71) regards national government's role in leadership as ambiguous, inhibiting leadership. Glatter (2006:74) argues that incremental rather than transformational change has greater effect, in what he refers to as a "complexity approach". Based on Glatter's view the context in which leadership is exercised has a bearing on its application. Consequently transformative leadership, imperative for HEI transformation, can only emerge if capacity to do so is enabled within the institutions governance mechanisms. It appears therefore that transformational leadership is determined by the external relationship with government and the relative notions of managerialism, now more prevalent in

HEIs. Such a symbiotic influence likely contributes to the dilemma of autonomy and academic freedom in a transformational context.

## 2.4.5 The significance of institutional culture and organisational design for HEI transformation

The literature reviewed indicates that institutional culture and organisational design are important factors for participation, inclusion and representation. According to Smit & Cronje (1999) institutional or corporate culture includes the beliefs, values, symbols, rituals, ideology and language shared by the members of the organisation. Derived from the external, political socialisation of society, institutional culture is seen to mirror the political and economic context. The transformation of institutional culture is seen as vital to facilitating the national agenda of redress and equality.

In evaluating South African HEIs, scholars such as Finestone and Snyman, (2005) and Mama, (2002) equate organisational design with Eurocentric, autocratic, hierarchical, authoritarian and individualistic management structures dominated by White males. Minority dominance is substantiated to some extent by the DoL skills indicators cited earlier and is shown in the quantitative data later in this study. Shattock (2003: 68) cites critical factors, supporting this notion in the HEIs as institution age, disciplinary mix, physical location and size, that is, design emanating from external contextual factors such as the public sector and industry. Erasmus (2005) argues that the organisational design and culture prevalent under apartheid are in many ways still evident today.

According to Shattock, (2003:70-73), Glatter, (2006:72) and Jansen, (2004) organisational change, impacted by mergers for example, becomes more mechanistic and hierarchical leading to extra levels of decision making. Based on this argument it is assumed that limited participation in decision-making, further marginalises traditionally excluded groups which can consequently compromise institutional transformation. The assumption is that organisational design and institutional culture can be derived from and is therefore symptomatic of dominant processes followed internally and practices

instituted by the organisations leadership. Considering the implication of all the factors above, HEIs though influenced by global trends have an implicit organisational design which emanates from its relationship to the state and socio-historical factors. The arguments in the literature show that based on its culture and design any institutional transformation is complex.

Authors like Kleiner (2004) and Elfenbein and O'Rielly (2007) suggest that homogenous groups often yield better results and less conflict, than those that are diverse. Kleiner refers to racism and sexism as two of many ingrained human behaviours particular in stratified, hierarchical organisations which amount to what he terms rankism.  HEIs are invariably hierarchical given the division between leadership, academia and support staff for example. Kleiner (2004) and Kayes (2006) argue that rankism manifests in an organisation in bullying and cliquish behaviour; inordinately high salary gaps between top and lower level staff as well as subtle discriminatory actions in recruitment and selection procedures. Kleiner, (2004), Ng & Burke, (2004), Mama, (2002) and Vokwara, (2005) argue that without breaking this trend, in which we become both victim and perpetrator, attaining representivity amongst women and people of colour in organisation will always be compromised.

From the comparative literature it is noted that the legacy of discrimination is perpetuated within institutions. For example Ng & Burke (2004: 317-324), in their research on women and ethnic minorities in Canada, argue that they are more likely to encounter barriers, discrimination and bias in respect of career advancement suggesting that the trend in organisation is universal. Mama (2002) focussing on the African continent draws a similar analogy where she claims that women in academia remain seriously under represented in proportion to men and by population group.   Using statistics this is substantiated in the findings of the case study university in chapter four. According to some scholars women are even more marginalised given the barriers and culture which exist within institutions (Kors, 2006; Hassim, 2005; Ng & Burke, 2004; Mama, 2002; Gibson, 2006).

Brown (2004:83) suggests that people are convinced to embrace dominant ideologies as always being in their own best interest. The dominance of ideology presents an important challenge for transformation and being critical thereof seems necessary for change.

Some of the literature reviewed illustrates the diverse nature of organisations and the objectives which determine and influence them. For example, organisational character has been described variously as monolithic (varying in structure and cultural inclusion), plural (focusing on employment profiles and fair treatment) as well as multicultural (drawing on policies and practices optimising human resources and maximising opportunities) to enhance employee potential (Roberson, 2006:215; Smit & Cronje, 1999: 423). The opportunity to change institutional culture or shape organisational design appears to depend to a large extent on leadership and governance capacity to do so.

## 2.5 SUMMARY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

This section of the chapter provides a summary of the main themes and debates outlined above as significant to the research question. Three main themes were covered in relation to HEI transformation as it applies to staff and student representivity in the post apartheid South African context. The first reviewed the global HEI reform and transformation context for its similarities and parallels with the South African experience. Secondly, the concepts of transformation, redress, equality, equity and diversity were considered for their contribution to our understanding of HEI change. Third the South African HEI context and the impact of the legacy of apartheid was debated. Furthermore, governance and leadership were explored as key facets within the HEI for their responsibility and potential to effect change. That combined with the knowledge of how institutional culture and organisational design generally determine the HEI were considered as important themes to transformation.

The literature included a conceptual framework for transformation looking specifically at the tensions which have manifested in HEIs between academic freedom and institutional autonomy on the one hand and managerialism and commodification, on the other. The literature emphasised the common global experience of how government focus and resources has shifted, in a changing socio-political context to a more comprehensive priority of improving HEI access for all and the consequent policies applied to achieve this.

This chapter showed that the priority of transformation and reform in this context is that of changing the role of HEIs to become more accessible to all, effecting equality and opportunity. The impact of global trends on academia and institutional autonomy was sketched. The influence of socio economic factors on determining HEI shape, including the use of affirmative measures to bring about greater access was noted. The literature considered definitions and interpretations within the HEI reforming context of key concepts such as transformation, redress, equity, equality and diversity. These are important for the evaluation of whether transformation has occurred at the case study university and what promotes and impedes it, as proposed in the research questions. The chapter furthermore considered the importance of inclusion and diversity management given the tendency for historical cultural tradition to dominate which leads to exclusion and minimises participation. It also considered the importance of distinguishing between numerical and intrinsic change for effective transformation. This chapter considered the importance of the individual socialisation and behaviour in transformation and the benefits of transforming one's own thinking in order to do so intrinsically.

The literature reviewed provides an overview of the divisive nature of apartheid education and the challenges this presents for HEI transformation today. It also describes the lack of skills which are evident amongst the majority Black population as a result of historical exclusion and discriminatory laws and policies pre 1994. The resultant inequality necessitates the need for corrective measures to be applied, as illustrated in the example of Brazil. An important external factor noted for its impact on transformation initiatives is that of the status of schools post apartheid and the lack of equal output from

historically disadvantaged schools which shapes the potential for applicants to compete equally into HEIs.

HEI transformation in South Africa was shown in this chapter to have focussed on mergers which have left some institutions unchanged including the case study university necessitating the need for greater institutional initiative to be applied to effect change. Such initiative would require transformational leadership as well as effective forms of participatory and accountable institutional governance. Governance should include key performance indicators and mechanisms for establishing accountability. The literature also shows that leadership is shaped by external socio-political factors, while institutional culture and organisational design either inhibit or facilitate participation and that culture mirrors socialisation.

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# CHAPTER 3
# DESCRIPTIVE BACKGROUND

## 3.1    INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the higher education and employment equity policy background of South Africa in the post apartheid period in order to illustrate the enabling environment created by the new democratic dispensation to bring about transformation and redress the imbalances of the past. It shows how policy has evolved and been designed to focus the initiatives of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) sector and employers generally. It also includes a description of the case study institution's initiatives to transform through policies related to the recruitment of first time entering students and staff equity planning.

There are two main sections. The first deals with the South African policy context on higher education and employment equity covering HEI concepts and policy as well as employment equity policy. The second section describes UCT's transformation principles and policies and the existing structure for transformation including roles and responsibilities.

## 3.2    THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY CONTEXT

### 3.2.1  Introduction

In this section a brief outline is provided of the proposed transition in higher education from the legacy of apartheid as outlined in the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE 1996), the Higher Education White Paper (HEWP 1997) and the 1997 Higher Education Act (HEA). The following section focuses on the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (NPHESA 2001).  Finally a description of some of the pertinent aspects of the 1998 Employment Equity Act (EEA) is provided, as relevant to the mini-thesis. The major significance of these legislative and policy documents is the fact that employers and HEIs specifically are obligated by law to plan for transformation, including creating equal opportunity and redress measures to overcome the inequalities in South African society created under apartheid.

**3.2.2 Transcending the HEI legacy as proposed through the NCHE 1996 and HEWP 1997**

The NCHE (1996) and the subsequent HEWP (1997) were strategies devised to guide and inform the transition from a fragmented HEI to a unified and integrated, globally competitive system (Hall, et al., 2002:19-20). Of the 36 institutions, four Historically White Universities (HWUs) were English medium and six HWUs were Afrikaans while one provided distance education. Eight were Historically Black Universities (HBUs) located in apartheid homelands, and two were HBUs in urban areas. In addition there were fifteen Technikons divided into Black and White institutions (CHE, 2006b: 40). Whilst the former White institutions were allowed a degree of autonomy, the HBUs located in the apartheid homelands had their teaching staff and curriculum tightly controlled by the apartheid state (Sehoole, 2005b; Anderson, 2003; Hall, et al., 2002: 20). Universities were seen as spaces where ideology could be deliberated[19]. As shown in the literature reviewed in chapter two, transforming to a unified and co-ordinated HEI system presented (and still does today) a huge challenge given the diverse governance, resources and oppression experienced under apartheid, in particular in the HBUs. Significant challenge exists, given the imbalance of the apartheid system, for institution autonomy and academic freedom within a democratic system advocating transformation, equality and redress. The HEWP (1997) advocated academic freedom, as imperative for critical, experimentation and creative thought, protected by the constitution.

The NCHE (1996) furthermore advocated that HEIs be more accessible and representative of its society, leading and supporting transformation and reconstruction. The NCHE (1996:5) proposed three central attributes of a transformed higher education system. These were increased participation (moving from elite to a mass based service), greater institutional responsiveness and increased co-operation and partnerships with society. These facets have already been described in the literature reviewed as

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[19] The use of apartheid Ideology had a destructive impact on communities (Anderson, 2003: 380) and presents a challenge to HEI making fundamental change (Hall, et al., 2002:63)

important in the HEI transformation context, reinforcing its purpose as HEIs are conceptualised globally. Contextually such critical objectives are not unique to South Africa as is evident in Milliken's reference to the transformation of HEIs in the UK (2004: 15).

According to the NCHE (1996:65) to provide higher education to a more diverse population there needs to be a re-orientation of attitudes, approach and policy within HEIs. The recommendations of the NCHE (1996:3) are that curriculum should be educationally transformative and relative to the social purpose of South Africa as a developing country. Institutional initiative has to be derived, established and maintained through state directives. The NCHE report serves as an invaluable document against which to evaluate the current policy and practice in the case study of transformation amongst staff and students of the University of Cape Town (UCT), a historically elite institution in the Western Cape, South Africa.

The HEWP (1997) refers to the purpose of HEIs as being to meet learning needs and develop intellectual ability.  They are furthermore seen as an important vehicle for achieving equity in society through improved access and equal opportunity. HEIs, as shown in the literature review, are essentially seen as providing necessary competencies and expertise for the labour market, in order for growth and prosperity of the economy. The same white paper equates HEIs with training people to specialised functions and contributing towards socialisation. It regards access to HEIs as leading to enlightened citizens, committed to a common good. The HEWP refers to HEIs as being about academic scholarship and intellectual enquiry. If the attributes advanced in the two concept papers referred to above are evident in an HEI, then it is likely that representivity amongst staff and students can lead to a changed outcome and future to the benefit of all.

### 3.2.3 The Higher Education Act 1997

This act provides the foundation and legal framework for HEI organisation and transformation in South Africa. Given South Africa's transition from apartheid, the act sets out, amongst other things, to:

- Establish a single co-ordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance;
- Restructure and transform programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic and development needs of the country;
- Redress past discrimination, ensure representivity and equal access;
- Promote the values which underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom;
- Respect and encourage democracy, academic freedom, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship and research;
- Pursue excellence and promote the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee, tolerance of ideas and appreciation of diversity;

The act furthermore advocates freedom and autonomy between HEIs and the State within public accountability and the national need for advanced skill and scientific knowledge. From this it is deduced that the relationship between the State and the HEI sector is qualified by the external social and economic needs of the country and is not therefore absolutely autonomous.

The 1997 HEA makes provision for the establishment of a Council on Higher Education (CHE) to advise the Minister of Education on aspects of the HEI system. The CHE's mandate includes quality assurance, research, planning, and mechanisms for allocating public funding, student financial aid, student support services, governance and language. The Minister of Education can through this act define, establish, merge or close an HEI as determined through consultation with the CHE.

The act determines that every HEI should be governed through the establishment of a council, senate, principal, vice principal, students' representative council and institutional forum. The act makes provision for an HEI to establish an institutional statute through which it can establish other structures and offices it deems relevant. Each of these mandated structures have internal governance, accountability and responsibility as defined by the act which guides the communication and consultation within the institution to ensure delegated participation. Management and administration of the HEI is vested in the principal. While the HEI council reports to the CHE it is not accountable to it. Therefore the capacity for institution autonomy is possible

given the terms of reference between it and the legal structures of government.

The Minister of Education in consultation with the CHE determines the funding policy and mechanisms for HEIs, which include measures for the redress of past inequality. The Minister receives reports from the HEI council on governance, audited finances and the status thereof. There is thus no direct mandated accountability between the HEI and the Minister. The act does however provide for the Minister to intervene in a HEI if the need arises, for example in cases of maladministration. In this instance the Minister can appoint an administrator to take over the authority of the council or management of the HEI for a limited period of up to two years. The Minister can institute action if it finds that the HEI or its council has not complied with the provisions of the act under which an allocation of funds was paid through parliament to the institution.

### 3.2.4 The National Plan on Higher Education South Africa (NPHESA) 2001

The purpose of the NPHESA[20] (2001:5) is to ensure that the HEI system achieves the transformation objectives set out in the HEWP (1997), in particular by responding to society's needs through a nationally coherent approach; by ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively with accountability for the expenditure of public funding; and by ensuring that academic teaching and research quality is improved. While the plan recognised the changing demographic profile in student enrolments, it nevertheless highlighted systemic problems in relation to the quantity and quality of graduate and research output; management; leadership and governance failures; the lack of representivity in staff profiles; and institutional cultures which had not transcended the racial divides of the past. Overall these factors were perceived as a threat to unifying the South African HEI system. A key purpose of NPHESA, therefore, was to address some of the

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[20] The 2001 plan is an illustration of the advisory interaction provided for in the HEA (1997) between the CHE and the Minister of Education

limitations that had been observed in HEI transformation following the 1997 HEA.

The NPHESA reiterates that the framework for HEIs in South Africa intends to develop a system that will:

- Promote equity of access – eradicate all forms of unfair discrimination and advance redress for past inequalities;
- Meet national development needs including high-skills for a growing economy operating in a global environment;
- Support a democratic ethos and culture of human rights through educational programmes
- Contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship focussed in particular on the diverse problems and demands of the local, national and African contexts through rigorous academic quality

Five broad categories with identified priorities were outlined in the plan (2001:2). These included:

- Producing the graduates needed for social and economic development in South Africa;
- Achieving equity in the South African Higher Education System
- Achieving diversity in the South African Higher Education System
- Sustaining and promoting research
- Restructuring the institutional landscape of the higher education system

Priorities included increasing participation to meet the demand for high level skills especially amongst Black African students; improving HEI system efficiency through increased numbers of graduates, especially with skills and competencies to participate in the modern world; achieving improved quality through improved efficiency; broadening the base of higher education by promoting improved access for workers, professionals and adult learners, especially those from disadvantaged communities; and increasing representation amongst women and Black people in senior level academic and administrative positions.

Other priorities extended to ensuring programme diversity and improving research and postgraduate output. Ultimately the priority advocated by this plan was to restructure so as to reduce duplication, enhance responsiveness,

build academic capacity and change institutional culture within South Africa's HEIs.

Some of the strategies identified for improving on these priorities included the increase of participation and graduate output. This involved linking funding to the number of graduates the institution produces and supporting academic development programmes. Another strategy was to change enrolments to reflect a systemic shift between the broadly defined academic disciplines. These were all premised on HEIs planning for strategic developments.

Whilst the NPHESA (2001:31-32) recognised that there had been an overall change in the racial composition in the student body, it was concerned that a number of individual institutions had made very slow process in becoming more representative. It noted too that the participation amongst African students remained comparatively lower than that for White and Indian students even though percentage participation had reduced for these two groups.

The NPHESA also noted with concern that participation in permanent academic staff posts had only increased marginally for Black staff with a similarly small decline amongst White staff in this category (2001:34). The plan suggested that limitations to rapidly improving this were related to such factors as the limited pool for potential recruitment; inadequate funding for postgraduate students; and the lack of competitive salaries offered by HEIs compared to those offered by the private sector. To address such limitations, the plan advocated institutional employment equity planning; a changed institutional culture; the recruitment of academics from the continent as a role model for Black students and also in order to help to transform institutional culture; and institutional strategies for recruiting and retaining staff (NPHESA, 2001:39).

### 3.2.5  The 1998 Employment Equity Act (EEA)

The Employment Equity Act, which came into force on 14 May 1999, outlaws unfair discrimination in the workplace and requires employers with over 50

employees (private and public) to prepare and implement employment equity plans, and to report regularly to the Government on progress in relation to such plans. Of particular importance for this mini-thesis is the fact that the act clearly defines designated groups for who redress and equal opportunity is paramount in South Africa's reconstruction from its apartheid past. These are Black people of African, Coloured or Indian origin, as well as women and people with disabilities.

The act recognises that apartheid laws resulted in disparities in employment and income, and that such disadvantage requires redress; hence the institution of the act to facilitate planning and responsibility around employment equity by employers. The act advances several related aspects, including the promotion of the constitutional right of equality; the implementation of employment equity and affirmative action measures to redress the effects of discrimination; the achievement of a diverse workforce broadly representative of South African demographics; the setting of numerical goals and targets; and the establishment of guidelines for employers on how to plan and report.

Affirmative action measures refer to the employer ensuring that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of an employer.

Employment policies covered by the act include:

- Recruitment and selection;
- Appointments;
- Job classification and grading;
- Remuneration, employment benefit, terms and conditions of employment;
- Job assignment;
- Work environment and facilities;
- Training and development;
- Performance evaluation systems;
- Promotion, transfer and demotion;
- Disciplinary and dismissal measures.

The EEA makes provision for an assigned senior employment equity manager to be appointed by institutions that are covered by it. Such managers should report to the Heads of their institutions on employment equity matters and, where applicable, should have employment equity outcomes incorporated into their performance contracts. The act requires that employers, in consultation with staff and unions, must prepare and implement an employment equity plan which should also describe measures taken by the employer to eliminate unfair discrimination in the workplace. The employer is furthermore required to report to the Department of Labour (DoL) on its employment equity in the manner prescribed by the act.

## 3.3 THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT) POLICY CONTEXT

### 3.3.1 Introduction

The University of Cape Town is an HEI of long standing having been established more than 175 years ago. However, this study does not go into the rich history of the institution but focuses on the specific HEI transformation and equity policy context since 1994. This section starts with an overview of how the institution has acknowledged the need to transform. The following section refers to three policies regarded as relevant to this study, namely the Admissions, Student Equity and Employment Equity policies. The last section considers the transformation structures, roles and responsibilities.

### 3.3.2 Acknowledging the need for Transformation

As part of its concept of transformation, UCT concedes the limitations experienced generally in HEIs and sees its many challenges and issues as not being institution specific but shared widely across the national sector. In complying with wide scale system change through national policy and legislation, UCT maintains that it has fully integrated transformation into its planning and budgeting strategies.

Information stated publicly, such as the Vice Chancellor's vision, the UCT website, the value and mission statements and the undergraduate admission prospectus will be used to illustrate institutional commitment to transformation.

The Vice Chancellor of UCT, Professor Njabulo Ndebele, reiterated his objective to transform the institution in his vision document, rolled out during his second term of office, and focussing in particular on living transformation (Ndebele, 2005). This concept of living transformation was a sequel to his initial ten point plan and included, for example, building a diverse staff profile, and creating a fulfilling work environment. The Vice Chancellor's approach was to seek ways of making transformation a reality. Living transformation, one of his seven strategic objectives, emphasised the University leadership's commitment to change. A further objective was to deepen transformation through policy-driven decisions around core academic functions making it a total institutional experience. Deepening transformation was said to involve the entire senior leadership group (comprised of the Vice Chancellor, his deputies, the Registrar, executive Directors, Deans and Directors of support departments). Another objective set out to change the academic staff profile, in particular through the recruitment and retention of new staff, both academic and non-academic.

The extent to which UCT has incorporated transformation into its planning is further substantiated by the institution's range of policies and rules which are adopted and periodically reviewed by its Council. These are contained in the public sphere and institution handbooks. For example, Handbook number 3, on General Rules and Policies, is the most notable for rules and polices on qualifications, discipline, student contact, traffic, and residence amongst others. More specifically it informs the UCT community of applicable rules, policies and principles guiding transformation within the institution. An outline of some of the very specific transformation policies follows in the next section.

The institution's concept and definition of transformation is that it is multi-faceted and an integrated process in which it strives to attain the vision, mission and values in all aspects of its life and function. Handbook 3 on General Rules and Policies contains the UCT statement of values which is said to serve as a: "…foundation for a range of University policies and guides

the management of particular aspects of University life."[21] (www.uct.ac.za UCT, 2007:105). Some aspects of the value statement[22] relevant to this study are that the University will be characterised by:

- Compassion for less privileged in our society
- Respect for differences (cultural, religious, political and others)
- Respect of personal choice
- Intellectual honesty
- The pursuit of excellence
- Steps to prevent unfair discrimination
- Active promotion of social justice and equity
- The principle of open governance
- Nurtured and empowered members

These values reinforce specifically the commitment of the HEI to redress and transformation.

The UCT mission statement indicates an iteration of the role of the university consistent with that already outlined in the previous sections. For example a primary section of the statement refers to the importance of teaching and research in terms of skills and critical enquiry. Further sections refer to the principles of life long learning including the aspiration to continuously grow and develop. The aspect most significant to the research is the reference to the challenges facing South African society. Here the mission statement stresses the need to take stock of the past and be cognisant of the future. It indicates for example that UCT undertakes to:

- Strive to transcend the legacy of apartheid in South Africa and to overcome all forms of gender and other oppressive discrimination;
- Be flexible on access, active in redress, and rigorous on success
- Promote equal opportunity and the full development of human potential;
- Value and promote the contribution that all our members make to realising our mission.

Furthermore, the statement refers to the need to find a balance between freedom and responsibility, rights and obligations, autonomy and accountability, and transparency and efficiency, through debate and consultation. From the above there appears to be a coherent and

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[21] http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/apply/handbooks/rules.pdf
[22] The UCT Value statement was adopted by the institution in 2001.

comprehensive undertaking to effect transformation amongst staff and students. Whether this commitment in principle has been matched in practice will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

### 3.3.3 Transformation principles and policies

This section describes the three main policies relevant to the study namely, Admissions, Student Equity and the Employment Equity policies, together with a description of the employment equity plan 2004-2007.

The Admissions policy is communicated in the Prospectus, to every undergraduate applicant[23]. Whilst the Matriculation Board[24] sets a School Leaving Certificate (Grade 12), with matriculation endorsement, as the general minimum entry requirement to study at an HEI, UCT, like other institutions, sets additional requirements for admission into specific programmes. These are based on specific disciplinary requirements and also take into account the number of spaces that faculties have to fill. The admissions policy furthermore makes provision for discretion to be used by the various faculties, with respect to redress, using the socio-economic position and or school of origin, where relevant as additional criteria. In particular, it encourages faculties to "… actively seek ways of differentiating between applicants on the basis of varying degrees of disadvantage flowing from social class and educational experience, or a combination of these." However, the policy fails to specify how it will evaluate potential applicants to ensure that redress is forthcoming.

With respect to student equity, more generally, a Student Equity Policy was adopted by UCT's Council in October. Amongst other things, this states that the University:

> … recognises its role in striving to end the racial fragmentation of the higher education system inherited from the past and to build a diverse student profile that predominantly reflects the demographics of South African society, while also reflecting the University's international profile.

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[23] See also www.uct.ac.za
[24] http://www.hesa-enrol.ac.za/mb/

The Student Equity policy expresses UCT's commitment to transformation and recognizes the constraints faced by a majority of school leavers, due to the continuing legacy of apartheid. Some of the principles contained in the policy refer to a commitment to diversity; to redress by striving to achieve equity of access and equal opportunity for all students to succeed; and to transparency and fairness in its admissions, curriculum and assessment systems amongst others.

In relation to enrolment planning and equity targets (though without specifying how it will do so), the policy undertakes to:

> … facilitate access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, … using a variety of measures to assess potential to succeed and will set differential entrance requirements.

The Student Equity policy is in its first cycle of implementation and is to be evaluated after three years, a report of which is to be presented to the UCT Council. Faculty Dean's are tasked with ensuring student equity planning occurs within the faculty, showing a devolution of the function and responsibility.
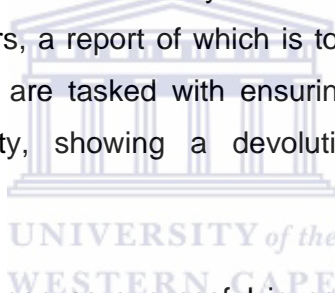
Whether the policy has been as successful in practice as in theory will be discussed in Cahpter 4.

The third main UCT policy discussed here is that of employment equity. The UCT as a significant employer is obligated to conform to the prerequisites set out in the 1998 EEA. The UCT has devised a plan and policy as a detailed articulation of its institutional goals for redress and equal opportunity informed by the provisions of this act. Unlike the preceding Admissions and Student Equity policies, the Employment Equity (EE) policy is informed by a detailed plan (2004-2007), described and analised in this study.

The EE policy[25] of UCT makes reference to the need to "… build a diverse, high quality staff profile throughout the University…", and claims to "… recognize its obligation in terms of the Employment Equity Act, and

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[25] UCT: Employment Equity Policy approved by Council 5 May 2004; updated version approved December 2006.

understands that the primary purpose of the legislation is to advance transformation through setting targets for achieving equity in staffing, …". It states further its intention to achieve equity in the employment of designated groups which are Africans, Coloureds, Indians, women and persons with disability, and that promotion for these sub-groups is in line with the institution's employment equity plan.

The EE policy (2006[26]) states that:

> In a transformed society, the staff profile of the University should broadly reflect appropriate South African demographics while, at the same time, include people of other nationalities who bring the expertise and leadership that contributes to the work of a university located in Africa. The immediate aim of the University is to ensure the development of a critical mass of Black staff, with an equitable representation of women and people with disabilities, at all levels.

The institution's 2004-2007 employment equity plan is elaborated here to illustrate the strategies that have been applied to realise the University's commitment to achieve a more diverse and representative staff complement that "broadly reflects appropriate South African demographics" (EE Plam, 2004:7). An important principle of the plan is to distinguish between the designated groups rather than to regard them as homogenous. This principle implies that there should be disaggregated planning based on diversity and representivity. The policy characteristics outlined in the plan indicate that there will be no prescribed target setting formula but that realistic employment equity targets be set and met (EE plan, 2004:6). The plan was based on a review and critique of previous EE policies and plans at the University, and was designed to address the slow pace of change that such plans had achieved.

The employment equity approach as outlined in the EE plan 2004-2007 furthermore refers to qualitative equity measures complemented by existing or emerging initiatives such as donor funding to assist faculties in changing their equity profile amongst academic staff (EE plan, 2004:23). Based on the

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[26] The 2006 Employment Equity Policy is an amendment on the 2004 version on which the 2004-2007 EE plan is premised. Core aspects which refer to South African demographics and representivity are consistently the same.

perceptions of staff (as solicited through the 2003 Institutional Climate Survey), the EE Plan is seen as a vital component to UCT's holistic approach towards transformation.   Moreover, the plan sets out to optimise existing transformation mechanisms. These include the Joint Consultative Forum on Employment Equity.[27] Furthermore, it undertakes to use additional equity funded posts and two academic staff development initiatives, namely, the New Academic Practitioners Programme and the Emerging Researchers Programme (directed at capacity enhancement in teaching and research respectively) as measures for improving equity and diversity.

### 3.3.4  Transformation structures, roles and responsibilities

Other than the mandatory Council, Senate and Institutional Forum, the institution is effectively managed by devolved authority as vested in appointed or elected heads. At the highest level, these include the Vice Chancellor (VC), the Deputy VC's, Registrar, Deans, executive Directors and Directors. The Vice Chancellor (VC) and senior leadership with executive accountability are responsible for the implementation of the EE plan.

The university has a comprehensive volume[28] comprised of over 400 pages naming and describing the levels of committees, participation and their terms of reference. It includes committees, sub-committees and working groups all of which ultimately are under the authority of Council and or Senate. These committees essentially constitute the mechanisms for decision-making and consultation including policy and rule making authority.

Participation in governance and access to these forums is through appointment (job designation) or election. Though election procedure ensures participation across the institution, the representation is not proportional to the campus staff numbers in the respective levels.   Furthermore it is effectively limited to the extent to which elected representatives of academic and non-academic sections, interact with their constituency. Student participation in governance and decision-making is facilitated through the Student

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[27] This forum includes representation of all recognised UCT staff bodies for the purpose of discussing and agreeing on matters related to staff.
[28] www.uct.ac.za

Representative Council. Generally there is access to information and decision-making in the form of documents, reports, minutes that are made available to staff through an institution intranet. Such access is often only facilitated when papers are archived, as in the case of closed committees. Some closed committees include Council; Council appointments; Faculty Examinations; Faculty Readmission Review; Remuneration; Senior Salaries and Selection committees.

Transformation is established at UCT as a performance management objective.[29] From this objective it appears that transformation is systematically incorporated into the accountability of the Vice Chancellor's Senior Leadership Group[30]. Objectives include to: redress past injustice; promote equality for all and reflect in the profile of its students and staff the demographics of South Africa. According to Deputy VC Hall (2005), transformation at UCT is comprised of "four primary dimensions". These refer to demographics in the staff profile and student enrolment; the university's relationship with civil society and its contribution toward social and economic development; and its institutional culture expressed as "the combination of values, patterns of behaviour, language policies, symbols, ceremonies and physical infrastructure …" (Hall, 2005).

Informed by the four dimensions above, the Transformation Office website (uct.ac.za) outlines the transformation programme and function. Key functions of this office include consultation, review, co-ordination and policy. The Transformation Office staffed by one manager and one assistant, co-ordinates the impact of the respective devolved transformation forums which exists in each faculty and professional staff (non-academic) section across the university. Some of the primary initiatives co-ordinated through the Transformation Office include employment equity, student equity, social responsiveness, staff awareness (in particular through workshops on diversity

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[29] See section 3.3.2 for a description of the Vice Chancellor's (2005) *Living Transformation*, vision and objectives plan.
[30] Known as the SLG, the Senior Leadership is comprised of the Vice Chancellor, his deputies, the Registrar, Deans, Executive Directors and Directors of the UCT.

and transforming institutional culture such as Khuluma[31]), and anti-discrimination on the basis of such things as race or gender.

According to the EE plan (2004:4), Employment Equity is a line management function and is a subset of transformation. The EE plan states that the appointment of the transformation manager and employment equity manager arose as a consequence of the institution's approach to employment equity. The transformation function includes planning, initiating, directing and monitoring university transformation initiatives. The employment equity manager's role is to provide support to line management in the implementation of employment equity. A distinction between the two roles is noted in that the employment equity manager's role is to support implementation whereas the transformation manager's role is concerned primarily with policy consultation, coordination and review.

The EE Plan which is devolved to faculties and non academic staff departments is informed by an implementation package, provided by the employment equity manager. This includes a template and accompanying guideline so as to facilitate reporting and uniformity across the campus. Twelve of the thirteen templates are designed to request quantitative data while the remaining one is designed to establish qualitative and developmental interventions (such as coaching, mentoring, and succession planning) identified by the department or faculty to support or implement their employment equity objectives (EE Plan, 2004:7). The guidelines on the setting of numerical targets are said to encourage planning based on a "holistic approach" and to combine numerical goals with an appropriate retention strategy which could for example include: " … continuous staff development, the provision of mentoring, and interventions which improve the diversity and institutional climate of the faculty … (or) …department concerned. " (2004:8).

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[31] The Khuluma workshop aimed at all staff, conceptualized in response to the 2003 Institutional Climate Survey, was devised as an integrated strategy to contribute to the transformation of institutional culture at UCT (Hall, 2006). Since its inception in 2006, just over 600 staff participated in workshops focused on racism and discrimination (Transformation Office, 2007).

Furthermore, a twelve step guideline is provided for the development, implementation and monitoring of the employment equity plan. This guideline requires, for example, that each faculty or department establish an employment equity consultative forum so as to monitor and review progress in relation to employment equity. However, there are few if any mechanisms available to the employment equity manager to ensure the accountability of such forums. The output or actual planned goals and targets which emerge result from the rigour and commitment applied by the department or faculty developing it and the implicit social consciousness of the devolved section leadership.

The EE Plan was based on budget areas derived from twenty devolved sections made up of academic and support staff. These include the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED); the Faculties of Commerce, Science, Health Sciences, Engineering & the Building Environment, Law and Humanities; the Graduate School of Business; Communications and Development; Finance; Human Resource Management; Information Computer Technology Services; International Academic Programmes Office; Libraries; Institutional Planning; Properties & Services; Registrar's Office; Research & Innovation; Student Development and Services Department; and the Vice Chancellor's Office. In 2007, the gender and racial composition of the heads of these sections was 50% male, 50% female, 70% White, 5% Coloured, 10% Indian and 15% African

## 3.4    SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the South African policy context and noted that it has evolved through several stages due to the challenges presented by the legacy of apartheid. The main initiatives of government outlined here in reference to the objectives of post apartheid HEI were the findings and recommendations of the 1996 NCHE; the 1997 HEWP; the 1997 HEA and the subsequent NPHESA 2001. These have consistently aimed to require the sector work towards a more diverse and representative student body, and address the socio economic gaps created by apartheid. The 2001 NPHESA identified a number of challenges in the process of HEI transformation

particularly in relation to staff and student representivity, as well as graduation throughput quality. It furthermore found that leadership and governance within HEIs were failing to achieve the goals of redress and transformation and that racial division was still evident in institutional culture. The provisions of the 1998 EEA were outlined as relevant and provide a clear guide as to the enabling environment which HEIs need to create to facilitate transformation amongst staff.

In the second section of the chapter the case study institution's transformation initiatives were outlined. From this it is noted that a significant commitment has been made on the part of the institution to effect transformation amongst staff and students. The institution has committed itself to principles such as respect; promoting social justice and transcending the legacy of the past. It has undertaken in its student admissions and student equity policies to be active in terms of redress and diversity. It has recently updated its employment equity policy to overcome previous limitations and to align it more closely to the requirements of the 1998 Employment Equity Act. The structures of transformation and equality are devolved to section heads for implementation while the transformation office serves to consult, review, set policy and co-ordinate.

The following chapter considers how effectively the policies and principles outlined in this chapter have been realised in practice.

# CHAPTER 4
# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and analyses the research findings in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two and the descriptive policy background in chapter three. There are two main sections. The first provides and analyses statistical data and the numerical status of participation amongst staff and students. The second provides an analysis of the qualitative research findings based on semi-structured interviews with staff and a focus group discussion with students. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings.

## 4.2    QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.2.1  Introduction

This section describes and analyses equity planning and performance for staff and students. First the numerical status of staff participation by job level and population group is outlined and analysed drawing comparisons between 1996 and 2004[32]. This is followed by an analysis of the status of staff as reported to the Department of Labour (DoL) in 2006. Second, the numerical status of students by population group is shown and analysed, drawing comparisons between 1996 and 2004.   An analysis of first year entering students is also provided.

### 4.2.2   General comparison of employment equity: 1996 and 2004

Table 1 below provides details on the percentage distribution of all permanent staff in 1996.  Table 2 below reports on the same personnel categories for 2004, though excluding international staff.[33] The personnel categories distinguish broadly between academic and senior executive or administrative staff and non academic and support staff. The academic staff are usually more senior in the institution. A general comparison between staff representivity in 1996 and 2004 shows a small  improvement in representivity

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[32] Although the comparison concentrates on the progress reported in the 2006 statistics submitted to the DoL, some information on the 2004 reporting year was accessible from the UCT Institutional Planning Department, providing additional insight.
[33] In 1996 the data for South African and international staff was not disaggregated by the University.

by population group. However, the lack of employment equity was still very marked, given in particular that African staff only comprised 11% of the UCT permanent staff, whereas people of African origin make up 80% of the South African population as a whole (as shown in Table 3 below).

Table 1: Permanent Staff at UCT in 1996 by population group and gender

| Personnel Category | Population group as percentage in 1996 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Coloured | Indian | African | **Total** | Male | Female | **Total** |
| **Professional staff:** Instruction / research Executive / admin / managerial | 90 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 100% | 69 | 31 | 100% |
| **Non-professional staff:** Technical, Admin Crafts / trades, Service | 35 | 57 | 1 | 7 | 100% | 46 | 54 | 100% |
| **Total** | 54 | 39 | 1 | 6 | 100% | 54 | 46 | 100% |

Source: UCT Institutional Planning Department

Table 2: Permanent Staff at UCT in 2004 by population group and gender

| Personnel Category | Population group as percentage in 2004 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Coloured | Indian | African | **Total[34]** | Male | Female | **Total** |
| **Professional staff:** Instruction / research Executive / admin / managerial | 77 | 11 | 4 | 8 | 100% | 64 | 36 | 100% |
| **Non-professional staff:** Technical Admin Crafts / trades Service | 32 | 52 | 3 | 13 | 100% | 38 | 62 | 100% |
| **Total** | 50 | 36 | 3 | 11 | 100% | 48 | 52 | 100% |

Source: UCT Institutional Planning Department

Table 3: South African demographics by population group

| **Population** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|
| African | 80 |
| Coloured | 9 |
| Asian / Indian | 2 |
| White | 9 |

Source: Stats SA, 2006

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[34] Reporting in 2004 included a distinction between South African and international staff and students. International have been excluded here as they do not form part of the analysis.

The decrease in the total number of White and Coloured staff employed at UCT between 1996 and 2004 is only slight from 53% to 50% in the case of the former and 39% to 36% for the latter group. This confirms that the improvements have generally been very slight towards attaining greater representivity and diversity amongst the UCT staff in the period 1996 to 2004. Women appear to have made gains in that by 2004, 52% of the staff were women compared to 46% in 1996. However, the more senior or professional categories of staff are still male dominated with 64% in 2004 compared to 69% in 1996.

### 4.2.3 Analysis of the Employment Equity Plan 2004-2007

The following information is derived from the EE Plan 2004-2007 as a key indicator of performance in relation to UCT's employment equity goals for the period stated. The status of staff with Senior Executive Accountability or leadership positions as at April 2004 is outlined in table 4 below. This table shows a staff count comprised of permanent and T3[35] contract staff.

Table 4: Senior Staff with executive accountability at UCT in 2004 by population group and sex

| Male | | | | | Female | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| VC, Deputy VC's & Deans | | | | | | | | | |
| African | Coloured | Indian | White | **Total** | African | Coloured | Indian | White | **Total** |
| 1 | | 2 | 6 | **9** | 1 | 1 | | 2 | **4** |
| Executive Directors & the Registrar | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 4 | **5** | | | | 2 | **2** |
| Totals | | | | | | | | | |
| *1* | *0* | *3* | *10* | *14* | *1* | *1* | *0* | *4* | *6* |

Source: Employment Equity Plan 2004-2007 – Table A1 and A2 adapted.

From table 4 it can be seen that within the senior leadership group 70% are White, 5% Coloured, 15% Indian and 10% African.  Women in this senior category make up 30% of the staff of whom two thirds are White. Only 1 woman out of the 20 senior leadership staff indicated in table 4 was African, compared to 10 White males in the same group.

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[35] T3 contract is the conditional temporary appointment with the same benefits and ranking as that of permanent staff.

In table 5 below the academic staff profile reveals that senior staff including the above leadership categories was 78% White, 8% Coloured, 5% Indian and 8% African in 2004. Furthermore temporary senior staff, not included here, were also predominantly White (EE plan, 2004:10). Women made up 36% of this category and were significantly under represented by population group. Women were 5% African, 78% White, 11% Coloured and 6% Indian.

Table 5: Academic Staff profile at UCT in 2004 by population group and sex

| | Male | | | | Female | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rank | African | Coloured | Indian | White | African | Coloured | Indian | White | **Total** |
| VC | 1 | | | | | | | | **1** |
| Deputy VCs | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | **4** |
| Dean | | | 2 | 3 | | | | 2 | **7** |
| Prof | 4 | 3 | 8 | 143 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 17 | **179** |
| A/Prof | 5 | 7 | 2 | 117 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 40 | **177** |
| Snr Lecturer | 21 | 7 | 8 | 111 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 91 | **251** |
| Lecturer | 23 | 20 | 6 | 48 | 9 | 24 | 8 | 90 | **228** |
| Ass Lecturer | | | 3 | | | | | | **3** |
| Total | **54** | **37** | **29** | **424** | **14** | **35** | **17** | **240** | **850** |

Source: UCT Employment Equity Plan 2004-2007 – Table B.

In the Lecturer category in table 5 above, of the 228 staff 61% were White, with White females being the largest single category. In contrast, only 14% were African, with African females being in a particularly small minority. In the senior lecturer category, 80% were White, with 6% Coloured, 5% Indian and 9% African. At the professorial level, the percentage of White staff was even higher at 89%, with only 3% African. From the figures presented in tables 4 and 5 above it is evident that Black academic staff in general, and African staff in particular, are seriously underrepresented at UCT, in relation to South African demographics.

Table 6 provides information on the Professional Administrative Support Staff (PASS) or non-academic staff profiles as at April 2004. This shows that

overall the staff complement was 37% White, 46% Coloured, 3% Indian and 14% African.

Table 6[36]: Professional Administrative Support Staff (PASS) profile at UCT in 2004 by population group and sex

| Pay Class | Male | | | | Female | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | African | Coloured | Indian | White | African | Coloured | Indian | White | |
| 13 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 20 | | | 1 | 12 | **37** |
| 12 | | 3 | 2 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 13 | **43** |
| 11 | 2 | 12 | | 55 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 62 | **149** |
| 10 | 11 | 25 | 2 | 40 | 14 | 21 | 2 | 86 | **201** |
| 9 | 13 | 40 | 3 | 30 | 14 | 48 | 5 | 87 | **240** |
| 8 | 14 | 54 | 2 | 18 | 25 | 87 | 10 | 102 | **312** |
| 7 | 15 | 26 | | 5 | 29 | 128 | 11 | 76 | **290** |
| 6 | 12 | 74 | 2 | 6 | 33 | 92 | 3 | 54 | **276** |
| 5 | 13 | 66 | | 3 | 20 | 56 | 3 | 14 | **175** |
| 1-4 | 21 | 70 | | | 16 | 49 | | 2 | **158** |
| **Total** | **102** | **372** | **12** | **197** | **156** | **491** | **43** | **508** | **1881** |

Source: Employment Equity Plan 2004-2007 – Table C.

As Table 6 shows, even though the overall proportional dominance lies with Coloured staff, the more senior pay classes remain predominantly White. For example in pay classes 13 to 8 (senior to supervisory management) the percentages were 56% White, 30% Coloured, 3% Indian and 10% African. This is particularly significant because such line management and supervisory personnel have the responsibility for more junior staff in terms of issues such as recruitment, performance management and promotion.

Table 6 furthermore illustrates a lack of representivity by gender. Women, though in the majority at 64% in the overall PASS levels, remain dominated by White and Coloured staff (42% and 41% respectively). However, women remain unequally represented in the more senior categories such as pay classes 13 and 12 which are at a level of Director or Senior Manager. This is significant given the level of influence associated with the responsibility and accountability of the more senior staff members generally.

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[36] Statistics reported in the plan include nominal groups of undeclared population, people with disability and international staff.

In order to try and address the lack of representivity noted in the sections above, the UCT Employment Equity Plan 2004-07 sets out a number of numerical targets to be achieved during the period of the plan. For academic staff (permanent staff and T3 temporary staff on permanent terms and conditions), these include the following:

- To increase Black staff from 20% 2004 to 27% in 2007.
- To reduce White staff from 80% in 2004 to 73% in 2007.
- To increase staff from designated groups from 47% in 2004 to 53% in 2007.
- To increase female staff from 34% in 2004 to 36% in 2007.
- To reduce White staff in professorial and associate professorial ranks from 89% in 2004 to 86% in 2007.
- To reduce White males in professorial and associate professorial ranks from 73% in 2004 to 69% in 2007.

For the PASS or non-academic staff (permanent and T3 temporary staff), these include the following:

- To increase Black staff from 63 % in 2004 to 66% in 2007.
- To reduce White staff from 37% in 2004 to 34% in 2007.
- To increase staff from designated groups from 89% in 2004 to 90% in 2007.
- To reduce female staff from 62% in 2004 to 61% in 2007.
- To reduce White staff in payclass11-13 from 82% in 2004 76% in 2007.

Perhaps the most significant thing to note about the above targets is that they were very modest, and involved little by way of substantive change to the 2004 situation. The aggregation of African, Coloured and Indian staff into one category (Black staff) may also be regarded as problematic, given the current and significant under representation of the African majority at the academic and senior PASS levels. The figures therefore seem to show that the employment equity plan of UCT is not aimed at making a significant change, despite the range of mechanisms available (as discussed above in chapter three). Numerical target planning, as used by UCT, would therefore appear to

be a somewhat limited and ineffective means of achieving significant strides towards employment equity.

In explaining the limited targets set in the EE plan, a number of constraints are indicated, especially in the Faculty reports and observations that accompanied the planning process. Numerical target planning is based primarily on anticipated staff turnover, in particular through resignations and retirement. In a faculty like Law, for example, the prospects for this are regarded as limited due to the relatively young age of present staff. In the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, scarce skills are cited as a limiting factor in effecting change. The plan notes that in such faculties the pool of Black and female qualified persons is relatively small nationally. Another limitation, cited by the Faculty of Health Sciences, is that attracting Black staff from lucrative employment outside of the university is difficult given the differentials in salary between the HEI sector and other sectors, in particular the private sector. Quite a number of faculties indicated that their capacity to improve their equity profile is being derived through opportunities such as donor funding. Such funding is an implicitly short term contractual resource that will most likely facilitate contract and short term employment, thereby continuing to present a challenge to achieving more permanent representivity amongst staff.

In terms of evaluating progress in relation to the EE plan targets, the only data the author could identify is contained in UCT's report on the EE plan to the Department of Labour (DoL). However, this data, which is outlined in Table 7 below, is provided in the generic reporting format required by the DoL of all employers, and thus does not provide a ready comparison with the targets established in the plan for various categories of academic and non-academic (PASS) staff. Nevertheless, as academics and senior managers fall into categories 1 and 2 in table 7, and most of the non-academic staff into the remaining categories (3-9 in particular), some tentative conclusions can be drawn. To facilitate this process, the author converted the absolute numbers provided in table 7 into percentages and presents these in Table 8 below in a form that permits comparison with the information for 2004 presented in Table

2 above. The percentages for the professional staff in Table 8 are drawn from categories 1 and 2 in Table 7, and the percentages for the non-professional staff are drawn from the remaining categories in Table 7. Table 8 provides details for permanent staff only, to achieve consistency with the data for 2004 in Table 2.

Table 7: UCT Workforce profile in 2006 by occupational categories, population group and gender

| Occupational Categories | Designated A = African C = Coloured I = Indian | | | | | | | Non-designated W = White | | | TOTAL |
| | Male | | | Female | | | | White Male | Foreign Nationals | | |
| | A | C | I | A | C | I | W | W | Male | Female | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Snr Officials & managers | 6 | 28 | 4 | 10 | 41 | 11 | 104 | 68 | 2 | 4 | 278 |
| 2. Professionals | 114 | 76 | 55 | 63 | 76 | 37 | 402 | 587 | 39 | 22 | 1471 |
| 3.Tech / assoc profess | 34 | 98 | 11 | 44 | 78 | 12 | 179 | 131 | 1 | 4 | 592 |
| 4. Clerks | 75 | 180 | 6 | 157 | 439 | 33 | 276 | 42 | 4 | 11 | 1223 |
| 5. Service & sales workers | 37 | 21 | 4 | 25 | 20 | 7 | 8 | 11 | | 1 | 134 |
| 6. Skilled agri / fish | | | | 2 | | | | | | | 2 |
| 7. Craft, Trade workers | 9 | 39 | 1 | 6 | 17 | | 2 | 7 | | | 81 |
| 8. Plant, machine operators & assemblers | 1 | 23 | | | | | | | | | 24 |
| 9. Elementary | 6 | 9 | | | 3 | | 1 | | | | 19 |
| 10. TOTAL PERMANENT | 282 | 474 | 81 | 305 | 676 | 100 | 972 | 846 | 46 | 42 | 3824 |
| 11. Non-permanent | 25 | 17 | 13 | 30 | 46 | 13 | 78 | 68 | 14 | 10 | 314 |
| 12. GRAND TOTAL | 307 | 491 | 94 | 335 | 722 | 113 | 1050 | 914 | 60 | 52 | 4138 |

Source: Employment Equity Report submitted to DoL (Department of Labour) 2006

Allowing for possible distortions caused by the change in reporting format required by the DoL, the information in Table 7 and, in particular, Table 8 indicates that there has been some visible, albeit fairly limited, progress in relation to employment equity during the period 2004-2006. At the professional level (senior management and academic staff), White staff have

reduced in percentage terms from 77% in 2004 to 69% in 2006. At the same time there has been an increase in African, Coloured and Indian staff, from 8% to 11.5% in the case of African staff, from 11% to 13% in the case of Coloured staff, and from 4% to 6.5% in the case of staff of Indian or Asian origin. The proportion of female staff members in the professional category has also increased from 36% in 2004 to 44% in 2006.

Table 8: Permanent Staff at UCT in 2006 by population group and gender

| Personnel Category | Population group as percentage in 2004 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Coloured | Indian | African | **Total** | Male | Female | **Total** |
| **Professional staff:** Instruction/ research Executive / admin / managerial | 69 (77) | 13 (11) | 6.5 (4) | 11.5 (8) | 100% | 56 (64) | 44 (36) | 100% |
| **Non-professional staff:** Technical, Admin Crafts / trades Service | 32 (32) | 45 (52) | 4 (3) | 19 (13) | 100% | 36 (38) | 64 (62) | 100% |
| **Total** | 49 (50) | 31 (36) | 5 (3) | 15 (11) | 100% | 45 (48) | 55 (52) | 100% |

Source: Derived from the data in Table 7 above. Figures in brackets refer to the percentage situation in 2004 (see Table 2 above)

With respect to the non-academic (PASS) staff, the proportion of African staff members has increased from 13% in 2004 to 19% in 2006, and the proportion of Indian staff from 3% to 4%. This has largely been at the expense of Coloured staff, whose proportion within this category has fallen from 52% in 2004 to 45% in 2006. The proportion of White staff remains the same. Within this category as a whole, there has been a slight percentage increase in female staff, from 62% in 2004 to 64% in 2006.

With respect to the overall staff picture, Table 8 indicates that there has been an increase in percentage terms of African staff, from 11% in 2005 to 15% in 2006, and a corresponding decrease in Coloured staff from 36% in 2004 to 31% in 2006. The overall proportion of White people and Indians has changed by only 1%.

Despite these signs of progress, the general picture that emerges from the above data is that UCT still has a long way to go in achieving a more

representative and diverse workforce. African people in particular continue to be seriously under represented at both the professional and non-academic levels. The University's 2006 report to the DoL shows that recruitment to UCT during the reporting period (annual) has remained skewed. While no White males were recruited during this period, White females constituted 32% of new recruits. During the same period 24% of new appointments were Coloured, 11% Indian and 33% African. In the category "professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management" 12 White females were appointed but only one African female. The analysis of the data demonstrates, therefore, the continued limited access for African staff, more especially African Women, despite the institutional commitment to transform.

This lack of progress is despite the adoption of a new "holistic" approach to transformation and employment equity adopted by the University, including the appointment of designated equity and transformation officers for the purpose and its strategy of employment equity planning devolved to leaders and section heads. The 2006 report to the DoL acknowledges that progress towards greater employment equity has been affected by a number of barriers, in particular in the areas of training and development; succession and experience planning; corporate culture; recruitment procedures; appointments; and remuneration and benefits. Though the report does not elaborate on such barriers, they are noted as factors contributing to the lack of transformation and would likely help to focus future institutional initiative. The report to the DoL further confirms that UCT has not made as much progress as would have been liked in applying affirmative measures (as provided for in the 1998 Employment Equity Act) in areas such as job classification and grading; job assignment; work environment and facilities; training and development; remuneration and benefits; performance and evaluation systems; promotions, transfers and demotions amongst others. The report shows that little attempt has been made to introduce and implement legislated potential opportunities for change so as to improve staff diversity within UCT, outside the focus on numerical targets.

The lesson from the above analysis, which will be taken up in more detail later in this study, would seem to be that targeted numerical planning has its imitations, thus indicating the necessity for the case study university to focus on broader issues beyond numerical change. As illustrated by the views solicited through the interviews below and the literature reviewed in chapter two, transformation is and should be about more fundamental change related to organisational purpose, design, governance and culture.

### 4.2.4  Comparative Trends in UCT's Student Population

The Admission and Student Equity policies outlined in chapter three indicate that measures are in place to transform the student population through redress and equal opportunity. The quantitative findings below help to illustrate the extent to which this is being planned for and achieved.

Table 9 below shows the total enrolment or head count of UCT students in the years 1996 and 2004 as a general comparison of its student population. This shows that, while the student population has grown substantially from 16,514 in 1996 to 21438 in 2004, the proportional overall student population has remained relatively unchanged. In 2004 28% of the students were African compared to 26% in 1996, showing that there has been very little improvement in student diversity in general terms particularly so given the steep increase in the overall student population between 1996 and 2004.

Table 9:  UCT students enrolled in 1996 and 2004

| Student Enrolment | Year | Population Group | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | White | Coloured | Indian | African | |
| 16,514 | 1996 | 54% | 14% | 6% | 26% | 100% |
| 21,438 | 2004 | 50% | 14% | 8% | 28% | 100% |

Source: Institutional Planning Department

Although indicative, the data in Table 9 does not distinguish between different categories of students, such as international, undergraduate and postgraduate.[37]    The lack of disaggregation, in particular between South African and international students, may mask important trends or conceal

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[37] It is only recently that figures have been produced by UCT disaggregarting the numbers of South African and international students.

even more the lack of progress in key areas. For example, the slight improvement between 1996 and 2004 in the proportion of African students could be attributable in the main to a growing intake of African students from other parts of the African continent, and could mask an actual decline in the number of domestic African students.

Table 10 below does provide disaggregated data for 2006. Amongst other things, this shows that a significant proportion (21%) of the total student population is made up of international students. Excluding such students, the data in Table 10 shows that only 23% of the total South African student population were African in 2006, with a slightly higher proportion (25%) of the undergraduate population. This is less than the proportion of African students listed for the whole student body (including international students) in 2004 and 1996, which would seem to indicate that the global count for 1996 and 2004 did include a significant amount of international students from other parts of the continent.
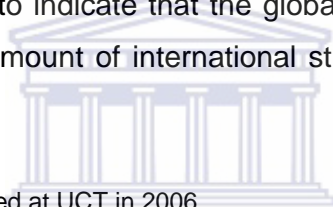
Table 10: Total Students Enrolled at UCT in 2006

| National Demographics | South African National Population as % | UCT total Students enrolled count 21562: as % | UCT Total South African students count 17034: as % | UCT Total Undergraduate South African students count: 15413 as % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **African** | 80% | 18% | 23% | 25% |
| **Coloured** | 9% | 13% | 16% | 16% |
| **Indian** | 2% | 7% | 9% | 9% |
| **White** | 9% | 41% | 52% | 50% |
| **International** | | 21% | | |

Source: Institutional Planning Department reporting 2006

**4.2.5 Analysis of first time entering undergraduate applicants 2006**

The first time entering undergraduate admission is the institution's major recruitment drive each year derived primarily from the pool of national matriculants. As such, this is the institution's major mechanisms for changing over time the representative character of the student body. The following section provides an analysis of the extent to which the operation of the University's admission policy in 2006 facilitated or hindered such change.

As noted earlier in this study, a school leaving certificate with matriculation endorsement is the minimum entry requirement for access to HEI institutions in South Africa.  Table 11 below shows the new undergraduate applicant pool by population group and those who qualified with full matric endorsement at the end of December 2006, when final matric results were published. In this table the majority or 41% of applications received were from Africans and 35% from White applicants. Proportionally the interest from historically disadvantaged applicants was lower than their comparative population ratio while White applicants were significantly higher.

Table 11 Total[38] undergraduate applications received at UCT in 2006

| Population | Applications received to UCT | Applications as % by population group | Applicants with Matric endorsement[39] | Matric endorsement as % of applicant pool |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| African | 3501 | 41% | 2688 | 77% |
| Coloured | 1190 | 14% | 1027 | 86% |
| Indian | 887 | 10% | 837 | 94% |
| White | 2992 | 35% | 2761 | 92% |
| Total | 8570 | 100% | 7313 | 85% |

Source: Short report on the 2006 Undergraduate Applicant Pool – Admissions Office

Table 11 shows that the applicant pool potential for eligibility to enter a HEI amongst African applicants at 77% is lower than for other population groups. As shown in Chapter 2, this is largely due to the continuing legacy of apartheid education, with the level or educational resources and performance for historically disadvantaged groups continuing to fall way behind those of historically advantaged groups even today. The data presented here shows the continued inequality by population group in secondary school output. Although more African students applied for admission than any other population group, fewer qualified with the minimum endorsement for admission.

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[38] Note the focus of the data shown and analysis is on South African (and citizens with permanent residency) only.
[39] Full matriculation exemption / endorsement signals applicants who have met the minimum requirement for eligibility to a HEI as set by HESA. Each HEI has an independent entry requirement premised by the national minimum plus degree / programme.

Table 12 below provides details of the actual academic offers made in 2006 for that academic year. This reveals that the largest proportion of offers (42%) were made to White applicants even though fewer applications were received from this group overall. This indicates that the proportional number of applications received is not used for example to guide the number of offers made given the objectives of active redress in terms of student equity cited in the policies. In fact 64% of White applicants succeeded in securing an academic offer during this admission cycle. African applicants in contrast secured 29% of the academic offers. Only 37% of African applicants therefore succeeded in their academic application to this institution.

Table 12 Undergraduate academic offers made in 2006

| Faculty | 2006 First time entering undergraduate offers | | | | |
| | South Africans and permanent residents only | | | | |
| | African | Coloured | Indian | White | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Commerce | 371 | 180 | 254 | 554 | 1359 |
| Engineering & the Built Environment | 269 | 86 | 111 | 291 | 757 |
| Health Science | 128 | 87 | 56 | 107 | 378 |
| Humanities | 214 | 244 | 68 | 620 | 1146 |
| Law | 24 | 17 | 10 | 34 | 85 |
| Science | 299 | 109 | 109 | 297 | 814 |
| **Total Offers** | **1305** | **723** | **608** | **1903** | **4539** |
| As % | 29% | 16% | 13% | 42% | |

Source: Applicant update 20/1/06 – Admissions Office, UCT.

Using the minimum matric endorsement as an indicator of broad HEI eligibility, a question emerges as to why more African applicants are not succeeding in their academic application. Only 49% of African applicants with endorsement secured an academic offer to UCT in 2006 compared to 73% for Indian applicants with a matric endorsement, 70% for Coloured applicants and 69% for White applicants. While the proportion of successful Coloured and Indian applicants appears high, the overall number of candidates is small and relative to their population demographic.

The reasons for these disparities in admissions are fairly straight forward. Given that the total number of students in different programme area are laid

down by the National Department of Education, that the Government's subsidy formula rewards institutions with high throughput rates and penalises those with low rates, and that UCT is committed to consolidating its reputation for academic excellence, faculties and programme areas usually specify higher entry criteria than the minimum matric endorsement. This naturally privileges applicants from historically advantaged educational backgrounds, and creates an ongoing tension between the need for academic excellence on the one hand and transformation and greater student equity and diversity on the other.

Given these facts, and that UCT has limited institutional capacity with regard to such things as class size and teaching resources, effecting transformation and equity will require significant planning towards advancing the interests of the under represented groups. The statistical data and analyses presented above suggest that there is potential within the applicant pool to do more towards achieving this. In particular, the findings indicate the necessity to have alternative admission criteria supporting and enabling the potential amongst targeted groups, especially those of African origin. Deans of faculties, in particular, need to guide student equity planning and targets in line with the aims espoused in the Admissions and Student Equity policies. Faculty staff responsible for admissions should be guided on how to interpret the applicant pool within the broader institutional goal of transformation and redress underpinning and informing the process. Unless a more proactive approach to admissions is followed, based on potential as well as actual performance in the school leaving examinations, the social and educational disparities that still exist in public schools will continue to be matched by similar patterns of disparity in UCT's student body.

## 4.3   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.3.1   Introduction

The semi-structured interviews with staff and focus group discussion with students reveal how they as members of the case study university perceive and understand the implementation of transformation. Their views are shown in the next two sections. The first is on staff perceptions of transformation and

diversity. The second section outlines student perceptions of UCT's transformation policy. This section of the study sets out perceived achievements, limitations as well as challenges and constraints as articulated by staff and students who participated in the study and is related to the preceding research questions posed and literature reviewed.

### 4.3.2  Staff perceptions of transformation and diversity at UCT

Based on the quantitative analyses above it is evident that staff diversity continues to remain limited throughout the institution. African staff are seriously under represented, especially at the academic and senior management levels. The views outlined below show that representivity amongst staff, active leadership engagement in transformation and institutional culture remains relatively unchanged, despite the institutional goals of redress and equality referred to in Chapter 3 above.  The responses gained from the interviews with staff are set out here, and will be correlated with the statistical evidence outline in the sections above. The staff perceptions are organised into three sections, namely achievements, limitations, and challenges and constraints.

### A) Achievements

Most of the respondents acknowledged that there is an institutional commitment to transformation at UCT. A number of respondents felt that the University had made the most progress in this respect in opening up access to Black students. Transformation policies have evolved over time and become more aligned to government legislation. Some of the staff interviewed agreed that there is greater diversity now amongst lecturing staff compared to when they first started. When asked about staff selection and recruitment, a positive feature cited by a senior administrator is that the transformation forums are now more functional in matters of employment equity than in the past.  One of the respondents, who is a transformation forum chairperson, argued that heads of department have had to become more accountable for transformation in their faculties and divisions. This suggests a greater commitment to employment equity policy implementation. However, what

seems evident from the numerical data presented in the sections above is that this commitment has not as yet been translated successfully into practice.

Most of the respondents agreed that there is wider consultation these days, especially through such institutions as the Transformation Management Committee. One respondent argued that policy is now more transparent with a strong flavour of redress. Some of these achievements are substantiated by the HEQC's undertaken in 2006[40].

### B) Limitations

The respondents were equally aware, however, of some of the main limitations to change. One senior manager noted that although there is a more transparent policy for transformation, there continue to be conflicting opinions amongst staff about the desirability of such policies. Some members of the senior management of the University have been very "hands off" in their approach to transformation. When asked what were some of the main obstacles to transformation at UCT, the same respondent observed that the university needs to have a more active Vice Chancellor (VC) and that if the culture of the institution does not change, then transformation will be difficult to achieve in practice. This suggests that senior leadership involvement in change has not always been as proactive as it might have been.

Another perspective in the interviews was that a sufficiently supportive environment that values all staff, from whatever diverse backgrounds, had not been created at UCT. Some staff, especially those from the Black majority in the country, felt that they were not fully valued. Three of the Black respondents interviewed as part of this study have subsequently resigned and left the institution.

Another limitation noted is that decision-making is often underpinned by subtle strategies, which according to the respondent, limits transformation. Reference was made to the fact that committees and statutory forums within

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[40] Improving on strength: UCT Review May 2006. Prepared for the Institutional Audit by the Higher Education Quality Committee

the institution are loaded with agendas which do not often allow for sufficient and adequate engagement with matters of importance in regard to transformation.

A respondent who had previously been a student at UCT stated that transformation should include a package of related strategies, and not just getting the numbers right. The respondent's perception is that UCT tends to concentrate on numerical change more than on managing diversity and achieving representivity more comprehensively. This perception is further corroborated by the analysis of the Employment Equity plan above where it is shown that the focus is on numerical targets as a primary means to achieving diversity. In response to identifying obstacles to transformation a senior administrator noted that the nature of the business slows down the rate of change as it takes a long time to "grow" an academic. However the responses shown below indicate that there has been lack of input on the part of existing academic staff to provide adequate mentoring for new emerging academics.

A response to the question of whether UCT's selection and recruitment procedures are aligned to the mission statement was that the composition of selection committees (including representation from the transformation forum) continues to undermine transformation, often in subtle and subconscious ways. This is due in the main to the continuing influence of the dominant institutional culture, inherited from the past, which unless challenged will continue to impact negatively on transformation. It was argued that there is a need to train and re-socialise staff in leadership and management positions to enable them to create and foster a more enabling environment.

Some of the limitations in terms of diversifying staff observed by the respondents refer to the need to improve the student profile which will help in turn to create the next generation of academics. One respondent suggested that there is sufficient talent amongst African students at UCT, but that graduates are often not encouraged to stay on to complete postgraduate

work, and then to join the academic staff, even though there is funding available.

A general impression gained from the literature and the respondents input is that policies are only one aspect of change and cannot succeed without a corresponding change in institutional culture.  To succeed transformation requires the support of each member of the institution, as well as their commitment to a common vision and an understanding of the past and the need for redress. A number of respondents indicated that there was not a shared commitment to transformation, especially amongst some members of the dominant minority group (i.e. White staff).  One senior academic leader interviewed stressed the point that the dominance of White staff and, in particular, White male staff, within the ranks of the University's current leadership has hindered the potential to transform effectively.

When asked about their understanding of diversity management one staff member suggested there needs to be a greater awareness of commonalities as well as differences. Another argued that there was an urgent need for diversity management training for both management and staff, in particular to transform the dominant minority culture and to combat racist and elitist views that are still held by some staff and students.

In response to the question of how UCT links with schools in the preparation of high school graduates to access university, some respondents questioned whether this should be UCT's responsibility.  Others felt that the University should be developing greater links with previously disadvantaged schools, and noted that there is a Schools Development Unit which is presently engaged with 5 or 6 such schools in training teachers in mathematics and science. Another respondent noted that a recent development was the shift in the focus of the Admissions Office towards more rural and disadvantaged schools for recruitment but that this still needs to be adopted as a targeted strategy by the University.

### C) Challenges and constraints

From the interviews it was apparent that the respondents had a common view of the challenges and constraints faced in effecting change. One of the responses was that there are lots of policies but evidence of a real will to implement on the part of senior leaders is not there and that there is a growing recognition that UCT has to confront its lack of change. This is also substantiated by the 2006 institution audit referred to above. This senior staff member's response shows that staff are associating the apparent lack of change with the commitment of leadership at UCT. Another respondent confirmed this perception by stating that the institution has all the elements of transformation, as espoused in the external South African legal and policy context, yet has found it difficulty to put this into practice. Despite wider consultation on transformation, implementation through devolved authority remains a challenge.

The same respondent who suggested that leadership is often not adequately involved in driving change felt that key sectors of the university such as those dealing with examination readmissions and orientation for new students tend to be biased and show an ongoing propensity to favour the interests of the dominant group.

A challenge perceived by a long standing senior lecturer and part time residence Warden is how transformation is conceptualized by the institution's senior leadership. He suggested that transformation has been characterised by human fear and an unwillingness to confront the past.  He argued that there is a need for those who benefited from the past to acknowledge this and to be prepared to undertake a personal spiritual transformation so as to arrive at a conceptualisation of change that is in line with the needs of the new democratic dispensation in South Africa.  According to two of the respondents, there is a general lack of acknowledgement of past privilege and of the inequalities prevalent in South Africa today. One respondent suggested that the UCT community has no frame of reference beyond their leafy surrounds and that they do not in reality get the essence of South Africa and the apartheid legacy. A further obstacle identified was complacency on the

part of academics who see UCT as already one of the best, if not the best, HEI in South Africa and do not therefore see the need to change.

When asked what was perceived to be the main obstacle to transformation, a senior administrator responded that UCT tends to value staff unequally, especially with regard to the academic staff. His view is that there is a number of cutting edge academic staff at the institution, predominantly White, but instead of assisting and mentoring other staff, especially those from other backgrounds, they sometimes show a somewhat elitist disrespect for them. This point is taken up in further detail below, with respect to mentoring.

A respondent reflecting on her experience of the transformation forum indicated that attracting suitably qualified applicants for employment is a challenge and suggests that more support should be provided to attract Black graduates into academia. Based on her knowledge there is funding available for this but there is little or no evidence that this is being used effectively at present. These funding sources and special employment equity initiatives for academic staff are also stated in the EE plan but are not clearly substantiated to show whether the initiative is adequate for the purpose. Another option suggested by the same respondent is academic mentoring but this does not appear to be working effectively at present. She and another respondent (who occupies a leadership position at UCT) noted that mentoring only occurs at present if there is a positive personal liking on the part of the Professor. There is no structured or coherent approach. The lack of initiative to drive such initiatives is indicative of the internal constraints which arise in pursuing employment equity, especially for emerging Black academic staff. Successful transformation amongst academic staff seems to depend largely on having a sound relationship with a senior academic mentor within the institution.

When asked whether the organization of academia impacts negatively on transformation the response from the transformation forum chairperson was that the recruitment and promotion criteria constitute a hurdle, especially as such criteria tend to be upped all the time, in particular with regard to the production of accredited publications. This often works to the disadvantage of

emerging Black academics, especially those from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, who require more time and mentoring to enable them to succeed and compete effectively with their more advantaged colleagues.

When asked about how UCT should improve its access for new first time entering undergraduate students, the general views shared were that UCT needs to move beyond the traditional schools network, and the entry requirements and standards that exclude student with potential from historically marginalised communities. This is particularly the case with the English language requirements for admission which work against those students for which is not a first or even second language. More creative admission tests and requirements, it was argued, are needed to overcome such barriers, together with academic development and support programmes for such students once they have been admitted. Similarly, it was argued by some of the respondents that for applicants to be required to have a portfolio (in disciplines such as architecture, for example) could be seen as prohibitive as many historically disadvantaged schools do not facilitate this, leaving applicants unprepared and unable to compete for entry into such degrees. The University has not adapted its recruitment processes sufficiently and creatively, it was argued, so as to be more focused on the current South African context, so as to improve access and diversity. When asked if UCT should drop its entry requirements for new undergraduates, respondents consistently referred to the need to develop more diverse context specific methods. One view was that admission entry points are currently too high, and too reliant on school leaving examination results that privilege applicants from historically advantaged schools and communities. A range of more flexible admission procedures are needed, it was argued, together with academic development and support programmes, financial assistance, and the erosion of cultural barriers to enable students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed once admitted.

### 4.3.3  Student perceptions of transformation at UCT

Based on the quantitative analyses of undergraduate students enrolled at UCT and the intake of first year students generally in section 4.2.5 above, it is evident that student diversity is extremely limited especially amongst African South African students. The views outlined below show that representivity and diversity from the student perspective is changing but is still faced by many challenges, despite UCT's adoption of policies of redress for staff and student equity. The respondent's views gained from the focus group discussion are set out in three sections relating respectively to achievements, limitations and challenges and constraints. The flow of the discussion generally allowed each member of the group to comment on the question raised but limited the range. The outputs of each respondent were either elaborated or supported by each consecutive speaker. There was little or no contradicting of statements or views shared within the group, and each member of the focus group had the opportunity to relate their own personal experiences of transformation at the University.

### A) Achievements

The students agreed that policies and transformation strategies are communicated across the UCT community, and there have been some definite successes and achievements.  These were particularly apparent in the institution's planning around HIV/AIDS and anti-discrimination practices and behaviour. From the views shared it is apparent that institutional transformation strategies that have tended to focus on anti-discrimination have met with the greatest success. One student acknowledged that, due to the housing department having a cultural diversity policy, she had come to know and appreciate different cultures.

The views of the students in this respect are in line with the literature reviewed in chapter two which indicated that reactive forms of organisational, relating in particular to anti-discrimination measures, are often easier to implement than more proactive forms of transformation relating to such things as equity and redress.  Reactive anti-discrimination policies are usually less  confrontational, focusing as they do on awareness raising and providing recourse where rights

have been infringed.  Proactive transformation policies, however, especially those related to issues of equity and redress, are usually more complex and difficult to achieve, and require a more fundamental commitment by the organisation and its personnel.

## B) Limitations

One of the students responded to the question on UCT transformation policy by commenting that there is no open and agreed recognition of what transformation is or should be about, especially when it comes to the tricky issue of race. The student elaborated further that transformation is a complex phenomenon, involving a range of unresolved issues and tensions amongst Black and White students, and further complicated by the fact that many White students are now also beginning to feel disadvantaged by some of the new policies.  The student stressed the importance of working towards a set of common values around equity and diversity, but acknowledged that there is still a long way to go in achieving this.

In response to the question on UCT's transformation policy one student observed that there needs to be stronger and more direct involvement by the University leadership in policy implementation, implying that this is not the case at the moment.  This point was also raised by a staff member above who has direct engagement at a senior decision-making level. Another student noted that transformation is only reflected in moments of fun or social activity, for example when building a float, or during a football game when students support the team irrespective of race.  A student from Zimbabwe argued that in South Africa, as in Zimbabwe, the attempts at reconciliation that followed liberation were not effectively accompanied by positive and on-going measures to foster real integration.

## C) Challenges and constraints

The students were very frank and observant about the challenges and prospects of transformation.  One constraint that was identifid was the need for more practical change and transformation workshops where UCT

management elaborate further on their policies. Such workshops, it was argued, were needed, in addition to the more social events described above, to build awareness and respect for different races and cultures, and to promote a common understanding of transformation, equity and diversity. The student views tended to centre on the importance of knowing who we are as individuals, in order to understand equality and transformation. One student noted that the policy experience of transformation is different depending on which group you come from. The example used by the student was that of a farm girl, accustomed to seeing Black people carrying out menial work. This internalised stereotype presents a challenge for the individual concept of change. Individual personal backgrounds can present a barrier, making it difficult to understand and appreciate that all are equal. This student observed, however, that it could take a long time to break down such barriers.

Two of the students noted that some of the fundamental principles of change are ignored and not clearly debated within the institution, but did not elaborate with specific examples.

One of the female students felt that Black staff do not participate fully in issues and debates to do with transformation, including the recent and quite heated debates on affirmative action for example. This allows White staff to continue to set the tone. In her view Black staff (she did not distinguish how this group was aggregated), are too busy climbing up the academic or managerial ladder. The notion that each one is a change agent therefore needs to be examined as part of the institutions commitment to transformation. Black staff in particular need to be more fully involved in discussion and debates on transformation issues.

One student recommended that we need to apply conscious diversity management in the same way that is currently being used to educate and raise awareness of life threatening behaviour, as related to HIV/AIDs for example, as well as the need o prevent stigmatization and discrimination. Much more needs to be done, through workshops for example, to proactively promote cultural tolerance and an appreciation of diversity.

The students in the focus group stressed that transformation is a broad concept which needs to be unpacked by the University more effectively. Transformation covers a whole range of issues from the need to change mindsets to learning how to relate to each other in a more understanding way and appreciate each other's cultures. Issues such as tolerance, representivity, accountable governance, proactive leadership, and the need for gender equity were also mentioned. All these and other aspects of transformation need to be thought through more carefully, and appropriate policies and strategies devised and effectively implemented.
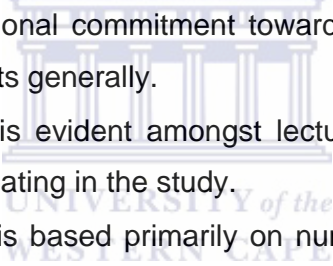
An important challenge identified by the focus group was the need for more effective policy implementation, accountability and the optimization of the available resources. The students felt that, although policies to transform UCT are in place, there is currently a lack of commitment to implement them effectively.

## 4.4 SUMMARY

The quantitative research findings in section 4.2 demonstrate a significant under representation of Black people, Africans in particular, at the case study university both amongst staff and first time entering undergraduate students. It can therefore be assumed that transformation policy and planning, though comprehensive, is failing to facilitate equal opportunity and redress to transform the institution's staff and student profile. Responsibility has been devolved to faculties and divisions for the conceptualization and implementation of employment equity and student access, but there is little evidence of real engagement with the goals of transformation. Furthermore UCT's own 2006 employment equity report to the Department of Labour reveals that the Institution has not opted for the full range of affirmative action measures that are provided for in the 1998 Employment Equity Act, thereby indicating the lack of a really proactive approach to transformation and change

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In the qualitative analysis in section 4.3 the first section focussed on the perceptions of staff and the second on the views of students of transformation at UCT. There were several parallels noted by both staff and students, in particular with regard to the role of the individual and the intrinsic importance of leadership involvement for successful policy implementation; the lack of diversity management, and the lack of commitment and accountability on the part of the University leadership. The staff views, however, were more emphatic regarding the prohibiting factors in the selection and recruitment of both staff and new first time entering undergraduate students, as well as the dominance of White and especially male staff in leadership and decision-making.

The following achievements, limitations and constraints and challenges are noted as significant:

- There is institutional commitment towards transformation amongst staff and students generally.
- Some diversity is evident amongst lecturing staff, as reported by students participating in the study.
- Transformation is based primarily on numerical targets, which has limited the successful attainment of change. There is much more that the case study university could do. Several aspects of transformation have been overlooked in the process, including the need for more effective forms of communication between staff, for example, as well as the need for greater respect on the part of academic staff for their non-academic colleagues.
- Transformation forums exist in each academic and PASS area, yet staff selection and recruitment seems to be failing to solicit and appoint qualified candidates from the designated groups.
- The transformation plans of the institution are somewhat vague at times and, as recommended by the CHE/HEQC 2006 Audit report[41] on UCT, need to be more focussed in terms of targets, timeframes, support, and consistency.

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[41] CHE, 2006 – Audit report on the UCT, http://www.che.ac.za

- There are internal institutional limitations related to the appointment and mentoring of new academics in relation to available resource capacity and established interest on the part of the senior academics.

- Effective and proactive transformational leadership, an imperative advocated in the literature, is lacking especially when it comes to the implementation of policies and plans.

- A significant challenge lies in how transformation is conceptualised for example whether it incorporates cognisance of past discrimination and the commitment to resolving the repercussions of inequality in society and how this informs institutional culture and commitment on the part of those in leadership.

- Improved access for Black and in particular African students will influence the potential for building staff capacity within the institution and ultimately benefit the economy through skills advancement.

- Diversity management is imperative, yet lacking.

- Each staff member and student has a role to play in transformation, if only by reviewing and being prepared to change one's mindset.

- Assessment for eligibility to enter the university as a first time undergraduate is biased towards historically advantaged learners and the feeder schools from which they come. Traditional and essentially elitist methods are still applied, thereby ignoring the realistic limitations in apartheid disadvantaged schools and amongst learners from those constituencies where resources and skills are still marginal.

- There is poor representation amongst African staff at all levels of the institution while other designated groups such as Coloureds and White women are mostly over represented yet continue to be included in the equity planning targets of the institution.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

This research study focuses on trying to establish the extent to which the case study university (UCT) has adopted strategies to transform its staff and student population to be more aligned to that of the South African national demographic profile. It furthermore considers the impact of both external and internal factors in the process of transforming to become more diverse and representative. The literature reviewed in attempting to address these questions identified three main issues. The first related to global trends in HEI transformation trends which have been determined largely by changing government focus and socio-economic political contexts. The second is the transition in South Africa's HEI transformation, given the specific inequalities exacerbated by apartheid and government directives to improve access for all through redress and affirmative measures. The third main issue related essentially to the impact of internal factors, identified in the literature, including leadership, organisational design and institutional culture.

The research is also informed by two specific South African components covered in the case study.  The first is the HEI and employment equity policy context, described in chapter three, as a basis through which change can be determined and measured.   The second relates to the quantitative and qualitative research finds of this study, outlined in chapter four, which inform the conclusions and recommendations which follow in the next sections.

The conclusions in this chapter are organised under the three headings of achievements, limitations, and challenges and constraints. These are followed by a number of recommendations for improving the transformation process at UCT.   Further research still needs to be carried out in the area of HEI transformation as this is an important and evolving process that must take into account the needs of the population and the existing resource constraints. Fundamentally transformation, including that of an HEI, is complex and

acknowledged as such. Institutional initiative and leadership commitment to transformation is one of the most vital components identified in my analysis of the case study.

## 5.2    CONCLUSIONS

### A) Achievements

As shown by the detailed descriptions in chapter three there are comprehensive policies and plans in place at UCT to transform the representivity and diversity of the staff and student profile. This indicates that there has been an institutional commitment to comply with government policy and directives related to equity. A particularly important development in this respect was the issuing of the Vice Chancellor's vision for living transformation at UCT, during his second term of office.  Policies in respect of employment equity have been in place since 1992, and have now been aligned more closely to the requirements of the 1998 Employment Equity Act. Again this shows that UCT has been cognisant of the need to transform its staff population to be more diverse for a significant period of time. Similarly a policy to advance equity amongst students was adopted by UCT's Council in 2004 and integrated into admissions planning.  Student admissions planning, most especially amongst undergraduate applicants is informed by an Admissions Policy which is aligned to the 2001 National Plan on Higher Education in South Africa and aims to incorporate redress as part of its goals.

Informed by the above policies, employment equity planning (devolved to departments and faculties) also aims to bring about greater diversity and representivity amongst the UCT staff population. This along with the admissions planning referred to, indicate the advancements that UCT have made in its commitment to transform to be a more diverse and representative Higher Education Institution (HEI).

In considering the statistical data combined with the staff and students perceptions of transformation at UCT, it can be concluded that some change towards a more diverse campus definitely has occurred. The statistics in chapter four show, for example, that overall the proportion of Black staff

increased from 46% in 1996 to 51% in 2006. The proportion of African staff increased during the same period from 6% to 15%, and female staff increased from 46% to 55% (see Tables 1 and 8 above). Similarly the student enrolment amongst Black and in particular African students showed a slight increase in the same period. The perceptions of staff and students, drawn from the interviews and focus group discussions, was also that there has been an improvement in diversity amongst staff and students at UCT compared to previous years.

One important achievement was the establishment of a Transformation Office and an Employment Equity Office with the specific purpose of focussing on transformation at UCT. Both of these offices are centrally involved in policies and plans to transform the UCT staff and student community to become more diverse and representative of South African demographics. As a result of these two structural advancements, there has been improved involvement by staff and, to a more limited extent, by students in forums dealing with employment equity and transformation. This was corroborated by the staff and students interviewed in this case study.

### B) Limitations

Despite the adoption of equity policies to transform UCT, progress has however generally been quite limited and slow. Staff are still predominantly White and male at the most senior levels of the institution, whereas Africans, for example, comprise only 11% of the combined two most senior occupational categories as shown in the report submitted to the Department of Labour in 2006. Amongst new undergraduate students accepted to study at UCT in 2006, only 29% were African compared to 42% Whites. The conclusion drawn based on the proportional offers to African new first year applicants in relation to those for Whites is that the latter group continue to be more likely to succeed in their academic application to UCT. The staff perception on this is that UCT should transform its admission criteria and methods of assessing applications to be more cognisant of the limitations and barriers they continue to present to historically disadvantaged schools and therefore learners.

Another limitation in relation to student recruitment is the fact that UCT has traditionally aggregated its student enrolment count to include international students. As many of these are Black, drawn from South Africa's neighbouring SADC countries in particular, this has served to distort the statistics on South African student representivity and to make an accurate analysis of trends quite difficult.

## C) Challenges and constraints

There is no doubt that UCT's somewhat limited progress with respect to the transformation of its staff and student profile can be partially explained by factors outside the immediate control of the University. With regard to staffing, many HEIs, including some that were historically disadvantaged, are experiencing difficulties in the recruitment and retention of Black and especially African staff. This in part reflects the general skills problem in the country as a whole, itself a reflection of the continuing impact of the legacy of apartheid education, and the fact that young and well qualified Black people (Africans in particular) are in demand in government and the private sector, often at salaries significantly higher than those that the HEI sector can provide. Although this should not be regarded by HEIs as an excuse for not doing more to attract Black academics, it nevertheless remains an explanatory factor. At the same time, whilst the continuing weaknesses in the state school system should not be an excuse for not doing more to improve the admission rates for Black students (again Africans in particular), there is no doubt that they have impacted on efforts to broaden the student base, especially in disciplines which require quite high admission standards.

Such challenges have undoubtedly been heightened by contradictions at the national policy level. Whilst the national Department of Education, for example, has encouraged HEIs to open up their admission policies to increase the number of students from historically disadvantaged educational as well as socio-economic backgrounds, and dedicated specific funding for the academic development of such students during their early years at University, the introduction of the output related subsidy formula has put

pressure on HEIs to increase their throughput rates. As the funding per student decreases the longer it takes them to complete their academic programmes, this has in many ways provided HEIs with a disincentive to introduce more flexible admissions policies that target students from weaker schools and with lower matric passing rates than have traditionally been accepted.

Such external challenges and constraints have also been accompanied by a number of internal factors, however. A major challenge for transformation observed in this study, in both the literature review and the research findings on UCT, concerns the limiting effect that institutional culture can have on governance, policy and decision-making. The fact that many of the staff at the senior leadership and managerial level are White and steeped in the historical traditions of UCT has undoubtedly had important implications for the University's ability to transform its institutional culture, governance and decision-making style. The University's 2006 Employment Equity Report to the DoL, for example, shows that some of the primary affirmative action measures to transform, relating in particular to training and development, succession planning and changes in corporate culture, have not been adopted so as to improve representivity and diversity. Whilst the Vice-Chancellor has produced a new vision for living transformation, together with policies, structures and processes to lead towards this, the qualitative findings of this case study reveal that University management and staff have not as yet been fully mobilised around this vision. Given the inherent tensions in combining UCT's deserved reputation for academic excellence on the one hand, with greater diversity in its staff and student profile on the other, this lack of universal support for a common vision is not altogether surprising. The delegation of the responsibility for preparing equity plans to faculties and divisions, whilst understandable at one level, has also aggravated in some ways the problem of achieving a common vision and consistent approach to equity planning across the institution. Although transformation is a performance management objective of the University's senior leadership, it can be concluded that the process of transformation is evolving very slowly

and needs more commitment and detailed articulation so as to become more tangible.

At the more specific level, and with respect to student admissions, an important challenge for UCT is the need to adapt its traditional assessment methods of new applicants to take account of the constraints faced by many historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa today. This involves identifying a more appropriate balance between traditional or conventional entry standards and alternative assessment methods that focus on student potential rather than performance in the school leaving examination. While UCT cannot control the external context, the challenge lies therefore in devising and implementing more innovative admission methods, that are capable of broadening the student base whilst at the same time consolidating the institution's reputation for academic excellence.

With respect to staff representivity and diversity, an important challenge is to make greater use of the affirmative measures set out in the 1998 Employment Equity Act to ensure more effective forms of recruitment, selection and retention of staff, succession planning, job rotation, and capacity building, as well as to ensure that such initiatives are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated. The challenge, in particular, lies in finding innovative ways of addressing some of the constraints identified in the University's EE Plan 2004-2007, relating in particular to such things as skills shortage and the turnover rate of staff. Rather than concentrating merely on numerical changes, such initiatives should focus more widely than at present on the broader issues related to transformation, such as organisational purpose, design, governance and culture. A related challenge, based on the staff perceptions recorded in this case study, is to address the barriers experienced by some emerging Black academic staff as a result of selective mentoring on the part of the senior academic staff.

The fact that UCT has complied with the legislation around HEI transformation and employment equity shows that the tendency towards managerialism has emerged generally. The literature reviewed illustrated the challenge that this

presents for institutional autonomy and consequently academic freedom. The constraint for UCT is the fact that the legacy of apartheid necessitates redress and affirmative change so as to become more equitable forcing the HEI sector to respond to government directives. This makes it particularly challenging for the transition from an autonomous Historically White University of the past to a diverse, representative HEI of the new democratic South Africa.

## 5.3    RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section includes a number of recommendations for improving and accelerating the transformation policies at UCT with respect to staff and student representivity and diversity.

Transformation policies and plans are clearly important tools for guiding and informing the process. It is recommended that the University therefore institutes a policy specifically on cultural diversity so as to address important barriers perceived in for example decision-making, hierarchical authority and line management function that remains White dominated. The objective of a cultural diversity policy would be to ensure greater clarity on the means of implementing transformation through diversity.

It also recommended that UCT should introduce more diversity awareness discussions, for example by having a dedicated facilitator within the Transformation Office to develop workshop themes, plan, coordinate and monitor. One opportunity for implementing practical training and discussion is through the existing Thursday staff training hour. A formatted workshop theme could be circulated to each section (ensuring maximum exposure) once a month for example. Any outcome from individual devolved discussions could be shared via the website.  This should be spontaneous and open allowing for free expression. The views shared could be used to learn about and from each other. The facilitator could derive input from staff expression, to be incorporated and used to develop and focus future themes. Ultimately greater awareness and training would hopefully result from such an initiative. Themed

workshops such as these would be an elaboration of the Vice Chancellor's objectives of living and deepening transformation at UCT.

Employment equity expertise could be developed (through coaching and mentoring, for example) amongst leaders and line managers responsible for planning in the areas of staff and student equity. At the same time, the current practice, whereby the advice of the transformation and employment equity representatives on recruitment and selection panels can be overlooked or ignored, should be re-evaluated. Furthermore, the experiences of these transformation and employment equity representatives should be documented and used to evaluate current and inform future employment equity policy, planning and implementation.

Selection and recruitment processes could be organised on a more centralised basis, so as to benefit from experience and build up a body of knowledge specific to understanding transformation and diversity. At the moment, this is a delegated line management function and, as such, is subject to varied interpretation and application. One possibility would be to establish a few specialist committees which have the range of expertise required for the purpose. For example one committee could be established to provide a specialised transformational selection and recruitment service to each sector such as academic, technical, managerial and administrative support. This could mean less potential for diverse outcomes and a more coherent approach to diversifying staff based on sound knowledge and principles of transformation, linked to UCT's stated goals of redress.

With respect to student admission, UCT could more thoroughly investigate the adoption of mechanisms for assessing potential based on alternative admission criteria which recognise the socio-economic constraints prevalent in public schools today. Where the potential is most evident, staff tasked with admission into the faculty could be coached on how to make the selection. Greater priority could also be given to the establishment of a more diverse range of feeder schools so as to improve access. Improved access could also be informed more effectively by the planning department, for example

investigating why African first time entering undergraduate applicants who are accepted to study at UCT, sometimes fail to take up their places. Possible barriers could well include perceived anxiety regarding institutional culture, and concerns about access to funding.

Symbols are recognised as important representations of culture. The University could therefore make its statements on values, mission and equality more widely known by ensuring they are visible, in foyers and on bulletin boards for example. This will help make policies and statements more real, showing commitment and inclusion.

Rather than relying on the term 'race', which is often perceived to be divisive, UCT could consider the use of alternative terms such as school of origin or socio-economic position so as to transform towards a more unified community while advancing equality and redress.

Finally, consideration could be given to reserving a number of places for students who lack an antecedent association with the institution, either through parents or siblings. The rationale for this would be offset the advantage currently held by applicants whose parents or siblings are alumni.
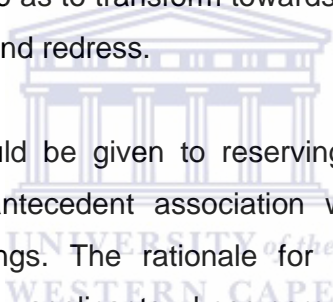
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# APPENDIX ONE

# Questions used to solicit input from staff and students on their perception of transformation at UCT

Semi-structured interviews held with key staff of the University of Cape Town 7-28 May 2007

This list illustrates the range of questions. Note not all questions were asked and the selection depended on the area of specialising the participant had in relation to the job designation.

* Why do you think change is necessary in contemporary South Africa?
* What in your experience are the main elements of employment equity?
* Which aspects of UCT do you think needs to change?
* Other than the Employment Equity Act (1998) what measures do you think are accessible for achieving greater institutional employment equity? Are these currently being used / considered?
* Do you think the rate of staff turnover is too high?
* Can you describe UCT's funding for institutional employment redress?
* What percentage of incidents of harassment is reported by staff? Do you feel that this is only a small percentage of actual cases?
* What is the relationship between this office and the Human Resource Department?
* Roughly or approximately what percentage of time is spent recruiting and marketing in historically disadvantaged schools? What percentage of 'feeder' schools are historically disadvantaged?
* Should UCT drop its entry requirements in order to become more accessible to target groups?
* If yes, what would be the challenge and how do you see UCT being able to meet those challenges?
* What intervention does UCT offer to link with schools in the preparation of high school graduates for university access i.e. subject relevance, grade levels, bridging opportunities, if any? Does this vary from school to school? If yes, how?
* How aligned do you think admissions and recruitment practice are to the UCT Missions Statement? Explain?
* What do you personally understand by transformation, and what do you understand and feel about UCT's policy in this respect?
* UCT has numerous committees (including Council, Senate and the Institutional Forum) – in your experience of where decisions are made, how does this obstruct / aid transformation?
* What in your experience are some of the main obstacles to transformation at UCT?

*       Does the organisation of academia impact negatively on transformation i.e academic work; staff recruitment and retention; autonomy within the department to determine research focus etc. e.g. curriculum content?

*       What tradition of decision making does UCT follow e.g. consensus building; directed?

*       Where does transformation planning, organising, leading and controlling occur within the organisation?

*       Who do you think should be the main change agents in the university?  Who are the main change agents at present?

*       What change model (approach) is UCT following?

*       How aligned do you think staff selection and recruitment practice is to the UCT Mission Statement? Explain.

*       What do you understand by diversity management?


<u>Focus group discussion with selected students of the University of Cape Town on 29 July 2007</u>


Focussed discussion was limited due to time constraints to:

•       What do you personally understand by transformation?

•       What do you understand and feel abut UCT's policy in this respect?

•       What aspects of the university do you think needs to change?

•       What in your experience are some of the main obstacles to transformation?