COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

THE STATE OF

HIGHER EDUCATION

IN SOUTH AFRICA

ANNUAL REPORT

2000/2001

CHE Annual Report 2000/2001

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FOREWORD

The Chair, Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu

Good quality higher education is a fundamental necessity if we are to achieve social equity, enjoy higher levels of economic and social development and build a vibrant democracy. Without higher education producing high-level skilled human resources, generating knowledge and institutionalising responsive knowledge-based community service, South Africa's prospects for overall social development will be constrained. The challenges that face South Africa in its reconstruction and development efforts and its attempt to be globally competitive are tremendous. Higher education must ensure that it contributes to South Africa meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is an independent, expert, statutory body. Its mandate is to advise the Minister of Education on all matters of higher education so that the system makes its due contribution to the political, social, economic and intellectual needs of our society. The CHE is also responsible, through its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), for quality assurance in higher education. The mandate of the CHE further extends to reporting annually to Parliament on the state of higher education in South Africa and on its own activities.

This third annual report of the CHE reviews higher education, highlights new trends, examines progress towards the policy goals embodied in the *White Paper* 3 of 1997, and identifies new challenges to higher education. The report seeks to promote public debate on the status and condition of higher education and considered, yet decisive, action towards developing a higher education system characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs, and effective and efficient provision and management.

The CHE will itself contribute to higher education development by providing informed, considered and strategic advice on higher education issues to the Minister of Education, through the quality assurance activities of its HEQC and through publications, conferences, workshops and various other activities.

The past year has seen the further institutionalisation of the CHE. The HEQC was launched and decisive steps have been taken in building a national quality assurance system for higher education. An extensive and impressive range of activities has been undertaken by the CHE and its task teams and project teams. New, highly skilled and competent personnel have been secured and, through the quality of its project proposals and the hard work of its secretariat, the CHE has received considerable international donor funding. The details of CHE activities are provided in Part Two of this report.

Overall, I am extremely pleased with the progress and performance of the CHE, and I have no doubt that it adds value to our higher education system. I thank the members of the CHE and its executive committee and the members of its various task teams, committees and projects for their work during the past year. Not least, I thank the CHE secretariat and its dedicated personnel, including those seconded from higher education institutions, for their energetic and selfless contributions to the work and activities of the CHE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Aids	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
APPETD	Alliance of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHESP	Community-Higher Education-Service Partnership
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
DFID	British Department for International Development
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECHEA	Eastern Cape Higher Education Association
EPU	Education Policy Unit (University of the Western Cape)
ESATI	Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurer
FOTIM	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions in the Northern Metropolis
FSHFETT	Free State Higher and Further Education Training Trust
FTE	Full-time equivalent
FY	Financial year
HAIs	Historically advantaged institutions
HATs	Historically advantaged technikons
HAUs	Historically advantaged universities
HDIs	Historically disadvantaged institutions
HDTs	Historically disadvantaged technikons
HDUs	Historically disadvantaged universities
HE	Higher education
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HRD	Human resource development
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDT	Independent Development Trust
IF	Institutional Forum
IJC	Interim Joint Committee
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
JET	Joint Education Trust
Medunsa	Medical University of South Africa
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Framework
NAI	New African Initiative
National Plan	*National Plan for Higher Education*
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSBs	National Standards Bodies
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy

NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NTEA	National Teacher Education Audit
NWG	National Working Group
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency (United Kingdom)
R&D	Research and development
SA	South Africa
SACTE	South African College for Teacher Education
SACOL	South African College for Open Learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPSE	South African Post-secondary Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SASVO	South African Students Volunteer Organisation
SAUVCA	South African University Vice-Chancellors' Association
SERTEC	Certification Council for Technikon Education
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SGBs	Standards Generating Bodies
SSA	Statistics South Africa
TSA	Technikon SA
TEFSA	Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNISA	University of South Africa
VUDEC	Vista University Distance Education Centre
White Paper	*Education White Paper* 3 of 1997, *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*

INTRODUCTION

The third *Annual Report* (2000–2001) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) fulfils several of the CHE's responsibilities. First, it constitutes the CHE's report to Parliament on the state of higher education (HE) in South Africa. Second, it represents an attempt to monitor the achievement of the policy goals and objectives of the *White Paper 3* of 1997. Third, it seeks to give effect to the CHE's responsibility to contribute to the general development of HE through reflection on the scope, limitations and possibilities of the unfolding processes of transformation. Finally, it reports on the activities of the CHE and its permanent committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

2001 witnessed several watershed events that are likely to have a major impact on the future trajectory and structure of South African HE. In March 2001 the Ministry of Education released the *National Plan for Higher Education*. Soon after, the Ministry released the discussion document *Funding of Public Higher Education: A New Framework*. Finally, in May 2001, the HEQC of the CHE was formally launched. These three events and the processes related to them put into place the three major steering mechanisms and instruments for transforming HE: National planning, a new goal- and policy-oriented funding framework and a quality assurance system.

Part One of the *Annual Report* focuses on the state of HE in South Africa. *Section One* describes and analyses the three key steering mechanisms and regulatory instruments that were introduced during 2001. *Section Two* examines the contemporary shape and size of the HE system, including the institutional landscape of HE and student and staff participation in HE. *Section Three* covers developments with respect to the core functions of HE — learning and teaching, research and community service. It also focuses on the human resource development goals and strategies of government, which must condition learning and teaching. *Section Four* deals with the governance and financing of HE. The final section, *Challenges*, synthesises key developments and identifies and discusses some of the key challenges facing South African HE.

In reading Part One on the state of HE, it is important to regard the first Annual Report (1998–1999) of the CHE as a reference point. There are areas of HE where there has been little substantive change from the conditions and trends that are described and analysed in the 1998–1999 report. In such cases, where there has been little or no change, this is simply noted and the information is not repeated. Instead, the report concentrates on updating, where possible, the data, description and analysis contained in the 1998–1999 report, on discussing new developments, and on expanding this *Annual Report* in the direction of description and analysis of new issues. These include the emerging approach to skills development and its implications for HE, the rolling out of the New African Initiative (NAI) and the preparedness of HE for the HIV/Aids pandemic.

Part Two provides an account of the CHE'S activities during the period November 2000 to October 2001.

In the first Annual Report (1998–1999), the CHE expressed strong concern about the difficulties of providing a comprehensive account, with up-to-date statistics, on the contemporary state of HE. It noted that HE information systems were sorely inadequate, and that there was also a weak institutional culture of HE research. Regrettably, in general, this continues to be the case. Reliable statistics in a number of key areas, including student enrolments, remain elusive, even for the 2000 academic year. The utility of the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which is vital for review, planning and steering of the HE system, remains to be proven. Provisional South African Post-secondary Education (SAPSE) data had to be utilised, which can only provide indicative trends. There are heartening signs of greater attention being given to institutional-level research, but this tends either not to be widely disseminated, perhaps for strategic competitive reasons, or else is by nature very specific and not easily incorporated into a macro-account of the HE system. Still, overall, more is being written on South African HE, and a challenge for the CHE is to draw on this effectively for the purpose of its *Annual Report*. Numerous reports on different aspects of HE were commissioned to assist in the writing of Part One on the state of South African higher education. The contents of these have been woven into the report.

The CHE itself has been exploring ways to build an effective system of HE monitoring, evaluation and review to ensure that there will be adequate measurement of progress around key policy goals, and ongoing and more in-depth review of select policy areas and issues. Developments in this regard are reported in Part Two of this report. Through its own initiatives and through the work of and co-operation with various other HE agencies, more comprehensive reports on the state of HE will hopefully become possible in the future.

Finally, the key steering mechanisms and policy instruments are yet to resolve major issues of uncertainty (for example, in the case of national planning, the reconfiguration of the system and the establishment of a new institutional landscape), or are still in the process of development (new funding and quality assurance framework and regime). The HE system remains in considerable flux and institutions inevitably continue to operate in an environment of uncertainty. In this context, it is much too early to draw definitive conclusions on a number of policy areas, issues and processes.

PART ONE

THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA
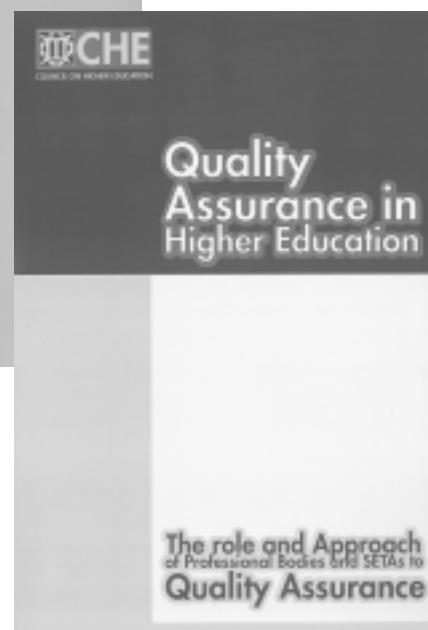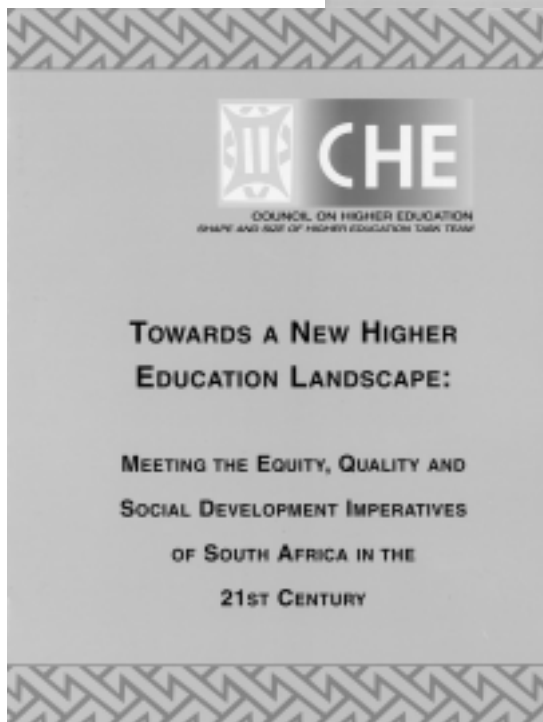
PART ONE

THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

SECTION 1

THE NEW REGULATORY INSTRUMENTS

Three major policy instruments for reconfiguring and steering the HE system emerged during 2001: The *National Plan for Higher Education*, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the CHE, and the proposed new funding framework for the funding of public HE.

1. The *National Plan for Higher Education*

In January 2000, the Minister of Education requested the CHE to provide him with a set of concrete proposals on the shape and size of the higher education system. He emphasised that:

> Until and unless we reach finality on institutional restructuring, we cannot take action and put in place the steps necessary to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the higher education system.

In July 2000 the CHE presented the Minister with its recommendations on the future landscape of higher education in a report, *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century*.

A range of proposals and recommendations — around reconfiguring the system, the prerequisites for successful reconfiguration and combination of institutions, the process of creating a new differentiated and diverse landscape, distance education, funding, the need to link equity and quality — were advanced in the CHE report.

On receiving the CHE's Size and Shape report, the Minister indicated that:

> the Government's response to the Report will take the form of a national plan for higher education. This plan will establish indicative targets for the size and shape of the system, overall growth and participation rates, and institutional and programmatic configurations. The plan will also address time frames for implementation. The national plan will be informed by the CHE Task Team Report as well as ongoing work of the Department of Education, including the analysis of institutional plans of various higher education institutions.

The Minister also signalled his intention of taking the national plan to Cabinet.

The *National Plan for Higher Education* was released on 5 March 2001. In unveiling the *National Plan* the Minister of Education signalled clearly his impatience with the pace of change:

> The time is long overdue. The reform of higher education cannot be further delayed. Nor can it be left to chance. We are seven years into our new democracy, yet a single higher education system, with shared goals, values and principles has not been realised.

The Minister was well aware that the stakes are high: whether or not the HE system becomes a key engine driving and contributing to the reconstruction and development of South African society. His determination to act was made clear in his presentation of the *National Plan*:

> The Plan is a product of engagement and consultation that has taken place over the past decade. The Plan brings these processes to a close. The Plan is, therefore, not up for further consultation and certainly not for negotiation. This is not to suggest that there is no room for consultations on the details of implementation or on the outcomes of the further investigations that are indicated in the *National Plan*. However, the focus must now be firmly on implementation.

The introduction to the *National Plan* notes:

❖ The challenges facing HE.

❖ The policy goals set out in the *White Paper.*

❖ The tension between planning and competition and the effects of competition and of the growth of the private higher education sector.

❖ The importance of the goals of equity and redress. There is an explanation of the concept of redress, drawing heavily on the CHE's approach, as well as a discussion of the purposes of redress.

❖ The importance of steering mechanisms in achieving the goals of the *National Plan.*

❖ The question of institutional autonomy.

❖ The status of the *National Plan.*

❖ The key policy goals of the *National Plan.*

The five sections that follow the introduction deal with five key goals, each section setting out the **goal** to be achieved; a **strategic objective**; the **priorities**; the **context** (an explanation of the conditions and developments that inform the approach to the goal); the **outcomes** that the *National Plan* seeks to achieve in relation to the goal; and the **strategies** by which the outcomes will be achieved.

Table 1: Goals and strategic objectives

GOALS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Provide a full spectrum of advanced educational opportunities for an expanding range of the population without any form of discrimination	Produce graduates with skills and competencies to meet HRD needs of SA
Promote equity of access and fair chances for success and advance redress for past inequalities	Reflect demographic realities of SA in student and staff composition and ensure that race and gender profiles of graduates reflect the profiles of student enrolments
Diversify the system in terms of missions and programmes mix to meet national and regional needs	Ensure diversity through mission and programme differentiation
Secure and advance high-level research capacity to ensure intellectual enquiry and application of research for technological improvement and social development	Sustain current research strengths and promote research required to meet national development needs and build competitive capabilities
Build new institutional and organisational forms and new institutional identities and cultures as part of a co-ordinated national HE system	Foster collaboration at regional level and restructure the institutional landscape

An ambitious and gruelling timetable for implementation and for making tough choices and decisions was put forward. Implementation was to begin immediately and the Minister vowed to relentlessly and inextricably drive the implementation process.

Table 2: National Plan implementation schedule

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAMES
PLANNING		
Release of consultative document on the new funding framework for HE	Ministry of Education	31 March 2001
Regional presentations on the *National Plan*	Ministry of Education	April 2001
Distribution of guidelines for institutional submissions indicating proposed teaching/ research niche areas and programme mix for the next five years	Ministry of Education	31 March 2001
Institutions to submit proposed teaching/research niche areas and programme mix for the next five years	HE institutions	30 July 2001
Analysis of institutional submissions	Ministry of Education	August 2001
Institutional visits to discuss proposed teaching/ research niche areas and programme mix	Ministry of Education	September– October 2001
Advice from CHE on teaching/research niche areas and institutional programme mix	CHE	February 2002
Publication of teaching/research niche areas and institutional programme mix	Ministry of Education	February 2002
Distribution of national guidelines for develop- ment of three-year rolling plans (2003–2005)	Ministry of Education	March 2002
Submission of three-year rolling plans (2003–2005)	HE institutions	30 July 2002
INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING		
Investigate appropriate institutional structures on a regional basis to meet regional and national higher education needs	National Working Group/ Ministry of Education	December 2001
Facilitate the establishment of a single dedicated distance education institution, including the development of an implementation plan	Working Group/Ministry of Education	June 2002
Finalise merger of Natal Technikon and ML Sultan Technikon	Technikon Councils	December 2001
Incorporate the Qwa-Qwa branch of the University of the North into the University of the Free State	Working Group/Ministry of Education	December 2001
Develop a framework and implementation plan for the establishment of National Institutes for Higher Education in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape	Working Group/Ministry of Education	December 2001
Gazette regulations for Private Higher Education Providers	Ministry of Education	July 2001

RESEARCH		
Request the HEQC to give priority to the quality assurance of postgraduate programmes and distance education programmes in contact institutions	HEQC	To be discussed with the HEQC
Finalise review of research outputs	Ministry of Education	June 2001
Facilitate co-ordination of research activities	Ministries of Education and Arts, Culture, Science and Technology	December 2001
GENERAL		
Investigate the necessity for standard fee levy for SADC students	SAUVCA and CTP	August 2001
Review the role and efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)	NSFAS Board	September 2001
Finalise National Teacher Education Plan	Ministry of Education	September 2002
Investigate an appropriate model for establishing a National Higher Education Information and Applications System	Ministry of Education	March 2002
Streamline procedures for obtaining study and work permits	Ministries of Education and Home Affairs	December 2001

The Minister's concerns regarding the pace, as well as the direction of change have their origin in the comprehensive HE transformation agenda to which government committed itself in 1997, and in the continuing problems and weaknesses in the system.

HE is required to help erode the inherited social-structural inequities and provide opportunities for social advancement through equity of access and opportunity. It must produce — through research, teaching and learning, and community service programmes — the knowledge and human resources for national reconstruction and economic and social development, to enable South Africa to engage proactively with and participate in a highly competitive global economy. Given the apartheid legacy and the social and developmental challenges, the HE transformation agenda has to be radical and comprehensive. It also needs to be pursued with particular urgency.

However, as has been well documented in the CHE Annual Report of 1998–1999 and the Size and Shape report, the HE system and individual institutions manifest two different, though connected, kinds of problems and weaknesses. These can be loosely characterised as fundamental, long-existing contextual problems and more immediate contextual problems. Thus, a number of conditions and developments within HE remain fundamental challenges to the system and major obstacles to the achievement of policy goals.

The stakes for national development are high. No country has succeeded in generating sustainable socio-economic development without investment in the high-level education and training of its people. South Africa's success depends on investment in its human resources. An equitable, good quality, efficient HE system has a major role to play in producing the required high-level human resources. The successful pursuit of South Africa's reconstruction and development programme demands a highly responsive and responsible HE system. Despite positive developments to date, far-reaching changes in HE are overdue, urgent and unavoidable. The failure to undertake such changes will have unfortunate consequences for the public HE system and choke its potential as a powerful engine of national development.

The *National Plan* is a renewed and concerted attempt to address the problems and weaknesses of HE and also to advance the transformation agenda of government. It is also a deepening and amplification of the HE policy framework constituted by the *Higher Education* Act 101 of 1997, as amended, and the *White*

Paper. It provides a framework for building a new HE landscape, for planning on the part of HE institutions, and for an iterative process of planning between the Ministry and HE institutions. Finally, it goes some way towards responding to the concerns that were raised by the CHE in its 1998–1999 Annual Report:

> There is now a need to identify and tackle with vigour the core priority issues and areas — the size and shape of the HE system, academic policy, how an integrated yet differentiated system is to be achieved and sustained by funding, etc. — and to make decisive choices and decisions and issue specific policy declarations. The resolution of a number of other subsidiary issues depends in large part on these initial choices and decisions.

> Second, there is a need in specific areas and around particular issues for adequate national and central shaping and steering of the HE system and appropriate and timely interventions, with a concomitant development of greater effectiveness and efficiency with respect to these processes. Finally, the resources must be mobilised to support institutions to develop capacities congruent with the demands of the new conjuncture. Prioritisation and decision making could contribute to providing greater policy direction, greater focus and depth to the work of central steering bodies and more effective use of the limited human and financial resources available.

The *National Plan* is also a direct Ministerial response to the CHE Size and Shape report. It embraces most of the CHE's recommendations, but differs in some key areas with the CHE report. One such area is the model of institutional differentiation. Whereas the CHE argued for differentiating institutions by allocating specific mandates and missions to them, the Ministry opts to create a new institutional configuration by differentiating institutions principally on the grounds of a negotiated mix of academic programmes and missions. A second difference is the strategy for creating a new landscape. The CHE expressed reservations about relying too strongly on funding and quality assurance in creating a new HE landscape. The Ministry, however, reasserts the central role of funding.

The *National Plan* was generally well received by HE stakeholders. Concerns were, however, raised around whether there was sufficient provision for institutional redress, whether there had been an attempt to factor in the impact of the HIV/Aids epidemic on participation in HE, and the capacity of the Department of Education (DoE) to cope with the implementation schedule of the *National Plan*. The Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) expressed concern about a statement in the *National Plan* that 'in planning for at least the next five years, the Ministry will continue to regard Technikons as institutions whose primary function is to provide career-oriented programmes at the diploma level'. They feared that this would restrict the organic development that was occurring in the offering of degree and postgraduate programmes at a number of technikons, and would inhibit the possibility of particular technikons developing over time into universities of technology. There was also general agreement that the proposed new funding framework would have to be analysed before definitive conclusions could be made around some aspects of the *National Plan*.

2. Quality assurance

In the trajectory of HE policy since the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), quality assurance has unambiguously been identified as a fundamental element in the transformation of the South African HE system. The NCHE stated that a comprehensive, development-oriented quality assurance system was central to the creation of a single, co-ordinated HE system. The *White Paper* was both broader and more precise in its view of quality assurance. On the one hand, quality was stated as being one of the principles for guiding the transformation of the system, together with equity and redress, democratisation, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability. On the other hand, the *White Paper* defined the pursuit of the principle of quality as meaning the maintenance and application of academic and educational standards, both in the sense of requirements to be complied with and ideals of excellence to be aimed at. The *White Paper* went further and established the goal of quality assurance — improvement and renewal of the educational arrangements being evaluated within the context of the needs of the country — as a central plank in the platform for restructuring the system.

Consistent with the approach followed from the time of the NCHE, the *Higher Education Act* made provision for the establishment of a Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) as a permanent committee of the CHE. This was the first step in institutionalising a new national quality assurance regime

for HE for the country. The establishment by the CHE of the Interim HEQC in 1999 comprised a second stage of activity, with the focus on consultative and preparatory investigations culminating in the publication of its *Founding Document* in 2000. The establishment of the HEQC, the appointment of members to it, and the development of planning and operational frameworks in 2001 took the HEQC into a third stage. Details of the operations and work of the HEQC during the past year are provided in Part Two of this report.

The Higher Education Act charges the HEQC with three functions: quality promotion, quality audits and programme accreditation. This means that, unlike many other quality assurance agencies in the world, the HEQC is responsible for both the accreditation of programmes and providers and the actual evaluation of quality at the institutional and systemic levels. This requires a balance of activities aimed at accountability and improvement. In this regard the HEQC *Founding Document* establishes five goals for the HEQC:

❖ To put in place a framework to support quality provision across a differentiated HE landscape in order to ensure that mission specification is accompanied by quality improvements in the whole system.

❖ To develop a sensible accountability regime for providers through partnerships with other quality assurance bodies and the co-ordination of the quality assurance activities of multiple agencies in HE.

❖ To focus on and ensure threshold levels of quality for public and private HE.

❖ To ensure that the quality, integrity and appropriateness of qualifications are maintained at all levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) relevant to HE in order to guarantee the national and international credibility of South African qualifications.

❖ To develop a quality assurance framework that includes an explicit focus on the quality of teaching and learning activities, research and community service in order to deepen and extend the process of HE transformation.

In order to achieve these goals the HEQC's *Founding Document* indicated the need for a phased approach to quality assurance. In the first phase the HEQC included quality promotion, the development and pilot testing of quality assurance instruments and criteria, the development of quality relevant capacity, the incorporation of existing quality assurance arrangements where appropriate, and the forging of partnership arrangements with other role-players, all of which constitute the base on which a quality assurance system can be built. There would also be a continuation of the accreditation-related functions of the HEQC and ongoing refinement of these in order to improve the processes for the scrutiny of new programmes of public and private providers. The second phase would include fully fledged audits and evaluations.

This phased approach was partially affected by the release of the *National Plan* in March 2001. The *National Plan*, which constitutes an implementation framework for restructuring higher education, restates the role of quality assurance in the transformation of the system and sets out clear tasks in the short and longer term for the quality assurance agency. It is necessary to analyse these tasks and objectives in the light of the *Founding Document* of the HEQC.

The very purposes and objectives of the *National Plan*, as well as the basis for institutional differentiation chosen by government (mission and programme mix), depend critically on the development and enhancement of academic quality across the system, as well as appropriate criteria to benchmark and assure that quality. Although issues of quality permeate most aspects of the *National Plan*, there are three main areas for quality assurance that it signals as priorities in relation to the work of the HEQC. These are:

❖ Perform a quality check on all new distance education programmes offered by contact institutions once the moratorium is lifted, irrespective of whether such programmes receive state subsidies or not.

❖ Perform a quality check on existing and new programmes offered as part of public/private partnerships, irrespective of whether such programmes receive state subsidies or not.

❖ Review the quality of all postgraduate programmes as a matter of priority.

These tasks put new pressure on the HEQC in the accelerated development of a quality assurance system in the country. Given that the current lack of systems, expertise and benchmarks cannot be resolved in the short term, the HEQC has decided to prioritise certain areas of provision for evaluation under the tasks indicated in the *National Plan*. Thus, in terms of the evaluation of distance education, the HEQC has identified teacher education programmes as a priority area. For the evaluation of postgraduate programmes the HEQC has started the development of terms of reference for the assessment of the Master's in Business

Administration. It is planned that these investigations will also serve as models for ongoing evaluations in the sectors identified in the *Plan*.

The above requests greatly increase the responsibility of the HEQC to facilitate the successful implementation of the *National Plan* and, more importantly, to establish a credible quality-related foundation for programme-based differentiation and diversity in higher education. Overall, it is clear from the *National Plan* that the equity targets and objectives for HE can only be met on the basis of quality provision, particularly for those formerly disadvantaged by previous higher education policy and practice. The HEQC's responsibility will lie both in assisting higher education institutions to develop sound internal quality management procedures to enhance the quality of their provision, and in developing external systems and criteria to attest to that quality for purposes of improvement or sanction.

Quality assurance will be a critical component of the 'differentiation' machinery that will lead to mission and programme mix identification. However, despite the importance that quality seems to have in relation to most outcomes of the *National Plan*, the implementation strategy table is rather thin in relation to quality assurance steps. On the whole, it refers mainly to quality issues in relation to the three areas mentioned above. It is also not clear what quality dimensions are being taken into account by the work of the National Working Group (NWG). It is likely that in this planning phase, quality will not be a critical variable in the analysis of institutions' niches and programme mixes, and therefore in the new reconfigured HE landscape. As the HEQC institutes new quality assurance systems on the basis of which quality judgements can reliably be made, ongoing reconfiguration is likely to occur. However, since these are not likely to be completed before the CHE is required to advise on proposed niche areas and programme mixes, the CHE will have to apply its mind to the kind of criteria and indicators to be used to discharge its advice function as required by the *National Plan*.

While the implementation of the *National Plan* unfolds, government has made public other policy instruments, like the proposed new funding framework, with which it intends to steer the system in the desired direction. The funding framework (see below) is designed in a way that helps to achieve the outcomes of the *National Plan*. Without an attendant careful and sensitive quality assurance dimension, vital decisions affecting institutions are likely to be made based on a quantitative mechanistic approach that might conceal fundamental problems at the institutional and systemic levels. For example, the aim to improve systemic efficiency would be achieved through the approval of student places in relation to institutional plans. The bases on which these decisions will be made are not spelled out in either the funding framework or in the *National Plan*. If this is done based on, for example, staff-student ratios, without considering the quality of the learning and teaching programmes, the much needed and desired institutional differentiation with high quality might not be achieved.

In terms of access and retention of students, if, as the funding framework suggests, institutions will be funded in relation to their outputs, quality assurance could have a double function in this regard. On the one hand, quality assessment could prevent the possibility of completion rates being achieved at the price of dropping academic standards. On the other, quality assurance mechanisms could be used to ensure that academic development programmes designed to help insufficiently prepared students are of adequate quality, and that their content is integrated into the degree for which the student is registered. In this regard, quality assurance could constitute an essential instrument in the achievement of meaningful equity and redress. The equity issue is central to the achievement of a successful transformation of HE, given the legacy of structural disadvantage in our country. The more differentiated landscape emerging from the work of the *National Plan* could deepen the equity divide by obscuring the quality gaps in the system. The combined policy steering instruments of planning, funding and quality assurance must ensure a targeted set of objectives for the investment of resources to strengthen quality provision, especially for disadvantaged students whose current options do not guarantee a high quality education.

One last point needs to be made in relation to the use of quality assurance as a transformation lever in South African HE. This has to do with remaining alert to the dangers of excessive accountability demands stemming from the proliferation of quality assurance bodies in HE. The HEQC, although accredited by SAQA as the band ETQA for HE, nevertheless has to operate alongside a number of economic sector ETQAs (professional councils and SETAs) in ensuring that the quality of higher education provision is appropriate to the social, intellectual and economic needs of the country, as well as internationally competitive. SAQA has recognised the co-ordinating role of the HEQC in this regard, and the HEQC itself has indicated its willingness to engage in co-operative agreements with other ETQAs in the search for coherence, lack of duplication and a tolerable accountability regime for HE providers.

However, it is not at all clear that the HEQC will be able to carry out its primary responsibility of enhancing and monitoring quality provision soon enough since so much of its limited resources have to be directed at reaching agreement on approaches to quality, quality assurance systems and criteria with numerous bodies (possibly in the range of 55) that have quite specific training interests in certain HE fields in ways that are not necessarily consonant with the broad educational requirements of the HEQC. The developing tensions between the education and training objectives and requirements of the NQF will have to be addressed as a matter of urgency if quality assurance is to play a significant role in shaping HE transformation. HE providers are feeling pressurised and confused by the multiplicity of quality assurance demands that are likely to be made on them.

If the co-ordination of quality assurance in HE is not successful or effective, the costs of accountability will be raised enormously and perhaps unacceptably — measured not only in monetary terms, but also in terms of the human resources required to report on the quality of provision, as well as the intellectual resources diverted from the core tasks of teaching, research and community service. The increased number of regulatory requirements in quality assurance is bound to consume a large amount of resources, but will not necessarily bring about an increase in quality that will benefit learners, educators and other stakeholders in HE. In this regard, the sharp differences in the resource capacity of the HEQC as the band ETQA for HE, in comparison to the SETA ETQAs that are able to draw on the skills levy, is a matter of concern, given the more comprehensive set of quality responsibilities of the band ETQA. Greater analysis of the existing and desired balance between the investment in quality assurance structures in HE and the benefits produced by their operations beyond formal and quantitative indicators, cannot be delayed for too long.

What is clear from the above analysis of quality assurance as a steering instrument to achieve the required transformation objectives in HE is that the platform for a national quality assurance system is slowly under construction, with many of the policy frameworks, regulations and structures already in place. The main challenges that lie ahead have to do with establishing more explicit strategic and operational links among the different elements of planning, funding and quality assurance in ways that reinforce the many common objectives that underlie all these dimensions of HE restructuring. Within the arena of quality assurance more specifically, the challenge will involve the simultaneous pursuit of the twin objectives of accountability and improvement in provision in ways that do not produce an excessive and expensive bureaucracy.

3. The proposed new funding framework

At the end of March 2001, the Ministry of Education released the discussion document *Funding of Public Higher Education: A New Framework*.

The proposed new funding framework generally embodies the thinking and intentions of the *White Paper* on HE. It seeks to provide the funding lever for the systemic and institutional planning approach set out in the *National Plan*. Indeed, the document states that it should be 'assessed in terms of its appropriateness as a steering mechanism to meet the goals and targets established in the *National Plan*' (DoE, 2001:3).

The new funding framework is intended to replace the present South African Post-secondary Education (SAPSE) formulae for universities and technikons from 2003 onwards. SAPSE funding is in essence a market-driven approach based on the notion of rational choices by students for prospective careers, with funding linked to access and success rates. The formula for universities was first applied to some universities in 1983 and the formula for technikons in 1987. By 1994, all universities and technikons in South Africa were funded in accordance with one of the two SAPSE formulae.

Funding approaches in HE invariably play a decisive role in shaping institutional responses and, as a consequence, in furthering or undermining policy implementation. The market-driven approach of the SAPSE formulae partially explains the high degree of 'entrepreneurialism' displayed by some institutions over the past decade, which has widened the gap between historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) and historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs). Taking this into account, any assessment of the funding framework must examine whether it advances the realisation of the policy goals set out in the *National Plan*, and must also explore the possible consequences for all HE institutions.

3.1 Main elements of the new funding framework

The new funding framework consists of two main elements:

❖ A mechanism (or formula) for allocating general purpose or **block grants** to higher education institutions.

❖ A set of **earmarked funds** designed to achieve specific purposes, which may not be expended on any purpose other than those specified.

Block grants cover teaching and support activities, including funds for academic development and research. Earmarked funds will provide for student financial support, institutional development and redress, interest and redemption of capital payments on approved loans, approved new capital projects and research development.

Block grant allocations comprise a range of different subsidies. By far the major component is the **teaching input subsidy**, which is generated by full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolled students in various fields and at various levels of study. On the basis of institutional three-year rolling plans, the Minister will approve student numbers. Each FTE student 'place' will carry a corresponding 'price'. Multiplying 'places' by 'prices' will yield the teaching input subsidies. Four fields of study are envisaged, weighted to compensate for different cost structures in the various areas of study. The cost-weightings will range from 1 for the less expensive subject grouping to 3,5 for the most expensive. A similar weighting is envisaged for programme levels (postgraduate and undergraduate).

The second component of the block grants consists of **teaching output subsidies**. In line with the *National Plan*'s emphasis on improving completion rates, institutions will receive subsidies based on the number of students in a particular year who obtained the diploma/degree for which they were registered. This applies up to the honours degree/higher diploma level. Master's and doctoral enrolments will be covered by the research output allocation. It is envisaged that approximately 15% of the total teaching subsidy will be allocated to this category. This deviates from the current SAPSE formulae, in terms of which funding is accrued on the basis of students who passed individual modules/subjects, regardless of whether they completed their diploma/degree.

The third component of the block grant allocations consists of funds generated through **research outputs**. This includes completed Master's and doctoral studies and research publications. No provision is made for any research input funds. This differs markedly from the present SAPSE formulae, which provide for unrestricted research input funds to institutions, based on student numbers. The unrestricted nature of these funds meant that in many cases they were expended for purposes other than research.

Finally, block grant allocations include **institutional set-up subsidies** for basic running costs, irrespective of the size of the student body. A similar provision — although determined on a different basis — exists in the present SAPSE formulae.

Without the injection of considerable new funds into HE, the current proportion of block grant to earmarked funding of approximately 87:13 is likely to be maintained during the next five years. This will have implications for the ability of the Ministry to pursue equity and redress goals more vigorously and to undertake a range of developmental activities.

3.2 The new funding framework and policy goals

Increased systemic and institutional efficiencies

The funding framework supports the *National Plan*'s goal to increase systemic and institutional efficiencies in a number of ways. The most important of these is linking funding to systemic and institutional planning. The aim is to improve systemic efficiency through a two-stage process. The first stage involves the proposed teaching/research niche areas and programme mix for the next five years, as indicated in documents submitted by HE institutions to the DoE in July 2001. The second stage encourages efficiency by linking funding to the annual submission of three-year rolling plans. Increased systemic efficiency will also be achieved through the Minister's approval of student places in relation to institutional plans, mission and vision.

The aim is to fund institutions in line with their real, rather than hoped-for delivery capacities. Institutions will, through these exercises, presumably also be engaged in critical self-analysis of their academic activities. Through the emphasis on regional co-operation in the *National Plan*, the DoE hopes to deal effectively with regional overlap and duplication of learning programmes. The pivot on which this drive towards greater levels of cost efficiency turns is the approval of student places in fields of study at the various programme levels for each institution. However, the new funding framework does not give any clear indications of the basis on which these decisions are to be made. Given the ambivalent record of human resource planning models, decisions on the approval of student places that rest largely on such models are not likely to be sound. An approach that takes national human resource needs into account, but which emphasises the thoroughness of the processes by which institutional plans are developed and the importance of the quality of these plans, together with the role of the HEQC in the accreditation of learning programmes and in institutional audits, is likely to achieve much more in terms of efficiency gains.

Emphasising funding based on educational outputs is generally held to constitute a strong incentive for greater efficiency gains. The expansion of funding based on research outputs in the new framework as compared to the SAPSE system emphasises efficiency in the production of research outputs. However, unless countered by meaningful earmarked funding for research capacity development, this emphasis on funding based on research outputs could adversely affect institutions with poor research output results. The stronger research institutions could become stronger and the weaker ones progressively weaker. All institutions, but especially the latter, will have to move away from attempts to do research over all the fields of study and will have to concentrate on selected niche areas.

The new funding framework seeks to improve levels of efficiency by rewarding institutions for their successful diplomates/graduates (up to the honours/higher diploma level) by means of teaching output subsidies. Presumably, institutions will seek to improve their delivery of teaching and learning, as well as their academic support services, in an effort to get greater numbers of students to complete their diplomas/degrees successfully in the required period of study. This will require careful monitoring by the HEQC to ensure that standards are not compromised in a chase for 'completions'. The argument that teaching output subsidies could have a negative effect on broadening admission to HE, in that institutions would be adverse to admitting 'at-risk' students, could probably be countered by the envisaged subsidy support for academic development in the new funding framework.

Overall, the new funding framework includes mechanisms that could significantly assist in increasing levels of systemic and institutional efficiency. Their success would, however, in large part depend on the thoroughness and diligence with which institutions approach their institutional planning exercises.

Increased institutional diversity

With respect to the goal of increasing institutional diversity, the new funding framework introduces the practice of uniform teaching subsidies for universities and technikons. This represents a strong recognition of the importance of present technikon education in the overall development of our country. It also signals the desire of government that technikons should not all attempt to totally change their present role and function by seeking to become technological universities. Uniform teaching subsidies should make it possible for some technikons to concentrate on teaching excellence rather than attempting to establish high levels of research excellence as well.

Another attempt to retain a measure of institutional diversity is represented by the retention of a distinction between contact and distance education institutions. As far as teaching input subsidies are concerned, distance education is to be funded at a level 50% lower than that of contact education. This could be an attempt to discourage mainly residential institutions from also engaging in distance education, thus preserving some form of institutional diversity in terms of mode of delivery. However, it is debatable whether the distinction that the funding framework seeks to maintain between contact and distance education can be sustained since high quality distance education (in contrast to correspondence education) is expensive. In addition, institutions are seeking to provide a package of delivery modalities in relation to their missions.

Dropping the present research input provision from the funding framework is likely to force most institutions, especially universities, to become far more selective in the research areas in which they seek to excel, and thus to promote greater diversity. Introducing subsidies for academic development is also likely to result in greater attempts at focus by institutions, and to promote greater institutional diversity. This is because the total higher education budget is unlikely to be increased to specifically provide for this

form of subsidisation. These subsidies will have to be found from a redistribution of existing HE funds, resulting in greater efforts by institutions to rationalise sub-economical course offerings and research programmes.

Achieving desired graduate profiles

Producing the graduates needed for social and economic development in South Africa forms an important policy goal of the *National Plan*. The new funding framework contains a number of elements that, if successfully applied, could support this policy goal. Increased participation and increased graduation rates could both be stimulated by the linking of three-year rolling plans and funding in terms of the new framework. Presumably, higher targets will be required as part of the three-year rolling plans, and funding will be linked to achieving such targets. This, however, assumes that institutions have the capacity to increase enrolments and simultaneously improve their graduation rates. Given the lack of preparedness of most entering students, this could be beyond the scope of most institutions, including the HAIs. Increased participation rates are likely to mean increased numbers of inadequately prepared students and, in turn, pressure on completion/graduation rates. The proposed funding for academic development will only assist institutions in countering these adverse trends if such funding arises from additions to current higher education expenditure, which is unlikely in the present fiscal climate. In this context, African and coloured students could be most severely affected by any lack of capacity in institutions to manage increased admissions and improved graduation rates simultaneously.

In theory, the target of achieving a broad national profile of enrolments by fields of study could well be realised by means of the new funding framework. This follows from the linkage between the three-year rolling plans and the new funding framework which would enable the Ministry of Education to exert some pressure on institutions in order to influence enrolment patterns where necessary. The mechanism of approving numbers of student places represents a powerful way through which changes in the overall profile of enrolments by fields of study could be achieved. Institutions that are grossly over-enrolled in particular fields of study in terms of their approved missions and programme niches could be awarded fewer funded student places in those fields of study. Stipulating higher 'student place prices' than the average cost of study in desired fields of study (and 'student place prices' lower than the average cost in fields of study where over-enrolments occur) could be a direct mechanism of supporting policy goals related to the distribution of enrolments by fields of study.

Sustaining and promoting research

The *National Plan* sets out to sustain and promote research in HE in a meaningful manner. The funding framework seeks to support this policy goal in two main ways: by the recognition of research-related outputs in the form of Master's and doctoral graduates and research publications as part of block grant allocations, and by making specific provision for building research capacity as part of earmarked funding. The latter research support will be concentrated in three areas: research capacity development, facilitating research collaboration at regional and national levels, and research student scholarships.

There are many good reasons for doing away with any research input provision. Yet, it is unlikely that an entirely output-driven system will result in a more acceptable distribution of research outputs across institutions, unless significant earmarked funding is made available for research development in qualifying institutions. This, however, may not occur for two reasons. First, the new framework does not foresee any appreciable increase in the level of earmarked funding from its present base of approximately 13%. Second, all institutions are being stretched by their efforts to respond to imperatives of the *National Plan*, the new funding framework, the new planning regime for institutions, and the requirements of quality assurance and the NQF. In this context, the possibility of transferring only a certain portion of the present research input funding to funding based on research outputs, and transferring the remainder to earmarked funding specifically for research development, could be investigated. The problem, however, is that it could lead to a weakening of the research endeavours of institutions that produce significant research outputs.

Equity and redress

The *National Plan* emphasises the importance of increased equity in student access and success rates of students, as well as improved staff equity. It also states that 'redress for historically black institutions will be linked to agreed missions and programme profiles, including developmental strategies to build capacity, in particular, administrative, management, governance and academic structures'.

The goals of increased equity in relation to student access, graduation rates and staff profiles are mainly linked to the setting of targets by institutions as part of their three-year rolling plans. The funding framework does not contain specific funding incentives or disincentives in this regard. Of course, the approval of student places could be tied to the achievement of equity targets — institutions that demonstrate an unwillingness or lack of commitment to pursue these targets could be allocated fewer student places. This would place pressure on such institutions since additional places would then have to be funded from their own sources.

Earmarked funding specifically provides for institutional development and redress in general. These funds are destined for 'previously disadvantaged institutions in order to enable them to discharge their approved institutional plans in the context of institutional restructuring'. As noted earlier, earmarked funding also includes specific provision for research development. The main issue, of course, is the amounts that are to be made available for these redress initiatives. If earmarked funding remains at approximately 13% of the total higher education budget, redress and development funds are likely to be extremely limited. This will result in HDIs finding it more difficult to compete with their historically advantaged counterparts in terms of institutional positioning through the institutional planning regime.

At a systemic level, the stronger emphasis on teaching inputs and the weaker emphasis on teaching outputs is likely to favour institutions with larger numbers of underprepared students. This shift in the weightings of teaching inputs and outputs recognises the very real differences in the levels of preparedness of students in institutions and the impact of this on graduation rates. Historically, the disadvantaged institutions would have been the main beneficiaries of such a policy shift. However, the very significant movement of black students to advantaged institutions means that these institutions will also benefit from this shift. Similarly, the inclusion of academic development initiatives in the new funding framework would in the past have benefited the HDIs more than their advantaged counterparts. The large black student enrolments at HAIs means that they are likely to benefit equally from such financial provision. The CHE is particularly concerned about the development of effective policy, strategy and funding for institutional redress in the context of creating and sustaining a new institutional landscape. A project to advise the Minister in this regard has been initiated, details of which can be found in Part Two of this report.

In summary, the new funding framework represents a radical and welcome departure from the present SAPSE formulae. It represents a form of goal-directed funding (as envisaged by the *White Paper*) which seeks to support the objectives and goals of the *National Plan*. In this regard, it is likely to succeed in varying degrees. However, it could also manifest major weaknesses in supporting the policy objectives of the *National Plan* in the areas of equity/redress, specifically in relation to institutional redress, and research. Much will depend on the ability of the Ministry to mobilise extra funding for HE and, ultimately, on the funding that will be set aside for earmarked purposes.

Another area of uncertainty is the difficulty in accurately predicting institutional behaviour in response to the new funding framework. As in the case of responses to the *White Paper*, there could be ingenuous interpretations and responses that could amplify existing patterns of institutional advantage and disadvantage, or generate undesirable new patterns. A large number of issues still need to be resolved in the finalisation of the new funding framework, and it is not possible presently to establish with certainty the future level of allocations to institutions, or their overall impact.

SECTION 2

THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The instruments of national planning, quality assurance and a new funding regime discussed in the previous section will all, of course, be applied within the existing HE landscape and terrain, even as they seek to change this landscape and terrain. This section focuses on the current institutional landscape and the participation of students and staff in HE.

1. The institutional landscape

As in the apartheid period, there continue to be 21 public universities and 15 public technikons that function, in accordance with the 1996 *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, under the jurisdiction of the national Ministry of Education.

The Higher Education Act of 1997 provided the legislative basis and framework for all educational institutions providing HE — including colleges of education, agriculture and nursing — to become part of the national HE system and a central state responsibility. *The White Paper* of 1997 stated that they would be incorporated into the HE sector in phases, beginning with the colleges of education.

Whereas there were 120 colleges of education in 1994, their number was reduced to 50 by early 2000. The number of colleges diminished rapidly during 2000 as the provinces rationalised down to 25 'contact' colleges and two distance colleges. During 2001, all the colleges of education were incorporated into universities and technikons.

24 nursing colleges (6 647 students in 2000) and 11 agricultural colleges (2 033 students in 1999) continue to exist under the jurisdiction of the provinces. Their future is the subject of ongoing discussion between the Ministry of Education and the Ministries of Health and Agriculture respectively.

Alongside the public HE sector there exists a small but growing private HE sector. The 1996 *Constitution* provides for such institutions on condition that they do not discriminate on the grounds of race, that they register with the state, and that they maintain standards that are not inferior to those at comparable public educational institutions. *The Higher Education Act* stipulates the legal conditions for the registration of private HE institutions and imposes various obligations. *The White Paper* calls for a regulatory framework to ensure that only private institutions with the necessary infrastructure and resources to provide and sustain quality HE will be registered.

A key goal of the *White Paper* is the achievement of a national, integrated, co-ordinated, and yet differentiated, HE system. Such a system would display diversity in the institutional landscape in terms of institutional missions, organisational forms, curriculum and qualification structures and offerings of learning programmes, as a means of being responsive to the diverse social and economic needs of South Africa. However, in mid-2000 the CHE's Size and Shape report warned of the continued and even increasing fragmentation of the system:

> The higher education system still does not function in the co-ordinated way envisaged by the White Paper. Neither the existing planning instruments nor leaving it up to the institutions has produced meaningful co-ordination or collaboration. There are only few and limited examples of successful co-operative initiatives and programmes between institutions. Many of the features of apartheid fragmentation continue within the system and between institutions. Excessively competitive behaviour and practices increasingly abound in the system with potentially damaging effects on other institutions, especially those in more rural areas. Public universities and technikons appear to regard their immediate neighbours and other public institutions more as market competitors rather than as colleagues striving towards a unified and co-ordinated higher education system. This is inevitable in a context of falling enrolments and the absence of a clear, explicit and comprehensive national planning framework.

The CHE report went on to argue:

> Some of the changes may well be positive. However, they occur mainly as individualised initiatives of institutions, frequently with no or little reference to real socio-economic and educational needs and to

the programme offerings of neighbouring institutions. The absence of well-established and optimally functioning accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms creates major concerns about the quality of teaching and learning. The major dangers are: lack of institutional focus and mission incoherence; rampant and even destructive competition in which historically advantaged institutions could reinforce their inherited privileges; unwarranted duplication of activities and programmes; exclusive focus on only 'paying' programmes; excessive marketisation and commodification with little attention to social and educational goals, and insufficient attention to quality.

These are some of the issues that the *National Plan* attempts to address.

1.1 The National Plan

Following its release, the DoE moved rapidly to give effect to the various activities and processes set out in the *National Plan*.

In March 2001, the Minister announced the establishment of a National Working Group (NWG) to investigate and advise him on appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of HE on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including the feasibility of reducing the number of HE institutions. The NWG must ensure that it is guided by the principles and goals for the transformation of the HE system as outlined in the HE *White Paper*, and that its recommendations address and promote the following goals:

❖ Social and educational goals, in particular, the contribution of HE to social and economic development, both regionally and nationally.

❖ Access and equity goals in relation to both student and staff equity, as well as institutional redress.

❖ Quality and efficiency goals in terms of economies of scale and scope, both programme and infrastructural, as well as the spread and quality of programmes and graduation and retention rates.

❖ Institutional sustainability and viability goals in terms of student numbers, income and expenditure patterns and management and governance capacities.

❖ Institutional culture and identity goals in terms of overcoming the legacy of apartheid.

The specific terms of reference of the NWG are that it must:

❖ Address how the number of institutions can be reduced and the form that the restructured institutions should take, and not whether the number of institutions can or should be reduced.

❖ Ensure that the reduction in the number of institutions does not result in the closure of existing sites of delivery; that is, it must be underpinned by the principle that HE programmes would continue to be offered at all the current sites of delivery, but within new institutional and organisational forms and structures.

❖ Consider the full range of potential institutional arrangements, including the rationalisation of programme development and delivery through institutional collaboration, as well as different models of mergers.

❖ Consider the role and function of all existing institutions in the development of new institutional and organisational forms; that is, no institution should be exempted from the need to change fundamentally and from contributing to achieving a new HE landscape.

❖ Recommend the incorporation of the constituent campuses of Vista University into appropriate existing HE institutions within each region, given the decision to unbundle Vista University. This does not include the distance education centre of Vista University (VUDEC), which will be incorporated into a single dedicated distance education institution through the merger of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Technikon Southern Africa (TSA).

❖ Consider the following regional demarcations for purposes of the investigation:

➢ Eastern Cape

➢ Free State

➢ KwaZulu-Natal

➢ Gauteng

➢ Northern Province

➢ North West

➢ Western Cape

The NWG is chaired by Mr Saki Macozoma and comprises:

❖ Prof. Hugh Africa, retired Vice-Chancellor, Vista University, and a member of the CHE.

❖ Prof. Malegapuru Makgoba, President, Medical Research Council of South Africa.

❖ Ms Gill Marcus, Deputy Governor, South African Reserve Bank.

❖ Mr Murphy Morobe, Chairperson, Fiscal and Finance Commission and the National Parks Board.

❖ Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, Economic Adviser to the President and Chairperson of the CHE.

❖ Ms Joyce Phekane, Deputy Vice-President, Congress of South African Trade Unions.

❖ Ms Maria Ramos, Director-General, Department of Finance.

❖ Prof. Jairam Reddy, Chairperson of Council, United Nations University; chaired the NCHE.

❖ Prof. Hennie Rossouw, retired Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Stellenbosch; served on the NCHE.

❖ Prof. Stuart Saunders, retired Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town.

The NWG is required to complete its investigation and to submit its recommendations to the Minister by no later than the end of December 2001.

During May 2001 a number of further working groups were established. The Working Group on the Establishment of a Single Dedicated Distance Education Institution must facilitate the establishment of such an institution through the merger of UNISA and TSA and the incorporation of VUDEC. Its terms of reference commit it to developing a framework and implementation plan, including:

❖ Developing a mission and vision for the institution.

❖ Developing an appropriate administrative, management and governance structure for ensuring the smooth functioning of the institution.

❖ Developing an appropriate academic structure.

❖ Developing an appropriate personnel structure, including the financial implications, based on the proposed academic, administrative and governance structures.

❖ Outlining the labour relations implications of the proposed personnel structure, including the processes necessary to implement the proposed personnel structure.

❖ Developing a financial framework to ensure the sustainability of the institution.

❖ Ensuring that provision is made to enable the existing students to complete their academic programmes.

❖ Identifying the financial implications for the existing students in terms of differences in the tuition and residential fee structure of UNISA, TSA and Vista University.

The Working Group is also required to investigate and advise on:

❖ The broader role of distance education in higher education in the light of current and future trends, in particular, changes in information and communications technology.

❖ The role that the single dedicated distance education institution could play in the development of innovative and quality programmes that would contribute to promoting access and enhancing quality within the HE system as a whole.

The Working Group on distance education consists of:

❖ Mr Franklin Sonn, Chairperson, former South African Ambassador to the United States of America.

❖ Ms Cynthia Mpathi, Head, District Development Project, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

❖ Prof. Rolf Stumpf, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Stellenbosch.

❖ Vice-Chancellor of UNISA or his representative.

❖ Vice-Chancellor of Vista or his representative.

❖ Vice-Chancellor of TSA or her representative.

The Working Group is required to complete its investigation and to submit its recommendations to the Minister by no later than the end of June 2002.

The Working Group on the Incorporation of the Qwa-Qwa Branch of the University of the North into the University of the Free State is required to develop a framework and implementation plan, including:

❖ Developing a mission and vision for the Qwa-Qwa campus as an integral component of the broader mission and vision of the University of the Free State.

❖ Developing an appropriate administrative, management and governance structure for ensuring the smooth functioning of the Qwa-Qwa campus.

❖ Developing an appropriate academic structure linked to a coherent menu of higher education programmes that address regional social, economic and labour market needs.

❖ Developing an appropriate personnel structure, including the financial implications, based on the proposed academic, administrative and governance structures.

❖ Outlining the labour relations implications of the proposed personnel structure, including the processes necessary to implement the proposed personnel structure.

❖ Developing a financial framework to ensure the sustainability of the Qwa-Qwa campus, including identifying the existing assets and liabilities of the Qwa-Qwa campus and the implications of the latter for the incorporation.

❖ Ensuring that provision is made to enable the existing students to complete their academic programmes.

❖ Identifying the financial implications for the existing students in terms of differences in the tuition and residential fee structure of the University of the North and the University of the Free State.

The Working Group is required to complete its investigation and to submit its recommendations to the Minister by no later than the end of December 2001. It comprises:

❖ Dr Bethuel Setai, Chairperson, previously Director-General, Provincial Administration, Free State.

❖ Dr Mashupye Kgaphola, Policy Analyst, Development Bank of South Africa.

❖ Prof. Angina Parekh, Ministerial Adviser on HE.

❖ Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State or his representative.

❖ Administrator of the University of the North or his representative.

Finally, working groups were created for the establishment of a National Institute for Higher Education in Mpumalanga and a National Institute for Higher Education in the Northern Cape. Each working group must develop a framework and implementation plan for the National Institute, including:

❖ Developing an appropriate administrative, management and governance and funding structure based on the *Higher Education Act*, but taking into account that the National Institute will not be an autonomous higher education institution.

❖ Identifying the infrastructure within the province, including the existing colleges of education, as well as the satellite campuses of HE institutions operating in the province, that could serve as the nucleus for the National Institute.

❖ Developing a coherent menu of HE programmes that address regional social, economic and labour market needs.

❖ Identifying the existing and potential capacity of HE institutions that currently operate in the province to contribute to the development of the National Institute.

❖ Exploring the potential role of HE institutions that do not currently operate in the province in contributing to the development of the National Institute, should the existing institutions not have the capacity to meet the identified programme needs.

The members of the Working Group for Mpumalanga are as follows:

❖ Mr James Maseko, Chairperson, previously Superintendent-General, Gauteng Department of Education.

❖ Dr Michael Smout, recently retired Vice-Principal of Rhodes University.

❖ Mr Tembile Kulati, until recently Ministerial Adviser on HE.

❖ Mr BP Nkambule, independent consultant on public sector transformation.

❖ Mr Vuyile Resha, Adviser, MEC for Education, Mpumalanga.

The members of the Working Group for the Northern Cape are:

❖ Mr Jonathan Godden, Chairperson, previously Superintendent-General, Eastern Cape Department of Education.

❖ Dr Michael Smout, recently retired Vice-Principal of Rhodes University.

❖ Mr Tembile Kulati, until recently Ministerial Adviser on HE.

❖ Mr Kevin Abrahams, education management information specialist, Education Foundation.

❖ Rev. Dr M Mahlatsi, Minister, Methodist Church, Kimberley.

The working groups are required to complete their investigations and to submit their recommendations to the Minister by no later than the end of December 2001.

2002 could be the most challenging, crucial and decisive year yet for the Ministry of Education with respect to institutional structuring, reconfiguration and the creation of a more differentiated and diverse, yet co-ordinated, system. In terms of the timetable of the *National Plan*, the first half of 2002 will see the coming together of a number of processes and activities instituted in terms of the *National Plan*. Vital choices and difficult decisions will have to be made in a context of competing policy goals, strong institutional interests and limited resources. The choices and decisions made (or not made) will shape HE, and in particular the institutional landscape of HE, for years to come.

1.2 Incorporation of the colleges of education and teacher education[1]

In 1996, a period of review of the colleges of education and teacher education resulted in the release of the National Teacher Education Audit (NTEA) and the National Teacher Supply, Utilisation and Development Study. The reports indicated that colleges of education constituted the largest sector of the non-university/technikon post-secondary education system in South Africa. They also presented a bleak picture of the colleges of education sector: it was inefficient and fragmented because of separatist apartheid policies that regulated its governance, curriculum and funding, and therefore largely cost-inefficient.

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[1] This section draws extensively on a paper by Ben Parker (2001), 'Roles and responsibilities, institutional landscapes and curriculum mindscapes: A partial view of teacher education policy in South Africa — 1990 to 2000'.

The NCHE proposed that colleges of education be incorporated into existing universities and technikons. Thereafter, the *White Paper* on HE recommended a comprehensive review of the college sector within the broader goals of a single system of higher education regulated through programme-based funding and rigorous quality assurance of providers and programmes. *The Higher Education Act* enables the Minister of Education to declare the incorporation of a college of education into the national public higher education system, either as an autonomous institution or as a subdivision of an existing university or technikon. The *Act*, however, lays down a crucial requirement that the Minister must fulfil before making a declaration. Section 21(5) of the *Act* states that 'an education institution may only be declared a public higher education institution after the employer has complied with its obligations in terms of the applicable labour law'.

In order to effect this process and locate all teacher education within the HE system as a national competence, a task team was appointed in August 1997. The final report of the task team was presented to the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) in mid-1998 as *A Framework for the Incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector*.

The framework document envisaged the possibility that some colleges of education could become autonomous higher education institutions if they could achieve a minimum enrolment of 2 000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, while others would become part of existing universities and technikons. On the basis of this report, provinces began restructuring their colleges and identifying those colleges of education suitable for incorporation into higher education. Guided by a Transition Committee, which developed national criteria for provincial rationalisation on a regional basis, the number of colleges was reduced from 120 (80 000 students) in 1994 to 50 (about 15 000 students) in early 2000.

The number of colleges diminished rapidly during 2000 as the provinces rationalised down to 25 'contact' colleges with 10 000 students who were earmarked for incorporation into higher education. The other 5 000 college students were enrolled in two distance colleges: the South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE) and the South African College for Open Learning (SACOL).

In 1999 a task team was established to investigate the two distance teacher education colleges, SACTE and SACOL. Together these colleges had an enrolment of 20 000 students. However, as a result of their highly flexible registration criteria, with many students registered for only one or two courses per year, this headcount translated into an FTE of approximately 5 000. These colleges were funded by the provinces in the same manner as the contact colleges and operated at a per capita cost of at least four times that of UNISA.

Once the provincial rationalisation process was completed, the 25 earmarked contact (face-to-face, full-time residential) colleges of education had approximately 10 000 students and 1 000 staff members, and the distance colleges had 5 000 students and 500 staff members, giving an overall staff to student ratio of one to ten. The budget for colleges of education in 2000 was approximately R800 million, giving an average per capita cost to the state of R40 000 per student. By comparison, the per capita subsidy cost of teacher training at a university was approximately R10 000.

In 2000, universities and technikons enrolled an additional 95 000 teacher education students — universities about 90 000 and technikons about 5 000. 60 000 of these students were studying through distance education institutions — 15 000 students were enrolled at UNISA and Vista, and approximately 40 000 were enrolled in public-private partnerships (for example, University of Pretoria and Success College; University of Port Elizabeth and Azaliah College; Rand Afrikaans University and Lyceum College).

The emergence and rapid rise of private providers during the late 1990s was linked to a clause in the *Constitution* allowing private HE provision. A number of universities established financially rewarding partnerships with private providers to deliver teacher education qualifications. The major weakness of these partnerships was the way in which public funds received by the universities were not always spent on providing students with an adequate service. A common pattern that emerged was enrolment of a large number of students for initial and further qualifications who were 'serviced' by the private partners in 'off-campus' locations with accreditation from the university. Many of these initiatives were 'distance' programmes and students did not always enjoy access to good library or other support facilities. Undoubtedly, public-private partnerships will play an important role in the future of teacher education, but the nature of the relationships and how they are regulated and funded are matters that must be addressed.

During the 1990s, the distinction between PRESET and INSET became increasingly blurred. For example, underqualified and unqualified teachers are pre-service students in so far as they are not yet qualified, but are in-service students by virtue of their employment as teachers. It is still worth noting, however, that of the 110 000 students enrolled in teacher education in 2000, 15 000 were enrolled in PRESET programmes and 95 000 in INSET programmes. Of these PRESET students, 10 000 were in the colleges and 5 000 in universities and technikons.

While the incorporation of the colleges of education into universities and technikons is largely complete, it has been a difficult and complex process, and not without contestation. First, it has been argued that the preference for a university-based teaching education model has not been backed by sufficient evidence. Second, it has been suggested that issues of curriculum and pedagogy were displaced by concerns about cost-effectiveness.

The institutional landscape and structure and content of South African teacher education have changed irrevocably. The DoE has made clear its intentions to have a new teacher education system that can respond rapidly to the needs of the country, and the *National Plan* committed the DoE to finalising a National Teacher Education Plan with a national agenda for teacher education, development and training. In this regard, the DoE is to hold its first National Teacher Education Policy Conference on 19–21 October 2001, under the theme *Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Towards a New Model for Teacher Development in South Africa*. The conference will consider the DoE's position paper, which outlines its vision for the teaching profession, and will focus on the following key areas:

❖ Teacher supply and demand: Facts and myths.

❖ Preparing professional educators for professional development, reform and outcomes-based education.

❖ Understanding teacher performance.

❖ Developing and implementing effective support systems for educators.

The DoE hopes that the conference will make possible:

❖ Development of a sharper understanding and appreciation of the context and complexities of teacher development in South Africa.

❖ Development of a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders with respect to teacher development.

❖ Identification of key issues that need to be incorporated into a five-year strategy on teacher education.

❖ Refinement of its position paper as a step towards developing a policy framework for teacher education.

The next few years will be critical for teacher education. A wide range of challenges — declining enrolments, attracting students, curriculum and pedagogy, etc. — face teacher education institutions. A major challenge for the DoE will be to provide adequate funding to the public HE institutions providing teacher education, including adequate subsidy funding and financial aid to teacher education students.

1.3 Private higher education

Since the mid-1990s, South Africa has seen a proliferation of local and foreign private providers of HE, as well as a complex array of partnership arrangements between public and private institutions. This has posed a number of regulatory challenges for the DoE, as well as a host of quality assurance complexities for the HEQC.

The *Higher Education Act* stipulated the legal conditions for the operation of private HE institutions and imposed various obligations. From 1999, private providers were required to register with the DoE and, with the HEQC still to be established, to have their programmes accredited by SAQA. By late 1999, 323 applications were received by the DoE. By August 2001, 90 institutions were granted registration, and 10 conditional registration.

Amendments to the *Higher Education Act* in 2000 firmed up the regulatory framework for private institutions. First, to remove ambiguities about who is a provider of HE, the Act states that:

'to provide higher education' means:

(a) the registering of students for:

    (i) complete qualifications at or above level 5 of the National Qualification Framework as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995); or

    (ii) such part of a qualification which meets the requirements of a unit standard as recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority at or above the level referred to in subparagraph (i);

(b) the taking of responsibility for the provision and delivery of the curricula;

(c) the assessment of students regarding their learning programmes; and

(d) the conferring of qualifications, in the name of the higher education institution concerned.

Second, private institutions must be registered or recognised as a juristic person in terms of the *Companies Act.* Third, to ensure that private institutions are also subject to the requirements of national planning towards a unified, co-ordinated and differentiated HE system, the *Act* empowers the Minister to 'prescribe the scope and range of operations, including the size and institutional configuration of private higher education institutions or individual private higher education institutions'. Finally, the *Act* stipulates that:

No private or independent education institution may call itself a university or a technikon or confer a professorship or an honorary degree or use the titles of rector, vice-chancellor or chancellor, unless it is registered as a private university or a private technikon.

During mid-2001, as stipulated by the *National Plan, Draft Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions* were released for public comment. These are to be finalised during late 2001 and will be followed by regulations for the accreditation of programmes of private HE institutions by the HEQC of the CHE.

Private HE has gained particular prominence in relation to two developments. First, the proliferation of a number of small, 'fly-by-night' operations (mainly in further education) gave high visibility to the problem of the quality and financial sustainability of some institutions. Second, the drop in enrolments in public HE and the HDIs and the decline in white enrolments in HAIs over the past few years coincided with the expansion of private provision. However, there is no data available to link declining enrolments in public HE with the growth of private HE.

The expansion of private HE is not an exclusively South African phenomenon. It is suggested that its worldwide growth can be captured by the notion of 'excess demand' in relation to the capacity of the public sector. That is, there is a demand for **more** HE (where the public sector cannot absorb the social demand), for **different** HE (for particular sectarian or faith-based education, or for more specialist or flexible, vocationally oriented programmes), or for **better** HE (where there is loss of confidence in the public sector).

In the case of South Africa, two reasons are advanced to explain the growth of private providers. First, there appears to be student interest in the types of programmes offered by private institutions, particularly short courses, flexible modular programmes, and distance education. Second, there is the issue of perceptions about the declining quality of public education and instability at public institutions. Private institutions, particularly foreign ones or those with international linkages, are seen as suitable alternatives. A study commissioned by the CHE and the DoE found that there was a higher number of reported African enrolments at private institutions than generally anticipated, which counters the commonly held assumption that private HE is beyond the financial reach of African students.

While the growth of private HE must and will impact on public HE, there is insufficient information around the shape and size of the private HE sector to engage with the notion that it constitutes a serious threat to public HE. The CHE/DoE commissioned study suggests that the size of private HE may not be as large as generally assumed. The perception of a larger number of enrolments could stem from a double count of students in public-private partnerships. The majority of institutions are small, local, single-focus institutions that vary considerably in size. Only a few large multi-focus institutions exist. The majority of institutions

appear to be distance education providers, with most institutions having their headquarters in Gauteng. Enrolments appear to be predominantly at NQF level 5 (certificates and diplomas), with only a small percentage at NQF level 8. The majority of enrolments appear to be in the fields of business/commerce/ management and education (an estimated 75%). Business administration and management seems to be the focus of almost 90% of the transnational providers. While these findings give some indication of the nature of the private HE sector, more comprehensive and accurate information is urgently needed. This will hopefully be forthcoming with the new registration requirements in place.

A Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study on private HE that is under way could also shed greater light on the sector. The study aims to provide a detailed qualitative description of private providers. Through this process, it aims to categorise emerging patterns and to develop a meaningful typology of institutions in the private HE sector. The research methodology will centre around qualitative case studies of 15 institutions, sampled in terms of four types: transnational institutions, franchising agencies, technical and vocational education and training institutions, and corporate 'universities'. The case studies will look at finance and governance, but focus largely on the issues of demand, quality and responsiveness.

Mention must be made of professional institutes which are important providers of in-house training programmes for a variety of occupational levels within companies, thus performing an important continuing education function. They draw on two categories of the working population: qualified professionals and technicians who need upgrading, and non-qualified mature working adults wishing to access formal educational opportunities. In-house training also consists of short targeted courses for middle-level management in areas such as supervision, conflict resolution, communication, leadership, technical skills, management, accounting, and evaluation and monitoring skills. Longer courses accredited through professional institutes enable individuals to top up their knowledge and skills. Interesting partnerships are also emerging between public HE institutions and large companies that have identified various continuing education needs.

The *National Plan* identifies current trends within the private HE sector and also highlights problem areas in public-private partnerships such as quality control, subsidy and financial benefits that accrue to public institutions, and the rights and protection of students. It advocates the regulation of partnership agreements. To this end, the funding of student places in these partnerships will be subject to programme approval from 2002. The *National Plan* also highlights the need for establishing complementary relations between the public and private HE sectors. The key issue with respect to complementarity is the specific education and training contributions of private providers. Economic, social and technological changes are continuously making new demands on the knowledge base and range of skills, competencies and attitudes possessed by current middle- and high-level human resources. There is a constant and growing need for flexible, tailored continuing education and training programmes that enable the acquisition of current and strategic knowledge, information and know-how. This could be one of the niche areas around which private providers enter into complementary relationships with public institutions.

With a commitment to maintaining a high quality public HE sector as a point of departure, legislation, policy and regulations should promote the effective integration of private HE within the overall HE system, and enable the development of complementary relationships between public and private institutions. On the side of private institutions, self-regulation to safeguard the image of private institutions, uphold high quality and standards and protect students is desirable. There are indications that this is indeed the direction in which private providers grouped within the Alliance of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development (APPETD) seek to move. Similarly, self-regulation by public institutions around public-private partnerships would also be a positive step. The Draft Code of Conduct that has been developed by the South African University Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA) contributes to this development.

2. Student enrolments in higher education

In reviewing changes and trends in the HE system over the past two years, it is necessary to stress that it remains difficult to obtain up-to-date data. The system remains without reliable, comprehensive and up-to-date institutional and systemic information. This is a serious impediment to effective monitoring, analysis and planning. Remedying this problem remains an urgent policy priority. The establishment of the new Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) is under way in the DoE. However, comprehensive and reliable data from this source is not yet available for the current year, 2001.

The analysis of trends in this and subsequent sections of this report relies on the latest available full set of the 2000 HEMIS and SAPSE data for previous years. Late in the writing of this report, ongoing updates and corrections were being obtained from the DoE for both data sets. As a result, there are some persistent uncertainties regarding data.

The figures provided in the CHE annual reports of 1998–1999 and 1999–2000 have subsequently been revised as more accurate data has become available. Some of these revised aggregate figures have been used below. However, because the updated data was not always available in disaggregated form, some tables below use figures reported in the 1998–1999 and 1999–2000 CHE reports. These are clearly noted.

The analysis in this report focuses on trends between 1996 and 2000, utilising the latest available reliable data, with some comments on initial indications from the 2001 data. For all the reasons stated, the data below should be treated cautiously.

Overall enrolments

The 1998–1999 CHE Annual Report focused strongly on the unanticipated dramatic decline in student enrolments between 1998 and 1999 — mainly in the historically distance education institutions and historically disadvantaged universities (HDUs). It was argued that the growth in enrolments and the participation rate projected by the NCHE report and assumed in the *White Paper* would not materialise. It was also suggested that there would be an ongoing decline as a result of further projected enrolment declines at the HDUs. This, it was indicated, would have dire effects on the subsidy funding of HDUs and their sustainability if this trend continued.

However, the statistics of the past two years suggest that the decline in enrolments at a system level has levelled out. Further, revised figures also suggest that the drop in enrolments between 1998 and 1999 was not as severe as originally assumed. The 1998–1999 CHE report signalled a decline of about 40 000 enrolments, whereas revised figures indicate that the drop was only about half of that — in the order of 20 000 — from 605 000 to 586 000. This highlights the danger of basing predictions on what could be short-term trends.
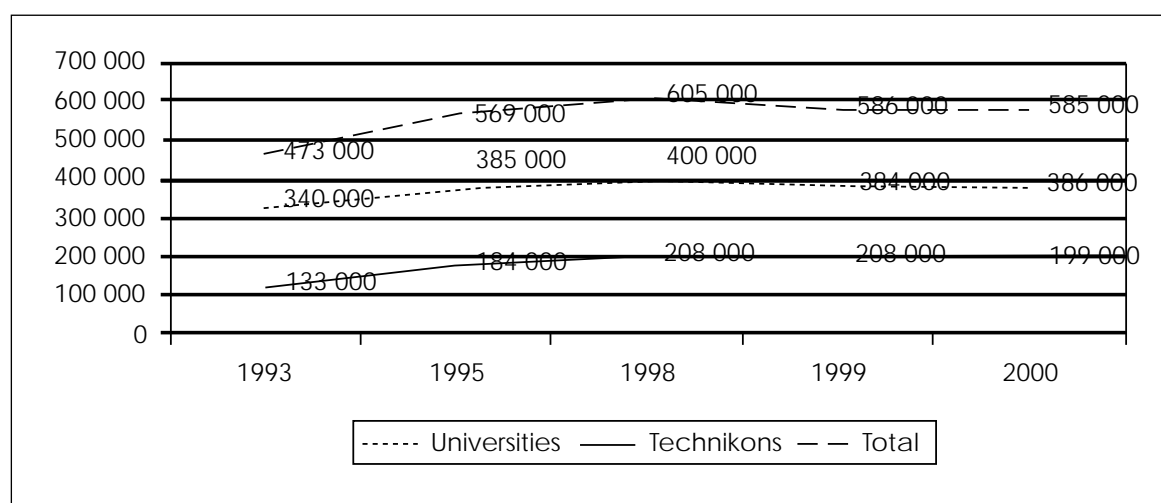
Figure 1: Head count university and technikon student enrolments, various years
Source: DoE HEMIS for 2000 and the latest SAPSE for the other years.
Note: The 1998–1999 CHE Report showed 564 000 for 1999 and the 1999–2000 CHE Report 582 000.

The latest available estimates shown in Figure 1 indicate that there were no significant changes in overall enrolments between 1999 and 2000. However, it is apparent that not all institutions have included distance education enrolments in their HEMIS and SAPSE reports to the DoE. If estimates of all of these are included, then an increase of about 15 000 enrolments is evident between 1999 and 2000, bringing total enrolments to approximately 600 000 — a little under the peak of 605 000 in 1998. Importantly, the underlying data shows a levelling off, and even increases at some HDUs that had previously experienced dramatic declines. Provisional enrolment figures for 2001 confirm these patterns.

It could be that most of the increases that culminated in the peak in 1998 comprised distance education enrolments concentrated mainly in the field of teacher training. Taking this and the subsequent decline and

levelling off of enrolments by 2000 into account, it is apparent that there has been a partial reshaping of the system. There has been an increase in distance education enrolments in traditionally contact institutions, a corresponding decline at the distance education institutions, a drop in some HDU contact programmes, and a growth in the proportion of technikon enrolments relative to universities.

However, it is clear that the size of the system has been relatively static since 1995. This indicates that HE is not currently providing the required number and range of graduates needed to drive South Africa's development and its competitive engagement in the global economy. The targets set out in the *National Plan* to increase participation rates and to reshape enrolments by field are directed towards remedying this. The success of these strategies and future enrolment patterns will depend on a number of interrelated factors, including continued improvements in school outputs (see below), student choices, institutional marketing and recruitment drives, the extent and range of student financial aid and the outcomes of the reconfiguration process.

The recent enrolment trends also suggest that while the NCHE and *White Paper* growth projections will not be achieved, the prediction of ongoing declines at HDUs will also not materialise. Given the indications of impending crisis for these institutions signalled in the 1998–1999 CHE Annual Report, it is important to note the stabilisation of enrolments in some of these institutions, with a few actually showing increases. These changes are most likely to be the result of increased financial support of students through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), and of more vigorous and well-directed institutional recruitment campaigns.

Why there have been such fluctuations in enrolments over the past few years remains unknown. The investigation called for by the CHE in 1999 into the reasons for enrolment declines in public HE institutions has yet to materialise. This remains an important task, which could help shed light on the factors that shape student choice and could contribute to a more sophisticated analysis of enrolment patterns for planning purposes.

A commonly accepted explanation for the non-materialisation of the predicted expansion in HE enrolments is the decline after 1994 in the number of students qualifying for university entrance. Compared with 1999, during 2000 there was an increase in both the number of school-leaving passes (from just under 250 000 to 283 000) and university entrance exemptions (from 63 725 to 68 626). While a positive development, the latter figure only represents a return to the 1998 figure, and remains far below the 89 000 exemptions obtained in 1994 (on which the NCHE based its prediction of 130 000 exemptions by 1998). It should also be noted that the overall number of candidates dropped from 511 474 in 1999 to 489 941 in 2000. Furthermore, the number of higher grade mathematics and physical science passes dropped between 1999 and 2000, with the result that only 4% of the total number of candidates passed higher grade maths and only 5% higher grade science. Clearly, the problem of poor quality schooling persists and remains an obstacle to HE contributing to the objectives of national human resource development.

Notwithstanding the above problems, data suggests that the problem does not lie in a decline in new entrants into the HE system alone, but also in the retention of students already within HE. Student retention and throughput, along with reducing time-to-graduation, remain a central challenge, and are clearly identified in the *National Plan*. Monitoring progress in this regard will be a specific focus of future CHE annual reports.

The *National Plan* indicates that one possible strategy to increase participation rates in HE is to put greater effort into recruiting non-traditional students, mature learners, and the disabled. Providing access and real opportunity for each of these groups poses particular challenges to the HE system and to each institution individually.

According to the *White Paper* 6 of 2001, *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, there are no reliable statistics available on the number of people with disabilities enrolled in HE or on the number of potential HE students with disabilities. The *White Paper* indicates that in 1999, there were between 293 000 and 322 000 students with disabilities in public, independent, ordinary and special schools. Even if only 10% of these students were to enrol in HE, this would represent a significant challenge for institutions at the levels of infrastructure, support services and learning and teaching.

Finally, the impact of HIV/Aids on the HE system can hardly be overestimated. Most reports on HIV/Aids indicate that the large majority of deaths occurring in the country among people aged 15 to 49 years are caused by Aids. A recent report suggests that by 2010 Aids will cause between 5 and 7 million deaths in

South Africa. A study commissioned by the government in 2000 offered the following projections on the impact of HIV/Aids on HE:

❖ In 2000, around 0.7% of students were predicted to have Aids. In 2010, this can be expected to increase to 3.7%.

❖ The infection level for undergraduate university students was estimated at around 22%. By 2005 this could reach 33%.

❖ The infection level among postgraduate university students was around 11% and could rise to 21% by 2005.

❖ The infection level for undergraduate technikon students was close to 24.5% and could increase to 36% by 2005.

❖ Around 0.5% of postgraduate technikon students had Aids. This could increase to around 4.2% by the end of the decade. (ABT Associates, 2000)

There is no doubt that the decimation of the population by Aids will impact on the number of pupils finishing secondary school, and consequently on the number of potential enrolments in HE. Given the age range of infected people, graduation rates may also be undermined by the spread of the epidemic. Thus, the epidemic could undermine two fundamental targets of the *National Plan* — increased participation and increased output of graduates.

Composition of the student body

Figure 2 below shows recent trends in the composition of the student body by gender.

Figure 2: Head count enrolments by gender (thousands)
Source: DoE HEMIS for 2000 and the 1998–1999 CHE Report for the other years.
Note: The 1999–2000 CHE Report gave slightly different figures for these years.

Gender parity was reached in 1997, since which time female students have formed the overall majority in the system. Enrolments in 2000 showed a further increase in the number and proportion of women students to 308 000 (about 53% of the total). However, the male:female ratio varied between the universities (44:56) and technikons (54:46). The predominance of males in the technikon sector reflects a higher proportion of males in the historically advantaged technikons (HATs) as a group (54%) and in Technikon SA (60%). Further investigation of the reasons for these variations would be informative. The aggregate increase in the number of female students, however, hides the fact that female students still tend to be clustered at the lower qualifications levels and in fields that are traditionally associated with females. Gender equality in student enrolments in a number of fields therefore remains an elusive goal.

Figures 3 and 4 below illustrate enrolments by 'race'. Between 1999 and 2000 there was a further increase of about 20 000 in the enrolment of African students. Enrolments in all other 'race' groups remained

virtually constant. The figures below make it clear that the racial composition of the student body has altered significantly since 1993. Over this period, the number and proportion of African students has risen dramatically by 161 000, from 191 000 to 352 000 (40% to 60% of the total). Correspondingly, the number and proportion of white students has declined by 59 000, from 223 000 to 164 000 (47% to 28%). The numbers of coloured and Indian students have increased slightly, while their proportions have remained unchanged.

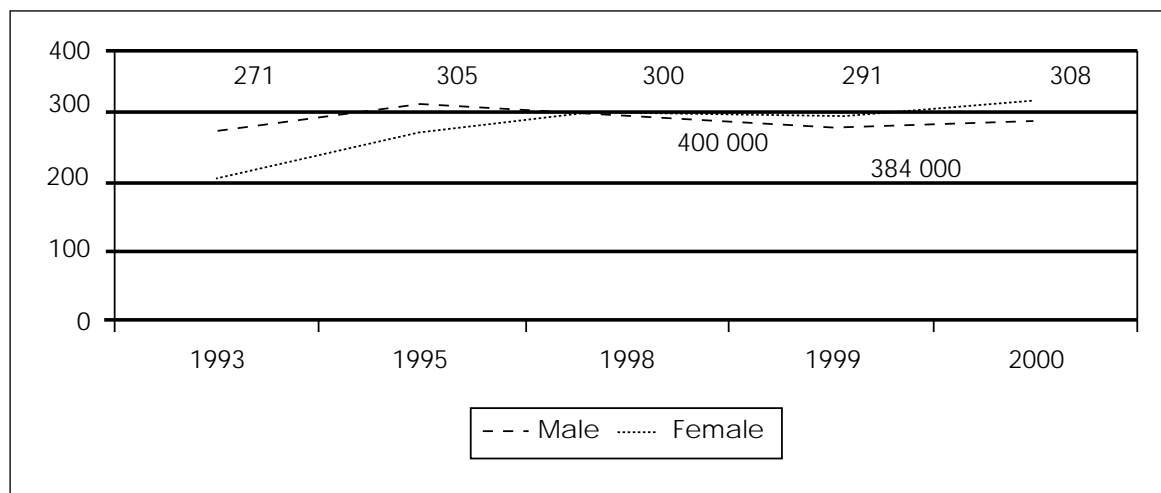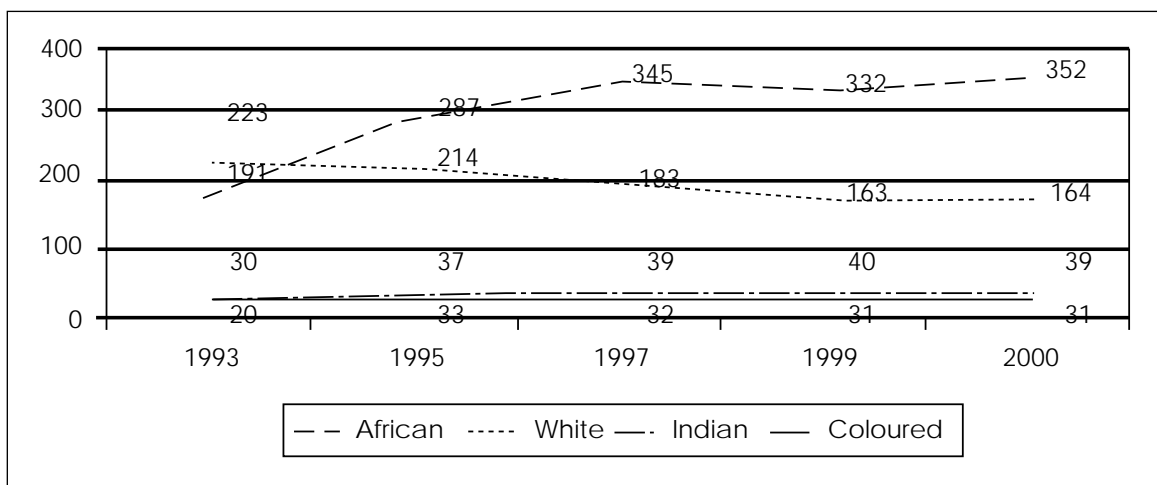*Figure 3: Head count enrolments by 'race' (thousands)*
Source: DoE HEMIS for 2000 and the CHE 1998–1999 Report for the other years.
Note: The totals here differ marginally from those in Figure 2.
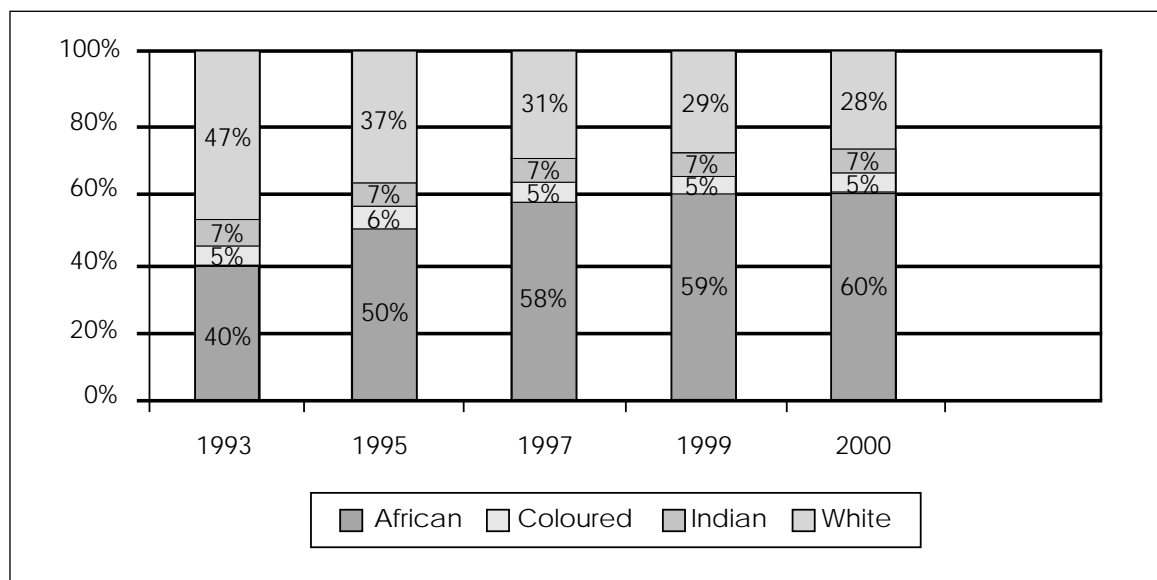
Figure 4: Percentage distribution of head count enrolments by 'race'
Source: DoE HEMIS for 2000, and the CHE 1998-1999 Report and SAPSE for the other years.

Enrolments by institution type

The distribution of students, especially Africans, varied widely according to the different historical backgrounds of institutions, i.e. whether they were historically advantaged or disadvantaged.

As is evident in Figure 5, the racial composition of students at institutions with different historical backgrounds has continued to shift noticeably in 2000. In 1993, 49% of African students were in the HDIs, and only 13% in the HAIs. By 2000, this had shifted to 30% and 43% respectively, while the proportion at the distance education institutions fell from 38% to 28%.
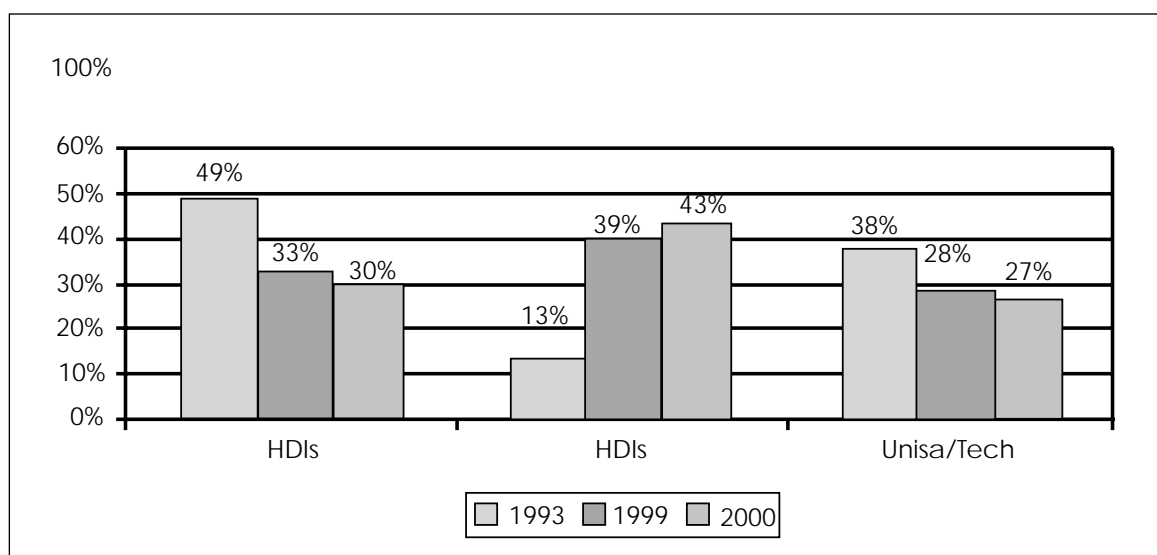
Figure 5: Distribution of African students by historical categories of institution
Source: DoE HEMIS for 2000 and the CHE 1998–1999 Report for the other years.

The redistribution of enrolments among contact and distance institutions is evident in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of head count enrolments among contact and distance institutions

Institution type	Proportion of total enrolment			
	1995	**1997**	**1999**	**2000**
Contact universities	45%	45%	46%	46%
Contact technikons	18%	21%	23%	24%
Distance universities	22%	21%	19%	20%
Distance technikons	15%	13%	12%	10%
Total	**569 000**	**596 000**	**564 000**	**585 000**

There has been a steady decline in the proportion of enrolments at Technikon SA since 1995, and a less pronounced one at UNISA. This has been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of students at contact technikons. These figures, however, obscure the increases in distance education student enrolments at the contact institutions.

Returning to the distribution by 'race', Table 2 below shows that African enrolments in 2000 were more heavily concentrated in technikons (73%) than in universities (53%). Conversely, a greater proportion of white students was found in the universities than at technikons (34% compared to 17%). This was also the case with Indian students (8% compared to 4%). Coloured students were evenly distributed among universities and technikons.

African students continued to form a far higher proportion of total enrolments at HDUs (88%) and HDTs (86%) than at HAUs (44%). However, it is significant that by 2000, white students were in the minority at the HAUs (44%) and UNISA (38%), and formed less than a quarter (23%) of enrolments at HATs. Correspondingly, African students formed higher proportions at HATs (68%) and Technikon SA (71%).

Notwithstanding the dramatic 'Africanisation' of the HAUs and especially the HATs, it should be noted that African student enrolments tend to be concentrated in fields in which and levels at which they were previously enrolled at HDUs. As with gender, though there has been a dramatic overall redistribution of

African students, past trends continue to persist when it comes to the concentration of African students in particular fields and disciplines, and at particular levels of study.

Table 2: Distribution of head count enrolments by historical categories of institutions, 2000

Institution type	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
HDU	88%	6%	5%	1%	100%
HAU	44%	4%	7%	44%	100%
UNISA	46%	5%	11%	38%	100%
Total	**53%**	**5%**	**8%**	**34%**	**100%**
HDT	86%	7%	6%	1%	100%
HAT	68%	6%	3%	23%	100%
TSA	71%	7%	4%	18%	100%
Total	**73%**	**6%**	**4%**	**17%**	**100%**

Source: DoE HEMIS for 2000.

Enrolments by academic programmes

A key target of the *National Plan* is to reshape the distribution of enrolments by fields of study in order to meet human resource requirements. To this end, the *National Plan* aims to shift the ratio of humanities, business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology (SET) enrolments from the 1999 ratio of 49:26:25 to 40:30:30 respectively. Provisional indications, which are reflected in Figure 6 below, are encouraging. In 2000, the ratio had already reached 46:28:26, with a decline in humanities enrolments from 277 000 to 263 000, and a corresponding rise in both business and commerce (from 146 000 to 164 000) and SET (from 140 000 to 153 000). As mentioned in the CHE 1998–1999 Annual Report, it remains an open question whether these continued shifts are the result of student perceptions that it may be harder to find employment with humanities qualifications, or of institutional initiatives to encourage SET enrolments, or both.
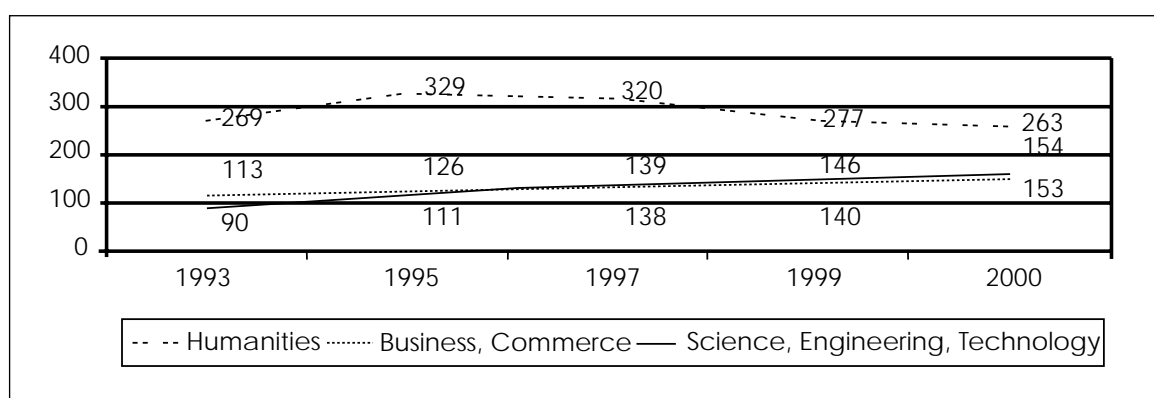
Figure 6: Head count enrolments by field of specialisation (thousands)
Source: CHE 1998–1999 Report and SAPSE 2000 Table 2.12.

3. The higher education labour force

The HE workplace is characterised by the same combination of continuity and change that is evident in the system as a whole. Certain shifts have occurred in response to government's *Employment Equity Act*, because of institutional policies and in anticipation of future policy — mainly in relation to the *National Plan*. The

policy goals of staff development and capacity-building have been incorporated into institutional three-year rolling plans but, detached as these are from the funding lever, have remained largely symbolic or been governed by institutional conditions and initiatives.

Changes have been more evident in the HDIs, with some growth in the numbers of African academics and executive managers. In stark contrast with the extensive enrolment of black students in the HAIs, there has been little deracialisation of staff composition at these institutions, especially in the academic and executive management categories. The reason for this needs investigation.

Policy initiatives related to the composition of staff are directed mainly at equity, effectiveness and efficiency goals. The proposals on institutional restructuring that will emanate from the National Working Group will undoubtedly have a major impact on the staff complement of affected institutions and inevitably generate staff anxieties and insecurities. Certain staff movements — from HDIs to HAIs, and from the HE system to government and the private sector — have no doubt occurred in anticipation of changes in the institutional landscape.

The other main policy lever for effecting staff changes is the phased promulgation of the *Employment Equity Act* and the principle of affirmative action which underlies it. This provides a comprehensive planning framework for pursuing staff equity. In anticipation of the *Act* and driven by genuine equity concerns, institutional recruitment, selection, retention and staff development policies and strategies have to varying degrees been developed and implemented. At this stage, however, it is not possible to assess whether any significant progress has been achieved. With effective monitoring and evaluation of institutional plans, progress (or lack thereof) will become clearer in the next few years.

Initial observations of the process of developing and submitting institutional employment equity plans give some cause for concern. In terms of the *Act*, institutions were required to develop staff profiles to determine the degree to which blacks, women and people with disabilities are under-represented in different occupational categories and at various levels of staff. Through an internal analysis, institutions were also required to identify the institutional barriers for these groups, both in relation to accessing employment opportunities and enjoying equal opportunities for retention and advancement. This includes examining the nature of existing employment policies, as well as attitudes, practices and perceptions among staff that shape the institution's organisational culture and environment. This review was expected to inform the development of a comprehensive plan that included the setting of quantitative equity targets as well as generating organisational processes and practices that would address the barriers to staff equity.

The requirements of the *Act* provided significant challenges to institutions. At a quantitative level, the profiling exercise highlighted the discrepancies between the occupational categories and levels in the SAPSE system and in the Department of Labour (DoL). This created enormous difficulties in capturing and recording data. While quantitative profiles are important in identifying continued inequalities in staff composition, the qualitative analysis of institutional conditions, practices and barriers is vital to inform effective planning for change. There is some evidence that institutions may have shaped their plans simply to comply with the minimum requirements of the *Act*, rather than by the specifics of rigorous institutional analysis, with the outcome being a numerical target-driven approach. Without addressing institutional cultures and practices in which barriers to advancement are embedded, formal access to blacks, women and people with disabilities may be broadened, but the advancement, retention and success of these groups could be jeopardised and limited.

These observations are preliminary. As institutions continue their ongoing reporting to the DoL around progress made and problems experienced, the value of the plans or their limitations will become clearer. Similarly, the extent to which they will provide the institutions with sound strategies to contribute to the changes sought by the *National Plan* remains to be seen.

Globalisation and the need for increasing revenues from non-government sources and for greater efficiency are also impacting on the HE workplace at the organisational and epistemological levels. Cost-cutting measures such as the outsourcing of 'non-core' service functions and retrenchments of academic, administrative and other support staff are restructuring the academic workforce. The statistical overview below bears this out.

Academics are increasingly functioning as 'knowledge workers' or 'entrepreneurial scientists'. A number of academics, with the support and encouragement of institutions, work as consultants and take on commissioned work alongside their normal scholarly activities. A number of academics employed by public

institutions also teach and supervise students at private institutions. Institutional policies and regulations are clearly required in this regard and various institutions have sought to develop these.

Various institutions have seen the emergence of tensions between a traditional collegiate academic culture and a new, more market-oriented managerial culture. There is a feeling among academics that the legitimate powers of senates and academic boards of institutions are being eroded, and that decision-making has become increasingly non-participatory. The implications of a more managerial and market-oriented approach to HE institutions and the implications of this for academic work and academic freedom require careful observation.

Statistical overview of staff in higher education

The HE labour force (academics, administrators and support personnel) at public universities and technikons is made up of approximately 45 000 staff. Despite the restructuring of the workforce at some institutions, this figure has remained fairly constant, dropping by about 1 000 only between 1994 and 1999. However, some reshaping of the HE labour force is evident within the various personnel categories and in the 'race' and gender composition of staff within certain institutional types.
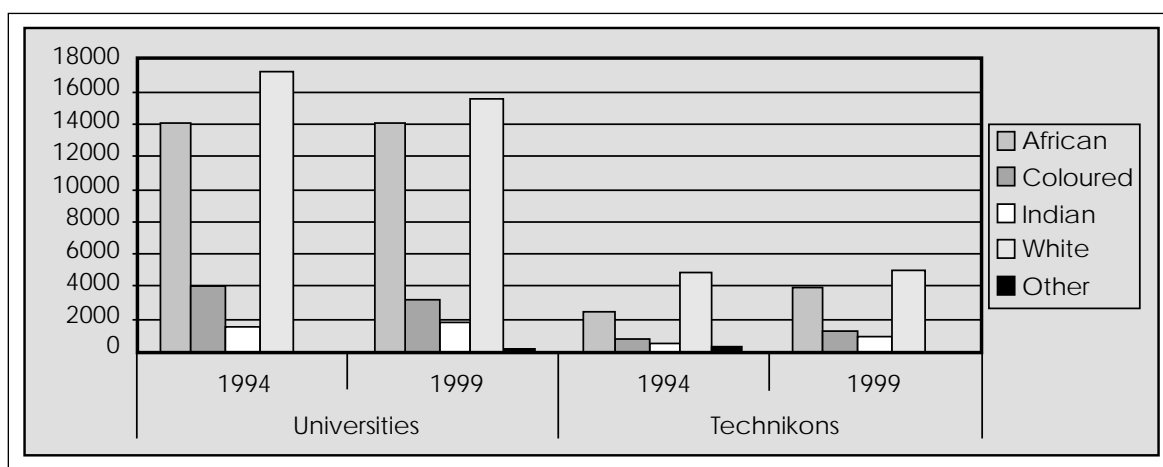
Figure 7: The higher education workforce by 'race', 1994 and 1999

Table 3: University and technikon staff by 'race' and gender, 1994 and 1999

Institution	Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Other	Total	Women
Universities	1994	39%	10%	4%	47%	0%	100% 36 475	41%
	1999	39%	9%	5%	47%	0%	100% 33 320	45%
Technikons	1994	28%	8%	6%	55%	2%	100% 8 725	45%
	1999	36%	10%	8%	46%	0%	100% 10 714	47%

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, the data in this table and in subsequent tables and figures is derived from the 1994, 1996, 1998 and 1999 SAPSE Table 3.3.
Note: Due to the unavailability of data, 1994 figures for the Universities of North-West, Transkei and Venda, as well as for the North-West, Border and Eastern Cape Technikons, are derived from the 1996 SAPSE Table 3.3.; 1999 figures for the Universities of the Western Cape and Natal are derived from 1998 SAPSE Table 3.3.

In terms of racial and gender composition, the overall HE workforce has remained virtually unchanged between 1994 and 1999. Regarding 'race', the African proportion of total staff rose minimally from 37% to 38%, that of Indians rose from 5% to 6%, while that of whites declined marginally from 49% to 47%. The coloured proportion remained the same at 10%. White staff, therefore, still predominate within the HE labour force.

Figure 7 and Table 3 show that the overall number of **university** staff declined by about 3 000 over the five-year period — a slight contraction in size — while the racial composition of staff remained virtually unchanged. Technikon staff numbers, by contrast, increased by about 2 000, and show a partially reshaped race profile, with the African proportion rising from 28% to 36% and that of whites declining from 55% to 46%. Regarding gender, males continue to dominate, although the male-female ratio shifted from 59:41 in 1994 to 55:45 in 1999 in universities, and from 55:45 to 53:47 in technikons, over this period.

Professional and non-professional employment categories by race and gender

Stark racial and gender disparities within the various occupational levels and categories emerge clearly when the overall figures are disaggregated.

Category	Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total	% Women
Professional	1994	12%	4%	4%	80%	17 042 100%	34%
	1999	18%	4%	6%	72%	18 155 100%	38%
Non-professional	1994	52%	14%	6%	30%	28 158 100%	47%
	1999	52%	13%	6%	29%	25 879 100%	51%

Table 4: Professional and non-professional staff by 'race' and gender, 1994 and 1999

Note: 299 staff categorised as 'other' are not shown but are included in the total.

In 1994, as Table 4 shows, 80% of professional staff were white and 12% African. By 1999, the white proportion had dropped to 72% with that of Africans rising to 18%. This reflected a rapid increase in technikons from 7% to 17%. Conversely, the majority of non-professional staff were Africans (52%), with whites comprising less than a third. These proportions changed very little between 1994 and 1999. Women remained under-represented among professional staff, despite an increase in their proportion from 34% to 38%. Among non-professionals, women were in the majority by 1999 (51% up from 47% in 1994).

Overall, the vast majority of African staff — 81% in 1999 — were heavily concentrated in the non-professional category, as opposed to whites (only 36%). Conversely, 64% of whites were employed in the professional category, and only 19% of Africans. A noteworthy trend is the decline in absolute numbers of non-professionals, which on closer examination can be traced to the universities, where a decrease of 3 278 occurred. This is clearly the effect of restructuring and the outsourcing of service functions. By contrast, technikons showed a slight increase in both the professional and non-professional categories. This is not unexpected, given the steady rise in student enrolments and, possibly, efforts to build personnel capacity in areas which were previously neglected as a result of the dual impact of the binary system and apartheid funding.

Changes in personnel categories

As a result of fiscal constraints and a drive towards greater efficiency, a partial reshaping of the higher education workforce has occurred.

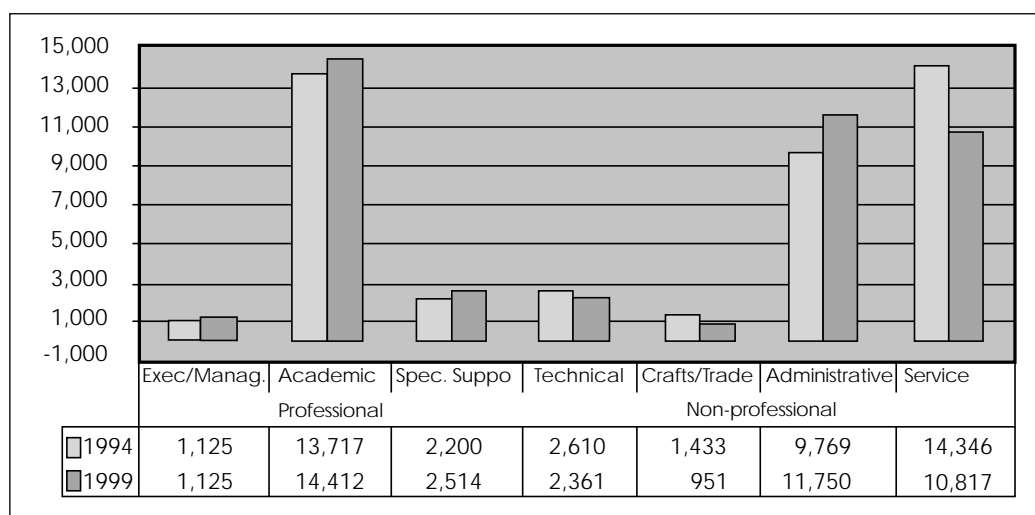|	Exec/Manag.	Academic	Spec. Suppo	Technical	Crafts/Trade	Administrative	Service
		Professional			Non-professional		
1994	1,125	13,717	2,200	2,610	1,433	9,769	14,346
1999	1,125	14,412	2,514	2,361	951	11,750	10,817

Figure 8: The higher education workforce by personnel category, 1994 and 1999

Figure 8 indicates declines in the number of technical, crafts/trades and service staff. These were at the universities, where there was a decline in service staff (from around 12 000 to 8 500), and in crafts/trades staff (from around 1 200 to 700). A smaller drop of 249 in the number of technical staff also occurred. In individual instances, such as at the University of Fort Hare, the reported figures indicate a dramatic drop from 979 to 94 service staff. On average, the Afrikaans HAUs reduced service staff by 41%. These changes may reflect the rapid implementation of cost-cutting efficiency measures. On the other hand, the Universities of Venda, Zululand and Durban-Westville actually increased service staff. Technikon staff numbers increased in almost all categories — no doubt the result of steadily expanding enrolments and operations.

The overall number of academic staff increased slightly over the five-year period 1994–1999. The numbers at the HAUs remained fairly constant despite increases in student enrolments, which have largely been in distance education programmes. Presumably there was either internal redistribution of staff, or the distance programmes do not require significant increases in academic staff or the partnerships with private providers mean that staff increases are not required. A forthcoming investigation into distance education programmes at the traditionally contact institutions should shed light on this matter.

There was a 7% increase in academic staff at the historically African universities. This would have been in response to increasing enrolments during the mid-1990s. However, with declining enrolments during 1999–2000 an excess of academics would have arisen in particular fields and disciplines. There was a reduction of about a quarter of executive management staff at the African universities (from 120 to 90 between 1994 and 1999). This could reflect vacancies and a high turnover in this category, given the challenging circumstances facing these institutions.

The table below illustrates the composition of the category of executive management by 'race' and gender.

Table 5: Executive management staff by 'race' and gender, 1994 and 1999

Year	Institution	Type	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total	% Women
1994	Universities	HAU	10 2%	3 1%	6 1%	502 96%	521 100%	14%
		HDU	78 33%	31 13%	12 5%	119 50%	240 100%	14%
	Technikons	HAT	5 2%	2 1%	0 0%	258 97%	265 100%	12%
		HDT	13 14%	38 41%	3 3%	39 42%	93 100%	8%
	Total		106 9%	74 7%	21 2%	918 82%	1 119 100%	13%
1999	Universities	HAU	30 5%	11 2%	11 2%	520 91%	572 100%	22%
		HDU	101 41%	31 13%	29 12%	83 34%	244 100%	15%
	Technikons	HAT	33 11%	14 5%	5 2%	239 82%	291 100%	18%
		HDT	27 22%	44 36%	20 17%	30 25%	121 100%	13%
	Total		191 16%	100 8%	65 5%	872 71%	1 228 100%	19%

Note: 6 staff categorised as 'other' have been omitted from this table.

Improvement in the representation of blacks (from 18% to 29%) and women (from 13% to 19%) in the executive management category is evident during the period 1994–1999. However, overall the executive management category continues to be occupied by whites (especially at the HAIs) and males (more so at HDIs than at HAIs).

The African proportion of executive management staff increased from 9% in 1994 to 16% in 1999, while that of white staff declined from 82% to 71%. Wide variations are, however, evident at the various historical institutional types. At the HAUs, African staff increased by only 20 over 5 years, shifting the proportion from 2% to 5%. Changes in the representation of coloureds and Indians were also minimal. Indeed, while the proportion of white staff at the HAUs declined from 96% to 91%, the actual number increased from 502 to 520. At the HDUs, the African proportion rose from 33% to 41% over the period under review — an increase of 23 staff — while Indian staff numbers rose from 12 to 29 (from 5% to 12%). White staff numbers dropped from 119 (50%) in 1994 to 83 (34%) in 1999.

In the HATs, African numbers rose quite sharply from 5 (2%) to 33 (11%), accompanied by moderate increases in coloured and Indian staff. The number and proportion of white staff declined from 258 (97%) to 239 (82%) over the five-year period. In the HDTs, increases in African, and especially coloured and Indian staff, were evident, though the latter were concentrated at Peninsula Technikon and ML Sultan Technikon respectively. The number and proportion of white staff in these institutions declined from 39 to 30 (25%).

Women continued to be severely under-represented at the executive management level, despite a modest increase from 13% to 19%. Women were most highly represented at the HAUs, where they comprised 22% of the total staff in 1999. Within the HAUs the highest proportion of women was at the English-medium HAUs (34%), followed by UNISA (25%) and the Afrikaans-medium HAUs (15%). The representation of women was lowest at the HDTs (13%) and the HDUs (15%).

Turning to academic staff, Table 6 below illustrates that they continue to be predominantly white. Between 1994 and 1999 the proportion of African academic staff increased from 13% to 18%, while that of white staff decreased from 80% to 73%. The coloured and Indian proportions were virtually unchanged.

HAUs were overwhelmingly staffed by whites, who comprised 90% of academic staff in 1999. The number and proportion of African academics in these institutions almost doubled from a low of 245 (3%) to 429 (6%) during this period. At HDUs, the proportion of African academics (46%) surpassed that of whites (37%) in 1999.

HATs saw a considerable increase in the number and proportion of African academics from a low of 26 (1%) to 171 (7%). The proportion of white staff declined from 97% to 87%, although their overall number increased. Similar shifts occurred at HDTs, where African academics increased from 20% to 34%, with the proportion of whites dropping from 47% to 33%.

Women academics were uniformly under-represented at around a third of the total at all institutional types. Interestingly, they formed the highest proportion, 39%, at HATs.

Table 6: Academic staff by 'race' and gender, 1994 and 1999

Year	Institution	Type	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Total		% Women
1994	Universities	HAU	245	3%	50	1%	117	2%	7 217	95%	7 629	100%	30%
		HDU	1 277	39%	269	8%	305	9%	1 440	44%	3 291	100%	34%
	Technikons	HAT	26	1%	18	1%	19	1%	1 893	97%	1 956	100%	35%
		HDT	159	20%	109	14%	147	19%	361	47%	776	100%	34%
	Total		1 707	13%	446	3%	588	4%	10 911	80%	13 652	100%	32%
1999	Universities	HAU	429	6%	97	1%	191	3%	6 797	90%	7 514	100%	36%
		HDU	1 566	46%	237	7%	331	10%	1 238	37%	3 372	100%	37%
	Technikons	HAT	171	7%	57	2%	68	3%	2 040	87%	2 336	100%	39%
		HDT	390	34%	138	12%	260	22%	376	32%	1 164	100%	37%
	Total		2 556	18%	529	4%	850	6%	10 451	73%	14 386	100%	37%

Note: 91 staff categorised as 'other' have been omitted from this table.

The stark gender disparity is revealed in the figures of academic staff by rank.
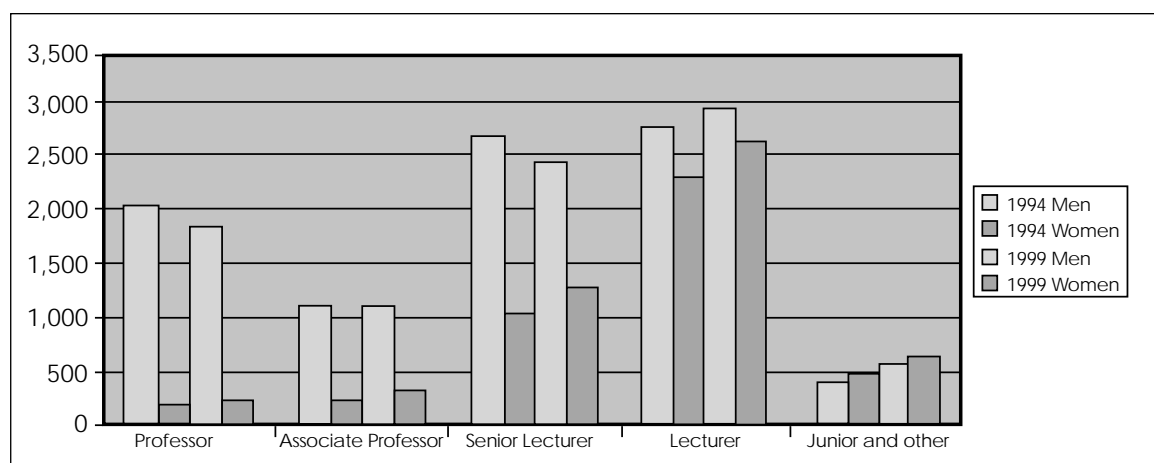
Figure 9: Academic staff by rank and gender, 1994 and 1999

Table 7: Academic staff by rank and gender, 1994 and 1999

Rank	1994		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%
Professor	186	8%	231	11%
Associate Professor	246	18%	331	23%
Senior Lecturer	1 064	28%	1 303	34%
Lecturer	2 366	45%	2 718	48%
Junior and other	480	55%	662	52%
Grand total	**4 342**	**32%**	**5 245**	**36%**

Figure 9 and Table 7 indicate that, while the representation of women academics improved during the period 1994–1998, women continued to be severely under-represented at the higher ranks, constituting only 11% of professors, 23% of associate professors, and 34% of lecturers in 1999. At the lecturer level, they were almost equal in number, while they were heavily concentrated at the junior levels where they were in the majority.

There was some, but not wide, variation in this pattern among and within the university and technikon sectors. UNISA reflected a higher proportion of women professors. There was also a greater proportion of women professors at technikons (19%) than at universities (11%) in 1999. However, the available figures indicate a drop in the absolute number of women technikon professors between 1994 and 1999.

SECTION 3

RESPONSIVENESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO SOCIETAL INTERESTS AND NEEDS

The *White Paper* on HE identifies the various, and indeed diverse, **social purposes** that HE must serve:

❖ Giving attention to the pressing local, regional and national needs of the South African society and to the problems and challenges of the broader African context.

❖ The mobilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society.

❖ Laying the foundations of a critical civil society, with a culture of public debate and tolerance which accommodates differences and competing interests.

❖ The training and provision of human resources to strengthen this country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professionals and knowledge workers with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation.

❖ The production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: … a well-organised, vibrant research and development system which integrates the research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction.

The *White Paper* elaborates on this theme by charging HE with the following specific responsibilities:

❖ To meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives.

❖ To address the development needs of society and provide the labour market, in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy. Higher education teaches and trains people to fulfil specialised social functions, enter the learned professions, or pursue vocations in administration, trade, industry, science and technology and the arts.

❖ To contribute to the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens. Higher education encourages the development of a reflective capacity and a willingness to review and renew prevailing ideas, policies and practices based on a commitment to the common good.

❖ To contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge. Higher education engages in the pursuit of academic scholarship and intellectual inquiry in all fields of human understanding, through research, learning and teaching.

In relation specifically to learning, teaching, research and community service, the following systemic goals for HE are set out by the *White Paper*:

❖ To improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the system and, in particular to ensure that curricula are responsive to the national and regional context.

❖ To promote the development of a flexible learning system, including distance education and resource-based learning based on open learning principles.

❖ To secure and advance high-level research capacity which can ensure both the continuation of self-initiated, open-ended intellectual inquiry, and the sustained application of research activities to technological improvement and social development.

❖ To promote and develop social responsibility and awareness among students of the role of higher education in social and economic development through community service programmes.

❖ To produce graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning, including critical, analytical, problem-solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and ideas.

This section focuses on developments with regard to the above through examining issues related to human resource development, learning and teaching, research and community service.

HE institutions have to differing degrees and in different ways taken up the call to be responsive and to contribute to equity and the economic and social development needs of the country. There have been efforts to increase enrolments in HE, both generally and through work on specific initiatives such as Recognition of Prior Learning. Attention has been given to extending the participation of blacks and women as academics and managers and administrators. There has been extensive restructuring of qualifications and programmes to make curricula more congruent with the knowledge and skills needs of a changing economy, the labour market and the world of work. There is a greater consciousness of the need to forge HE-industry partnerships and there have been a number of successes in this regard. The CHE itself has established a large project to facilitate the building of strong relationships between HE and the public and private sectors around South Africa's high-level human resources and knowledge needs.

At the same time, it is necessary to signal concern about the *White Paper's* notion of responsiveness and that which seems to have emerged since and continues to be emphasised today. The *White Paper*, clearly, advances an extensive, broad and 'thick' notion of the social responsiveness of HE. Policy implementation however, sometimes unfolds independently from actual policy intentions. Social actors read either too little or too much into policies and principles, and polices become loosely coupled to practices. Endogenous and exogenous forces also inevitably mediate good policy intentions.

Developments in recent years suggest that 'social responsiveness in the discourse on higher education transformation is being thinned down and reduced to the terms of market responsiveness' (*Kagisano*, the new CHE Discussion Series publication). Further, 'the traditional knowledge responsibilities of universities (research as the production of new knowledge, teaching as the dissemination of knowledge, and community service as the applied use of knowledge for social development) are increasingly being located within the demands of economic productivity and its requirements for particular kinds of knowledge and skills' (*Kagisano*). The danger, of course, is that the 'the notion of responsiveness (could become) emptied of most of its content except for that which advances individual, organisational or national economic competitiveness' (*Kagisano*).

HE is, of course, crucial for the production of skilled and trained human resources and for the production of knowledge for economic growth and development. However, the function of HE cannot be reduced to the production of graduates and/or research related to the needs of the labour market and business alone. The consequences of such a one-dimensional approach to HE responsiveness could be greatly impoverishing for the broader social role of HE. The responsiveness of HE to the general and specific needs of the economy can only be a subset of a more complex and multi-faceted notion of responsiveness. It is vital that, in a country like South Africa, where HE transformation is part of a larger process of democratic reconstruction, social responsiveness is not entirely subsumed to economic responsiveness.

This is recognised, if not always in practical application, to differing degrees by the human resource development (HRD) initiatives of government, to which the report now turns.

1. Human resource development and labour market needs

Recent studies (for example Pillay, 2000) confirm the recent labour market trends highlighted in the 1998–1999 CHE report. In the formal sector, employment increased by 18.6% between 1970 and 1995, from about 7.5 million employees to 8.9 million. This means that, over that period, the labour absorptive capacity of the formal economy was inadequate in providing jobs for new entrants. This is reflected in the growing numbers of the unemployed: from about 570 000 in 1970 to about 4 million in 1995. Significant losses in employment occurred in the agriculture and mining sectors while gains were experienced in the other main sectors over that period.

Among the other important structural shifts in the period 1970–1995 between and within economic sectors were the following:

❖ Dependence on the primary sectors declined consistently with a simultaneous growth in the services sector.

❖ The largest increases occurred in the professional (312%), managerial (272%) and transport (173%) occupations in each of the primary, secondary and service sectors, while the largest decrease occurred in farming occupations (-54%).

❖ In terms of race and gender, gains were evident but with differential impact on the four race groups. The employment of non-Africans increased at a rate of between 48% and 108% while formal employment of African workers remained constant through this period, due to high losses in the primary sectors. African employment gains were registered in the service sectors, with the largest increase being in the wholesale and retail sector (156%) and in finance (450%). Female employment increased at a greater rate than that of males, due to increases in the service sectors.

❖ Unskilled and semi-skilled employment declined significantly relative to skilled workers, in particular to professional, managerial and technical occupations. This shift has resulted mainly from technological changes.

❖ According to the *National Plan*, the demand for workers with no education declined by as much as 79%. The decline for those with primary schooling only was 24%, while the demand for workers with tertiary qualifications increased by as much as 2 028% (Ministry of Education, 2001:17).

Despite significant increases in the proportion of highly skilled employees since 1973, South Africa has half the number of professionals of other countries with similar economic profiles. Overall, the skills profile indicates a shortage of high-level skills, especially in management, engineering, medicine, mathematics, bio- and information statistics and information technology. Recent investigations by Statistics South Africa (SSA) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) suggest strong future demands in management sciences, mathematics, information technology, the natural sciences and other high-skill areas. In addition, government is experiencing a shortage of skilled employees in the public service. One quarter of teachers remain under-qualified.

In each of these fields, it is estimated that we need to treble our current number of graduates in order to satisfy labour market demands. Estimates indicate a shortage of 300 000 skilled people in the managerial and technical sectors, and between 25 000 and 50 000 in information technology. This is in line with continued growth in the retail and service sectors of the economy. These numbers are likely to grow further due to the anticipated long-term impact of HIV/Aids.

Similar shortages also exist in other countries whose active recruitment strategies are responsible for the loss of high-level skills, especially to Australia, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands. In addition, many South Africans take advantage of short-term job opportunities in Britain, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other developing countries that recruit social service workers. Collectively, this has obscured the difficulties graduates experience in finding employment locally and has contributed to the overall loss of crucial skills.

It is against this backdrop that the HRD policy interventions discussed below must be viewed.

1.1 The National Human Resource Development Strategy

The case for the strategy is argued on the basis of its importance for advancing the imperatives of the *Constitution,* according to which 'everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected'. Its purpose is to provide 'a plan to ensure that people are equipped to participate fully in society, to be able to find or create work, and to benefit fairly from it' (Ministries of Education and Labour, 2001:5).

The *National HRD Strategy* argues that in South Africa there are many causes for persistent poverty and unemployment. These causes go beyond the question of 'capabilities' and stem from 'the unequal distribution of productive assets in our society'. Consequently, the strategy should be to enhance the 'specific abilities of all citizens within the overall economic, employment and social development programmes of the state. To realise their potential citizens need knowledge, skills and democratic values, and they also need opportunities in which to apply them' (Ministries of Education and Labour, 2001:5).

The *Strategy* has five specific objectives, including 'improving the foundations of human development' — a series of measures directed at early childhood development, literacy and adult education, universal general education, examination pass rates, and maths and science performance in the schooling system.

Of importance, the second strategic objective of the HRD strategy is directed specifically at developing high-quality skills 'which are more responsive to societal and economic need'. This plank of the strategy is specifically directed at strengthening the fields of science, engineering and technology; higher rates of participation in higher and further education; the distribution of students between disciplinary areas of learning in various programmes and careers; the recruitment of foreign skilled workers and placement issues. There are high expectations of the responsiveness of the HE system to these objectives. The *Strategy* refers to a number of indicators and institutional planning and development strategies to deal with these issues.

Strategic objective 4 is directed at the 'growth of employment through industrial policies, innovation, research and development', the indicators for which are expenditure on R&D and science-industry partnerships to enhance employment. This has obvious implications for HE.

In a recent article, the Minister of Education and a co-author comment on the function of HE institutions relative to innovation, extending its interpretation beyond a narrow technical definition. According to them:

> Formal institutions of learning are not at the dramatic forefront of industrial innovation today, nor have they, some notable exceptions aside, been so in the past. But they have played an immeasurably great role in the accumulation of understanding and stimulation of intellectual curiosity that is the fertile breeding ground of new ideas. And they will play an immeasurably great role in digesting, simplifying, popularising and extending knowledge that may presently be the preserve of a few, so that its benefits may be broadly enjoyed. (Asmal & Kahn, 2000:131)

They argue further that 'participation in the global economy requires the abilities constantly to renew economic and social systems, to extend knowledge and specialist skills, and effectively to engage in knowledge production and transfer' (Asmal & Kahn, 2000:135).

1.2 The National Skills Development Strategy

The *National HRD Strategy* resonates with the objectives of the *National Skills Development Strategy* (*NSDS*) (DoL, 2000), part of whose objectives are similarly directed at the development of high-level skills for the formal economy. This strategy lays the legislative and institutional framework for the development of skills, their accreditation, for funding and for the establishment of a society of continuous learning.

The *Skills Development Act* provides the 'legal underpinnings' to support the *NSDS* and 'seeks to establish a high quality skills development system that is cost-effective and accountable; meets skills needs; and promotes employment generation and economic growth' (DoL, 2000:2).

The *Act* establishes a National Skills Authority to monitor the development of the strategy and implementation of the *NSDS*. The procedures to plan and execute the strategy are germane to the work of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), of which 25 have been formed to date. The provinces share some responsibility in that they are responsible for interventions through social development and micro-enterprise programmes.

According to the DoL there are several reasons which justify the *NSDS*. These include 'the structural rigidities and inequalities inherited from the apartheid era', the dual 'challenges of social development' and global competitiveness, and the need to transform the labour force from a low skills base to 'one that is

committed to high quality life-long learning'. Other reasons are 'making the labour market more responsive' and to 'improve the employability of the country's workforce'.

The *NSDS* has identified five objectives, which are to be achieved within a given time-frame:

❖ Developing a culture of high quality life-long learning. This objective is directed at level 1 qualifications on the NQF and seeks to achieve particular outcomes by March 2005.

❖ Fostering skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth. Here the emphasis is on the development and measurement of productivity through skills development grants to enterprises of different sizes. In addition, it seeks to develop learnerships in every sector of the economy and to ensure that government departments 'assess and report on budgeted expenditure on skills development'.

❖ Stimulating and supporting skills development in small businesses. This requires at least 20% of new and existing small enterprises to be supported in respect of their skills development initiatives and the measurement of the impact of such support.

❖ Promoting skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives. This objective is directed at expenditure of the National Skills Fund on viable development projects, and the measurement of its impact.

❖ Assisting new entrants into employment. This objective seeks to ensure that 'a minimum of 80 000 people under the age of 30 have entered learnerships' by March 2005 and is also directed at seeking employment or further learning opportunities for such persons.

These important goals and far-reaching interventions will require the development of much greater capacity than presently exists. In addition, they will provide specific challenges to which the HE system must be able to respond.

1.3 The Framework Document of the Department of Trade and Industry

The *Framework Document* of the Department of Trade and Industry observes that South Africa's skills base is 'far too limited' and 'too narrowly based'. It is highly skewed both by race and gender and is being denuded by the 'brain drain', especially as a result of the recruiting practices of industrialised countries. The *Framework Document* considers knowledge-driven activities as a key to the industrial strategy of the country. It indicates that studies in a wide variety of other sectors have identified knowledge-driven activities, such as innovation and marketing intelligence, as the prerequisite for further development. The *Framework Document* argues that knowledge-driven activities are critical to secure a competitive edge, even in sectors that are generally labour intensive. In deep-level mining, for example, 'knowledge-driven activities such as exploration, construction management and finance and other activities can … deepen our comparative advantage even in areas where we have traditionally been strong, such as raw material extraction'.

1.4 The role of higher education

In the *National Plan*, HRD and labour market trends are regarded as important to social and economic development in a knowledge-driven world. The case for expanding HE provision is argued on the basis of the structural changes in the South African economy and shifts in the labour market over the past three decades that are outlined above. According to the *National Plan*, these shifts signify the endemic shortage of high-level professional and managerial skills. Particular shortages are noted in the science and economics-based fields. It is anticipated that these skills will continue to be in short supply in the coming years.

A key issue in making HE more responsive to economic needs is the accuracy of projecting labour market trends. Especially in the absence of any analytical data on the effects of HIV/Aids on the high-skills labour market, the *National Plan* is cautious about the reliability of employer forecasts as an indicator of long-term labour market trends. Nonetheless, it argues that:

> The accuracy of the projections of the demand for labour is less important than the indicative tends that they suggest. The projections and trends provide a framework within which to assess whether the higher

education system is geared to the task of supplying the human resource requirements of the country. (Ministry of Education, 2001:18)

The *National Plan* expresses concern that enrolment trends and graduation rates suggest that the HE system is not meeting the human resource needs and that this is likely to impede economic development. It points to 'international evidence which suggests that there is a correlation between economic development and the level of participation in higher education' (Ministry of Education, 2001:21). It argues that South Africa's 15% participation rate is well below that of comparative middle-income countries.

The *National Plan* proposes increased access to HE and an increased participation rate target of 20%. It also aims at shifting the balance between the humanities, business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology to a greater proportion of students registered in the last two broad groups. There is thus a correspondence between the *Plan* and the *National HRD Strategy*, which also seeks to strengthen participation in the fields of science, engineering and technology. However, while enhancing access is important, it is also crucial, as the *National Plan* recognises, to improve current retention rates. This means dealing systematically with problems of students' lack of preparedness for HE (academic development initiatives), improving the capacities of academics (staff capacity development) and exploring new curricular and pedagogic approaches.

All the documents emanating from the Ministries of Education, Labour and Trade and Industry express concern around the shortage of high-level skills in the South African labour market. There are two dimensions to this skills shortage. On the one hand, there is a structural skills shortage due to the small intake of students in the fields mentioned above. On the other, is the inadequacy of new and existing employed graduates to respond to the demands of the new economy. In relation to the latter, government, the public service and the private sector are increasingly questioning the quality of recruits from universities and technikons, the nature and appropriateness of their qualifications and training, and the international competitiveness of graduates in some fields. While efforts at curriculum innovation are aimed at meeting the needs and expectations of employers, it is clear that not enough is known about employers' needs and that, in many cases, they themselves are not entirely clear about short- and long-term workplace needs.

Analysis of labour market demand that focuses on quantitative issues alone is inadequate. It is also insufficient to focus on the 'mismatch' between education and the requirements of the market. A key issue is the changing nature of the jobs held by HE graduates today — that is, the differences in the nature and characteristics of jobs rather than the characteristics of the workers in those jobs. No longitudinal studies of the South African labour market exist that show the changes in the skills demand of specific occupations in the context of globalisation and a transforming society and workplace. With reference to HRD strategy and a HE response to labour market needs, what is important to investigate is what are the knowledge, skills, competencies, capacities and attitudes required by the South African economy and society generally and by the different constituent parts specifically.

Graduate employment rates vary by field, gender, race, age and region. While graduate unemployment rates remain low compared with that of non-graduates, graduates continue to struggle to find employment in fields such as education and law. Time to employment for graduates without working experience remains long, especially in social and public service fields, and especially for graduates from HDIs. Faced with student debts, some graduates enter professions for which they did not train, others work in jobs for which they are overqualified, others change fields of study or study further to avoid unemployment spells or opt to work overseas. Clearly, graduate unemployment is related to the weak labour absorptive capacity of the formal economy. However, a number of measures could over time help reduce graduate unemployment rates. These include widespread curriculum restructuring and the greater alignment of programmes to meet emerging labour market needs; distance education programmes that enable students to combine work and study; the growing range of more generic 'pre-service' programmes aimed at improving student employability, and 'in-service' programmes to enhance the knowledge and skills of mid-career professionals.

Achievement of HRD policies will require the development of meaningful partnerships between the private and public sector employer and employee organisations and HE. The importance of specifically HE-business partnerships is captured in the view that the legacy left to future generations 'will depend far more on how we extend technical progress through our institutions of learning, how we build bridges between innovative business enterprises and colleges and academics, than on the particular success of our "new economy" stocks' (Asmal & Kahn, 2000:132). In the view of these authors, 'a vibrant higher education system, socially responsive, in close contact with industry, and able to produce top quality graduates is essential' (Asmal & Kahn, 2000:135).

The greater responsiveness of HE will entail:

❖ HE institutions proactively identifying the learning needs of the private and public sectors and, where necessary, re-organising curricula to match the desired outputs.

❖ The mode of delivery of HE programmes becoming dynamic, flexible and responsive to the demands of particular enterprises and sectors, while ensuring a high level of conceptual and intellectual coherence and quality.

❖ Mechanisms for significant components of workplace in-service learning and structured internships at all qualification levels, and also the improvement of the portability of qualifications.

❖ The assessment and recognition of prior learning and experience becoming embedded in the policies and practices of HE institutions to enhance access for workplace and adult learners.

Finally, to return to an issue raised earlier, it is crucial that HE guards against becoming responsive in only a narrow economic and individualistic sense. This could pose the risk of an unwitting crude separation between 'training' and 'education', and come to underlie a social stratification of 'doers' and 'thinkers/doers'. This would undermine the spirit of all the HRD documents discussed earlier as well as the *White Paper* on HE. The CHE Size and Shape report is important here:

> Higher education, and public higher education especially, has immense potential to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and social justice, and the growth and development of the economy, despite the problems and the challenges it faces. These contributions are complementary. The enhancement of democracy lays the basis for greater participation in economic and social life more generally. Higher levels of employment and work contribute to political and social stability and the capacity of citizens to exercise and enforce democratic rights and participate effectively in decision-making. The overall well-being of nations is vitally dependent on the contribution of higher education to the social, cultural, political, and economic development of its citizens. (CHE, 2000:25)

The report notes further:

The role of higher education is to develop greater complementarity between the economic and humanising goals of society. Both these goals are of critical importance to the survival and sustainability of nations, to their ability to participate effectively in a competitive global arena and to meet the needs of citizens. (CHE, 2000:26)

2. Curriculum, learning and teaching

Curriculum restructuring began following the report of the NCHE, which had deliberated about the impact of globalisation on an emerging country. The thinking of the NCHE found its way into the policy documents that emerged and also informed the understanding of many academics about the form that curriculum change should take. In relation to HE specifically, globalisation was expected to result in massification, institutional transformation, and profound shifts in research, curriculum construction and teaching. Massification was expected to result in large numbers of previously excluded youth and adults entering HE institutions. Shifts in institutional arrangements were expected to result in greater efficiency and accountability with less emphasis on academic departments and a greater emphasis on flexible teaching teams.

Globalisation was also expected to result increasingly in a shift in knowledge production, from Mode 1 (largely discipline-based, and located predominantly within universities) to Mode 2 (interdisciplinary research, conducted by teams of researchers based inside, and increasingly outside, universities). The proponents of Mode 2 knowledge production regard it to be more appropriate than Mode 1 for solving contemporary technological, cultural and social problems in the 'information society'. It is also regarded as particularly relevant to addressing the economic and social development problems of developing countries such as South Africa. In this view, HE institutions have a particular responsibility to adopt problem-solving curricula and to undertake the organisational arrangements to support Mode 2 knowledge production (see especially Gibbons, 1998).

For many participants in the mid-1990s policy debates, the shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge production implied a shift from discipline-based to interdisciplinary curricula, and a shift in curriculum organisation from an emphasis on courses to credits. Instead of registering for a traditional degree or diploma programme located in a single institution for a specific duration, students would accumulate credits for a qualification from, if necessary, different institutions, and over more flexible time-frames. Modularisation of the curriculum, it was anticipated, would allow for this, and the portability this promoted would enhance equity and efficiency. The NQF was to provide the framework for these arrangements.

The NCHE defined a programme as follows:

The sequential learning activities leading to the award of particular qualifications can be called programmes. These are almost invariably trans-, inter- or multidisciplinary, and can be transinstitutional as well. (All programmes have a broad area of specialisation and it is possible to use wider or narrower definitions of programmes for specific purposes). (NCHE, 1996:84)

Following the NCHE report, an academic programme came to be associated largely with the following core features:

❖ Interdisciplinarity: Programmes would comprise a compulsory core, together with foundational elements and electives.

❖ Relevance or responsiveness: The need to address, to some extent at least, the needs of the economy and civil society.

❖ Efficiency: Institutions were expected to 'niche' themselves around strong programmes, to avoid unnecessary duplication and promote quality.

❖ Portability: Students should be able to move from one institution to another, and accumulate credits towards a qualification over time.

❖ Coherence: Programmes needed to be carefully planned so that different aspects related meaningfully to others.

On the face of it, the definition of an academic programme and its associated descriptors seemed relatively clear. In practice, however, it gave rise to widely diverse sets of interpretations and to confusion between and within universities and technikons.

How did universities and technikons engage with curriculum restructuring in terms of programmes? In discussing this issue a number of contextual features must be borne in mind. First, the anticipated massification of HE did not occur, with enrolments dropping after 1997 and institutions increasingly competing for students. Second, under conditions of fiscal constraints, many institutions contracted their permanent staff establishments and retrenched staff. This was accompanied by institutional reorganisation, with faculty and departmental amalgamations occurring at many institutions. Finally, in this context, there were high anxiety levels over jobs. In the minds of many, academic programme restructuring and development was linked to continued funding and even survival. Institutional capacity to take on curriculum reconstruction also varied widely.

Universities responded in different ways to the call for programmes, as did faculties and departments within them. Many professional faculties and departments, such as law, engineering, medicine, social work, pharmacy and journalism were stimulated by the transition to democracy in South Africa to reconsider and reconstruct curriculum offerings. Academic programme planning did not impact on them significantly, as their curriculum offerings were regarded as already 'programmatised'. Humanities, arts, social science and science faculties, on the other hand, experienced great difficulties. Much of the difficulty stemmed from the belief that a programme had to be interdisciplinary and related to future graduate employment. Trying to fashion science, social science, arts and humanities undergraduate degrees accordingly proved easier on paper than in practice and, ultimately, for many academics and their students, counter-productive.

Five years on from the NCHE report, a survey of university handbooks of science, social science, arts and humanities faculties indicates that curriculum reconstruction has taken place broadly according to four programme types:

❖ The traditional bachelor's degree, constructed around one or two majors, pre- and co-requisites and a range of electives.

❖ Essentially the same as the above type, but student choice is restricted, both in relation to majors and electives. Students cannot combine majors at will, but are required to follow a limited number of degree paths, which specify the major/s, and to a very large extent, co- and pre-requisites. Subjects are grouped according to academic cognacy (such as in a programme in historical studies) or applied cognacy (development studies). Those science faculties that do not allow students to follow a curriculum of the above type offer this second type.

❖ Similar to the above type, but the vertical sequences tend to be multiple vertical strands rather than single or double majors.

❖ A compulsory core made up of modules drawn from different disciplines — for example economics, geography, sociology and politics, in making up a development studies core. There is sometimes a choice between modules. This is the closest the university sector has come to 'integration' across the curriculum (except for existing areas such as Media Studies that are already established and recognised by many as new disciplines).

It is not possible to map these programme types on to the university sector in such a way as to group institutions according to programme type. There are at least two axes of variation here. One is historical differences between institutions related to differential patterns of resourcing, staffing and student profile (the HAI-HDI divide). The other relates to faculty type. Science faculties across different institutions usually have more in common with each other in curriculum design than they have with their own humanities or arts faculties. It is clear, however, that governance and other problems of capacity to undertake curriculum renewal at some HDUs have meant that curriculum evaluation and restructuring has occurred with more difficulty and more slowly at these institutions.

As in the university sector, there was initial controversy and confusion in the technikon sector over how to define an academic programme in practice. In large measure, though, technikon academics were able to define and adopt academic programmes, initially at least, with the same degree of ease as the professional departments and faculties in universities. Academic programme planning occurred in ways that linked relatively smoothly with established practices of liaising closely with industry and professional bodies over the composition of curricula. The technikon sector has traditionally co-ordinated curriculum development and qualification design across the sector in ways that have facilitated portability. However, the technikon sector has increasingly been troubled by many of the same dilemmas confronting the university sector.

The NCHE proposed academic programmes that promoted interdisciplinarity, responsiveness (or relevance), coherence and portability. To what extent have these objectives been achieved or are they being achieved following five years of curriculum restructuring?

In the university sector there may be less **portability** in the system than before 1996. While modularisation, which should favour portability, has taken place at most institutions, in practice this has been accompanied by fairly tight restrictions on student choice. Compulsory programme cores vary across institutions, being niched according to institutional strengths, thus limiting the possibility of students carrying credits from one institution to another (which they are able to with relative ease with the traditional BA, B Social Science and BSc, as well as professional degrees). In the technikon sector, the control of curriculum and credit allocation of national qualifications in the past enabled smooth articulation across the sector. However, the focus on credit-bearing outcomes, as opposed to credit-bearing subject areas, has opened up the possibility of greater autonomy for individual technikons in designing programmes. Technikons nicheing themselves in this way could limit the potential for students to move from one institution to another.

As indicated, **interdisciplinarity** has been addressed in different ways at different institutions. Universities offering traditional BA, BSc or B Social Science degrees argue that they attend to the need for interdisciplinarity by allowing for a mix of majors and electives. Those universities stressing interdisciplinary programme cores have attempted to organise curricula around a common theme (such as development

studies), drawing on modules from a range of disciplines (economics, sociology, etc.). Research in the area suggests that the overall vertical coherence of many of these programmes has been compromised.

The technikon sector has identified similar problems in relation to its own curriculum design. On some campuses, an attempt has been made to address **interdisciplinarity** (and hence **responsiveness**) through reorganising and integrating the knowledge base of the curriculum to align with the needs of industry. However, existing nationally registered curricula are subject-based, with subjects a mix of traditional and more contemporary disciplines, and constructed in such as way as to lead to specialised knowledge and skills achievement in a particular career field. In many cases, far less integration has been achieved than was previously anticipated. Assessment has remained largely subject-based, with 'integration' occurring largely through experiential training and project work. Modularisation in many technikons, as in many universities, has come to mean little more than the semesterisation of discipline-based subjects.

To achieve greater **responsiveness** or relevance, a number of universities have 'packaged' their undergraduate offerings as programmes, with titles that suggest a relevance to the world of work, such as tourism, translation and heritage studies. The extent to which this has been achieved in practice requires close scrutiny. Efforts to produce curricula that are more relevant and responsive have resulted in two main initiatives. One builds curricula mainly around disciplinary majors, but with less student choice. The other constructs curricula that are made up of modules from different disciplines. In this case, overall cohesion and coherence are very often problematic. In both cases, programmes are given names that suggest a strong orientation to the field of employment

Different players in the HE environment have different conceptions about **coherence**. Coherence for those emphasising traditional BA, BSc and B Social Science degrees is largely an issue of vertical progression. For those emphasising the integration of modules into cores, coherence is defined more laterally. Both the university and technikon sectors have pointed to the danger that attempts to achieve interdisciplinarity, especially in basic science and humanities, result in fragmentation and lack of cohesion of the curriculum.

Comparing offerings in science and humanities faculties at some universities between 1994 and the present would suggest major differences. In some faculties of science and humanities the traditional generic bachelor's degree has disappeared, and has been replaced by more specifically designated programmes. At some universities, specifically designated programmes (apart from those that existed previously like social work, journalism, fine art, etc.) do not exist at all. Other institutions offer combinations of specifically designated programmes and traditional bachelor's degrees. It is possible, though, that differences that exist may be more at the level of form than of content.

The tendency towards eliminating traditional bachelor's degrees and towards what could be a narrow vocationalism is a good example of a 'unilateral' reading of the *White Paper*, aided by the absence of an implementation framework. A DoE comment in this regard confirms this:

> Although not raised in the institutional plans, it became clear in the course of institutional visits that this [the programme-based approach to higher education] has created much confusion and programmes are in danger of being fetishised. The programme-based approach has been interpreted by many institutions to mean (i) that general and formative programmes would no longer be funded; (ii) that to qualify for funding all programmes would have to be linked to vocational outcomes. This has led, in some cases, to an approach to programme development that is narrowly vocationally focused and without disciplinary foundation. The *White Paper* makes no such claims. (DoE, 1998)

In general, however, even though student choice may have become narrower, and domains of knowledge linked together more tightly than before (in the case of specifically designated programmes), the central organising principle of university undergraduate curricula remains overwhelmingly disciplinary.

Both the university and technikon sectors have attempted to meet the challenge of the NCHE to produce relevant, coherent, interdisciplinary programmes. Almost all universities and technikons have been involved in some form of curriculum review and renewal since 1996. Universities and technikons which retained the general structure of their qualifications (such as generic bachelor's degrees in the case of universities) have encouraged re-examination of the content of their provision.

Both universities and technikons have struggled to construct 'interdisciplinary' curricula, and the difficulties encountered by academics in forging curricula on grounds other than on a discipline or subject basis are now more apparent than previously. The most general response has been to retain disciplines or subjects intact. It is difficult to see how this could have been done differently. New fields of enquiry (authentic

versions of interdisciplinarity that give rise to new disciplines) develop gradually over time. There is no evidence that this can be legislated through the construction of undergraduate curricula. Where there have been attempts at interdisciplinarity by combining modules from different subject areas, the results in many cases have been less than successful. It is now probably necessary to concede that the enthusiastic recruitment of the Mode 2 knowledge production discourse into South African HE discourse was too uncritical.

Although there is now a greater awareness that responsiveness to labour market and employment needs cannot be achieved through any simple constructing of interdisciplinary curricula, the pressures towards this could remain. The *National Plan* has no direct implications for curriculum, but rather reasserts the importance of curriculum activity to focus upon issues of throughput and success rates, and quality assurance. Most of its recommendations call for a strengthening of curriculum provision, rather than further restructuring. However, the SAQA processes, especially related to NQF levels and level descriptors, the activities of Standards Generating Bodies and National Standards Bodies, and the completion of registration of qualifications by 2003, remain a challenge. The concerns of HE in this regard are likely to be strongly articulated to the NQF Study Team established by the Ministers of Labour and Education. The CHE has also commissioned a study on the implementation of the NQF in HE for submission to the Minister of Education and for debate and discussion and development of strategies around the coherent and effective implementation of the NQF within HE (see Part Two).

3. Research and knowledge production

The *National Plan restates* a key goal of the *White Paper:*

> To secure and advance high-level research capacity which can ensure both the continuation of self-initiated, open-ended intellectual inquiry, and the sustained application of research activities to technological improvement and social development. (DoE, 1997:1.27)

In relation to this goal, the *National Plan* advances the following strategic objective:

> To sustain current research strengths and to promote the kinds of research and other knowledge outputs required to meet national development needs, and which will enable the country to become competitive in a new global context.

The priorities that are defined with respect to the goal and strategic objective include:

❖ To increase outputs of postgraduates, particularly Master's and doctoral graduates.

❖ To increase research outputs.

❖ To sustain existing research capacity and strengths, and to create new centres of excellence and niche areas in institutions where there is demonstrable research capacity or potential.

❖ To facilitate collaboration and partnerships, especially at the regional level, in research and postgraduate training.

❖ To promote articulation between the different elements of the research system with a view to developing a national research strategy linked to the national system of innovation.

As noted, the new funding framework of the DoE signals the intention to eliminate the research input subsidies in the present SAPSE system's formulae and to fund research-related outputs in the form of Master's and doctoral graduates and research publications as part of block grant allocations. It also seeks to make specific provision for building research capacity as part of earmarked funding. The latter research support will be concentrated in three areas: research capacity development, facilitating research collaboration at regional and national levels, and research student scholarships. The strengths and weaknesses in the proposed new funding framework in giving effect to the research goals, strategic objective and priorities of the DoE were discussed in Section One.

Here, the focus is on two related issues: publication outputs and the current system for measuring research outputs.

Publication outputs

Annually, the DoE calculates research units based on the institutional submissions of publications according to the policy. This data provides some indication of research productivity across the HE sector. Research productivity may be defined as 'the totality of research performed by academics in universities and related contexts within a given time period' (Print & Hattie, 1997:454). Although research productivity as a whole cannot be fully assessed through the use of a single indicator, the use of publications is arguably one of the best indicators since it is a highly prized research outcome across the globe.

The trends revealed through an analysis of the publication counts over the past years serve as one input into the question of the future funding of research.
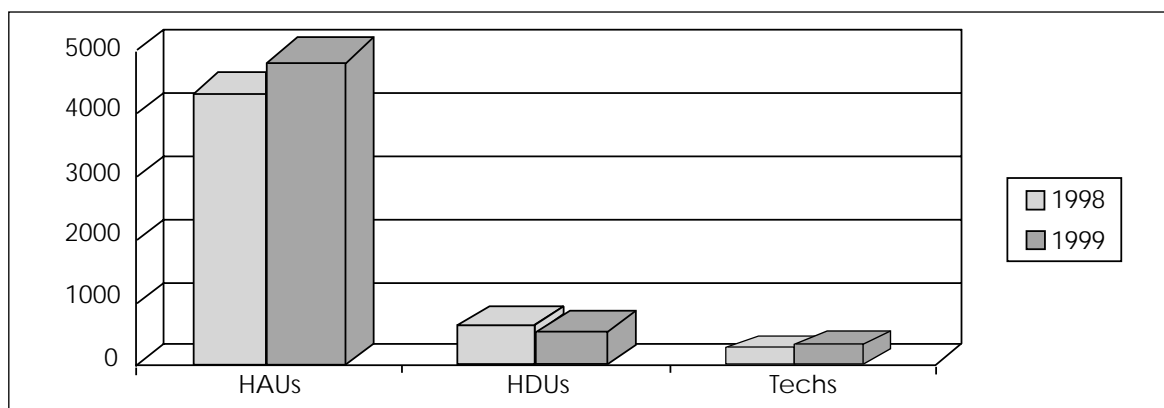

Figure 1: Total research output, 1996–1999
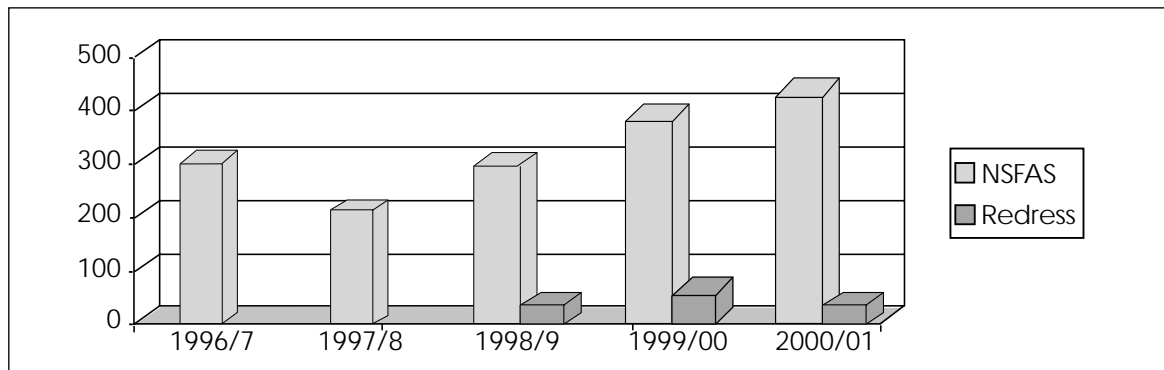
Figure 2: Research output by institutional type, 1998–999

The data reveals some fluctuation from year to year, but no overall increase in the total research output. Instead, there has been a decrease in recent years. In the reporting year 1998 the total output expressed in units was 5151.57; in 1999 this declined to 5071.86. While the decrease may appear to be nominal, it is a matter of concern when it is seen as part of a general downward curve from 1996 to date.

Analysed by institutional type, the contribution by universities compared to technikons is significantly dominant. In the 1999 reporting year, the research output of the universities as a whole comprised 96.57% of the total, with technikons contributing 3.43%. However, from 1998 to 1999 the technikon contribution increased slightly from 2.57% to 3.43%.

The research output of the universities may be further analysed by institutional type. In the 1998 reporting year, the HAUs contributed 85.36% of the total, with 12.08% from the HDUs. In the 1999 reporting year there was some change in that the percentage contribution from the HDUs declined to 10.77% of the total research output.

Three comments are necessary in relation to these statistics. First, the lack of accurate and up-to-date data makes the analysis of trends incomplete and unsatisfactory. Second, the categories of comparison may obscure more than they explain. That is, simply saying that HAUs produced more research than HDUs can be misleading. Third, an important question is why there has been a decline in the output of research publications at HE institutions. These issues become important when decisions are made regarding institutional profiles and programme mixes and niches.

The measurement of research outputs

Over the past year, the DoE commissioned a review of the policies and procedures for the measurement of research outputs at universities and technikons and the use of this information to allocate public funding for research in HE institutions. The need for such a review arose primarily from changes in the national context of HE, in HE policy itself and in research publishing as an enterprise, together with a general dissatisfaction with the policy and procedures among HE institutions, researchers and other stakeholders. The policy and procedures were formulated during the 1980s and there has not been a comprehensive review since.

The review was informed by submissions from HE institutions and other stakeholders as well as the growing literature on research assessment. Internationally, the assessment of research performance relied on a few basic methods until about the mid-1990s. With the increasing demand for accountability, research assessment and evaluation has grown into a complex and dynamic field. Systems of research evaluation vary along several diverse dimensions. The more comprehensive the system, the greater the complexity and cost. Research assessment exercises are typically motivated by the need to establish indicators and measures of research productivity and research quality.

In broad terms, the current system relies on publication counts as a means for allocating research funds to HE institutions. This system of evaluation of units derived from publication counts is not unique to South Africa, nor are many of the associated limitations and problems. Quantitative indicators are widely used to measure research performance. The use of publication counts falls within the bibliometric approach to research assessment. While seemingly simplistic, bibliometric methods that rely on quantitative indicators such as publication counts and citation measures are widely recognised as valuable in providing a quantifiable indicator of research output. Publication counts is an internationally used indicator of research productivity. An advantage of using publication counts is that it permits recognition of a variety of indicators such as journal articles, monographs, books, patents and conference proceedings.

Much of the dissatisfaction with the current policy stems from the list of journals that are accredited by the DoE. Only papers published in journals that are listed as accredited are counted for subsidy purposes. Originally, the list was compiled by including all journals that were included in internationally recognised citation indexes. The idea was that inclusion in these citation indexes could be used as a proxy for quality. With regard to South African research journals not listed in these indexes, special provision was made for quality assurance checks. Publication by the Council for Scientific Publications and national learned societies was used as an indicator of quality. Another quality check was implemented through the requirement that the universities and technikons appoint a research committee to internally evaluate the research output submitted to the DoE. This is intended to ensure quality assessment at an internal institutional level.

The overall recommendation of the review was that the current policy and system should be retained, albeit with certain revisions. It was argued that the basic approach was sound and that many of the problems primarily concerned the procedures. The new funding framework of the DoE retains the principle of allocation of funds based on publication output.

Revision of the current list of accredited journals is currently in progress. To keep abreast of the changes in publishing, electronic journals are under consideration. A critical question to be confronted concerns the quality of electronic publications. It was recommended that there should be recognition of electronic publishing provided that there is clear indication that the product has been subjected to peer review and that an editorial board comprising individual researchers of high standing oversees the entire process. In the case of journals, titles are likely to be accredited if it is clear that articles are subjected to peer review and the journal is indexed in an internationally reputable indexing system. Indexing is a means of maximising the possibility that the research will be disseminated to a wide audience of researchers, students and other interested parties.

In the interests of promoting national publishing, a special dispensation for local journals was considered. The review recommended that indexing should not be the critical determining factor for accreditation, but should be viewed as desirable. Critical factors for accreditation were identified as the use of blind peer review, the composition of the editorial board, adherence to a regular publishing schedule and a distribution that extends beyond a single institution.

4. Community service in higher education

The *White Paper* on HE makes specific references to the role of community service within the overarching task of transforming the HE system. It calls on institutions to 'demonstrate social responsibility and their commitment to the common good by making available expertise and infrastructure for community service programmes'. It also states that one of the goals of HE is 'to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness among students through community service programmes'. The *White Paper* indicates its receptiveness to 'the growing interest in community service programmes for students' and gives support in principle to 'feasibility studies and pilot programmes which explore the potential of community service in higher education'. In congruence with this, the *Founding Document* of the HEQC of the CHE makes provision for academically-based community service to be part of the quality assurance framework in HE.

Other policy initiatives include the development of a Position Paper on community service in HE by the DoE, and the Green Paper (1998) of the National Youth Commission on National Youth Service. The Green Paper calls for the integration of community service into mainstream academic programmes within HE institutions. In addition, the Southern African Students Volunteer Organisation (SASVO) released a Position Paper in 1999 calling for mandatory community service in HE.

During 1997–1998 the Joint Education Trust (JET) conducted studies of community service programmes at South African HE institutions. The research showed that while most institutions included community service in their mission statement, few institutions had articulated a policy or deliberate and cohesive strategy to implement this component of their mission. Most institutions 'housed' a wide range of relatively ad hoc community service programmes initiated by innovative students and academics, but few of these programmes were intentionally linked to mainstream scholarly activity.

A former president of Harvard University, Derek Bok, argues that HE institutions must function as genuinely civic and socially and morally engaged institutions in order to fulfil their educational mission. He states:

> If we could teach our students to care about important social problems and think about them rigorously, then clearly our institutions of learning must set a high example in the conduct of their own affairs. In addition to responding to its students, a university must examine its social responsibilities if it wishes to acquire an adequate understanding of its proper role and purpose in present-day society. (Bok, 1982)

HE institutions generally have a longstanding tradition of 'community service'. Yet, 'community service' has tended to be rather undefined and it is important to clarify its different forms and foci.

Models of community service

First, there is '**community service**' with the primary focus on service, with little if any reference or intentional linkage to teaching and research. The principal beneficiary is the recipient of the service. Terms often used for this type of community service are 'volunteerism' or 'National Community Service'. Generally, volunteerism is a phenomenon in developed countries. Its primary purpose is to provide a service and in so doing to develop a sense of civic responsibility in students. National Community Service as a requirement for graduation is found more usually in developing countries. The primary purpose is to address a shortage of skilled human resources. An example is the compulsory one-year community service for medical students. Within both developed and developing countries, the current trend is to integrate community service into mainstream academic programmes.

Second, there is '**student learning**', the primary focus here being on maximising student learning by placing students within the workplace without intentionally linking the learning to a particular service within the community. The primary beneficiary is the student. Terms often used for programmes in this category are 'internships', 'field education', and 'experiential learning'. Examples include articles for law students, and medical and technikon internships.

Finally, there is '**service learning**', with the primary focus on integrating community service with the scholarly activities of learning, teaching, and research. This is underpinned by the assumption that service is enriched through scholarly activity and that scholarly activity, particularly student learning, is enriched through community service. The primary beneficiaries are service recipients, students, the academy, and service agencies. Terms often used for this form of community service are 'service learning', 'academically-based service learning', 'academically-based community service', and 'community-based learning'. The American Association for Higher Education defines service learning as:

> a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully-organised service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is co-ordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience (1997).

Service learning, unlike the other categories of community service described above, is entrenched in a discourse which proposes the development and transformation of HE in relation to community needs. The proponents of community service learning argue that HE increasingly has become an area of private gain with little regard for the public good (Zlotkowski, 1998). They argue that service learning is a means of reconnecting HE to society by making its academic mission more responsive and relevant to the real problems of society.

Local initiatives

The Community-Higher Education-Service Partnership (CHESP) was launched by the Joint Education Trust in 1999. The primary purpose of this initiative is to explore operationalising the reconstruction and development mandate of the *White Paper* at a programmatic and institutional level. Central to this initiative is the development of partnerships between developing communities, HE institutions and service agencies to research the development priorities of participating communities and to design and implement appropriate interventions.

70 academic programmes including 39 academic disciplines are currently being piloted and researched by JET in collaboration with participating HE institutions. Disciplines include agriculture, architecture and building sciences, arts, economic sciences, education, engineering, health sciences, environmental sciences, law, management sciences, natural sciences, and social sciences. Participating students range from first-year through to honours and Master's level. Participating HE institutions have:

❖ Conducted a situation analysis of their neighbouring communities.

❖ Conducted an audit of community service initiatives on their respective campus.

❖ Drafted and adopted a institution-wide policy on community engagement.

❖ Drafted a strategic plan for operationalising this policy.

❖ Established a range of community-based 'campuses' (i.e. sites) for teaching, research and service.

These sites include metropolitan, urban, informal settlement, and rural areas.

Community development priorities addressed through these academic programmes are numerous and diverse and include HIV/Aids; literacy; library services; youth development; job creation; skills development; education of prison inmates; crime prevention; violence; upgrading of built environments; development of recreation facilities; legal aid; upgrading of schools; school education; and rural resource management. Research on these pilot academically-based service learning programmes will focus on the development of indicators for quality assurance of community service in HE and the cost implications and challenges of this form of HE.

Early indications are that service learning has numerous and diverse concrete benefits for communities, students, academics and HE institutions. At the same time, the following challenges to implementation have been identified:

❖ **Building and managing partnerships:** Building and managing partnerships between communities, the academy and service agencies is complex and time-consuming, but critical for effective service learning programmes. Identifying appropriate partners is the first challenge. The notion of community is often

difficult to define. Frequent turnover of key community participants at community-based sites impacts on the continuity of the programme and necessitates sustained capacity-building within the community. Once identified, each partner group comes to the table with different histories, values, capacities, power and expectations. The particular challenge here is to mediate the interface of different knowledges and discourses. Each partner group will see the proposed service-learning programme through their particular lens. While this makes for rich dialogue and potentially transformative discourse, it requires patience, and careful and sensitive brokering and mediation. The challenge is to find a common focus. Generally, the identification of a specific community development priority to be addressed through the service-learning course provides this focus.

❖ **Clarification of expectations:** Each partner group has different expectations. The community has a development outcome agenda, the academy wants to generate research and learning outcomes, and the service agencies want to provide services more efficiently and cost-effectively. It is important that expectations are clarified and that those to be addressed through a particular service-learning programme are identified at the outset so as to avoid false expectations.

❖ **Clarification of roles and responsibilities:** The transformative power of partnerships lies in the dialogue, the discourse and the communicative interactions. To exploit this power it is important to encourage these interactions. In terms of the latter in particular it is important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the community, students, faculty, and service agencies in the conceptualisation, development, implementation and assessment of the service-learning programme.

❖ **Capacity-building:** Building the capacity of the community, the academy, and service agencies to engage with one another and to fulfil their respective roles and responsibilities effectively is critical. Often students are lacking in critical thinking skills and are unable to apply themselves effectively to a particular problem or unable to reflect and record critically in their journal which is used as a form of assessment. Another challenge for students is to take responsibility for their own learning.

❖ **Legitimacy of service learning:** A fundamental challenge facing the implementation of service learning is the mindset of the academy. An anthropologist from the University of Pennsylvania writes: 'The most significant challenge I've encountered has been getting service learning accepted as a valid enterprise. The tendency is to view it as not theoretical nor meaningful for a major course of study. When a department accepts a service-learning course it is all-too-often as an elective that does not count for the major. I believe strongly that service learning courses must be accepted by departments as integral components in students' programmes, regardless of the department.' The dominant paradigm within the academy limits scholarly activity to teaching and research. Often, service learning is not seen as real academic work. This mindset has been strongly challenged in recent years (Boyer, 1990).

❖ **Time constraints:** Another key challenge is the time required to implement the service component effectively — time to have the important discussions with community and service partners, time for students to participate, and time for faculty to reconsider their course design and implementation. As with the use of technology, the integration of service requires time to acclimate to a new form of teaching. The time factor seems to reduce with each semester the course is offered. However, the time factor may be enough to deter those who may be considering service learning. Therefore, it is important for campuses to consider interventions that address the time factor, such as service learning teaching assistants, faculty course development stipends, a partnership curriculum development for a particular course, or a service learning clearing house or centre to set up the service component.

❖ **Logistic challenges:** Transportation between community-based sites, service agencies and the HE institution is a challenge for students who do not have their own transport, and can be time-consuming and costly. Placing students in the community is a significant challenged when faced with an HE institution timetable that is not designed to accommodate this. Another logistic challenge is the safety of students at community-based sites.

It will be necessary to monitor the results of the CHESP initiative, and to pay especially close attention to the conditions that are defined as necessary for the successful implementation of service learning within HE. As service learning becomes institutionalised within HE programmes for credit purposes, it will be important to have in place quality assurance procedures for their accreditation and review.

SECTION 4

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Co-operative governance

In trying to lay the foundations for a transformed higher education system, the NCHE (1996) advanced the notion of co-operative governance. This concept was endorsed by the *White Paper* on HE. The assumption was that, to transform and democratise HE governance arrangements, new structures should provide for co-operative decision-making 'between separate but functionally independent stakeholders who recognise their different identities, interests and freedoms, while pursuing the common goal of a co-ordinated and participative polity and civil society' (DoE, 1997:14, para.1.28.1).

The implementation of co-operative governance has been far from easy and progress towards this goal has been uneven. There has been a lack of clarity and tensions regarding the functions, role and accountability of the major governance structures, especially Institutional Forums (IFs). The transformation of council structures has been relatively successful at the levels of representation and social composition, if not always in terms of effectiveness. The status and role of the principal academic structures such as senates seem to generally have been given inadequate attention, and there are concerns that the traditionally important functions of these bodies are being eroded.

It has been suggested that there are three possible reasons for this (CHE Annual Report 1998–1999:26–7). First, there seem to be two competing notions about democratic priorities in HE. One view is that the key transformation issue is that of representation — the participation of previously excluded groups in institutional governance and decision-making structures. The other view is that the priority is the transformation of the actual structures of governance themselves — the arrangements, mechanisms and processes of decision- and policy-making. Second, even though the *White Paper* on HE provided some detail about the functions and powers of governance structures, it was silent on the role and functions of management and, crucially, on which agents must drive and be accountable for transformation. Finally, at some institutions the attempts at transforming institutional governance have occurred in a context of declining enrolments, funding difficulties and conflicts around various issues.

In May 2001, the Minister of Education requested the CHE to conduct an investigation and advise him, by the end of June 2002, on the state of co-operative governance within HE. The investigation, which is under way, will:

❖ Describe and analyse the state of governance at HE institutions with a special focus on the role of university councils, senates, institutional forums and management, and the relationship between these four structures.

❖ Establish whether, how effectively and with what consequences co-operative governance has been implemented at public HE institutions in South Africa.

❖ Make recommendations on how to improve democratic practice and efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in HE governance.

The specific aims of the study are:

❖ To develop a conceptual framework and methodology to establish the state of governance at South Africa's HE institutions.

❖ To analyse the relationship between government and public HE in South Africa, focusing on issues of autonomy and accountability.

❖ To analyse the mechanisms for the constitution of university councils, their relationship with management and senate, and the bases and procedures for councils' accountability.

❖ To analyse the current state and role of senates and their relationship with management.

❖ To analyse and define the role of IFs in governance.

❖ To establish what constitutes good governance through a comparative study of different international experiences.

❖ To establish whether the co-operative governance model is working and if there are alternative models that should be taken into account.

The CHE study takes as its point of departure the following assumptions:

❖ The assessment of policy needs to integrate the analysis of its intellectual and political clarity and appropriateness, with the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation mechanisms at the institutional and systemic levels.

❖ Governing includes all those activities of social, political and administrative actors that can be seen as purposeful efforts to guide, steer, control or manage societies, or sectors or facets of societies. Taking this into account, governance comprises the structures, processes and values by which institutions make decisions in pursuing their objectives, which includes the systems of administration and control as well as the processes by which policies are formulated, adopted, implemented and monitored. Good governance ensures that policies and systems are in place in order to manage and administer institutions in an effective and efficient manner to achieve their own as well as the system's objectives.

❖ The simultaneous demand for higher efficiency and democratisation has aggravated some fundamental paradoxes of the governance of HE institutions like, for example, who is responsible for the institution — the council or management.

❖ The general reform of HE has had a demand overload effect on institutions, which in turn has impacted on the governance structures.

❖ Apartheid created different types of governance systems that differed according to the nature of the institutions and the mission they were to fulfil in the context of a racially segregated society. The acknowledgement of the historic differentiation between institutions should be kept as a permanent reference in understanding and interpreting the different trajectories that these institutions have followed.

Student participation

Regarding the role and participation of students in governance and in the transformation of governance structures in the post-apartheid era, two phases are evident. The first phase largely involved structural reforms to institutionalise co-operative governance. This was done by involving civil society organisations in Broad Transformation Forums and by extending council membership. These changes were partly motivated, and therefore shaped by the quest to restore legitimacy to institutional governance structures through incorporating a wider range of social groups. The second and current phase centres mainly on becoming equipped to participate more meaningfully in policy- and decision-making activities and embodies a relative shift from structural reform to consensus-building around issues.

The building of students' capacities required for meaningful participation within the framework of co-operative governance will be an ongoing challenge. The differing, and unequal resources, organisational capacities, knowledge and information and expertise that are commanded by different social actors involved in policy- and decision-making must be recognised. Unless this is appropriately addressed, student participation in governance processes could remain merely formal rather than substantive, and their effective participation will be circumscribed. This requires resources to be made available to student organisations to develop both the organisational and, through leadership and policy education and related skills training, the intellectual capacities for effective participation. At a national level, a DoE initiative through the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) has conducted several capacity-building workshops around some needs of student formations. Considerably more, however, is required.

At the same time the concept of co-operative governance and the notion of effective participation raise the complex question of what is meant by 'participation', and especially where a transformation agenda is being pursued in a context of inherited race, gender and other inequities. Some notions of participation could effectively block any transformation of HE and institutions and reproduce the old social order. Others could effectively result in no choices or decisions being made around difficult and substantive issues. The

National Education Policy Investigation of the early 1990s identified four notions of 'participation'. One was involvement in decision-making. A second was being involved in the provision of advice. A third was involvement in different kinds of consultative mechanisms and processes. A final and weaker form of participation was being provided with continuous information, thus being kept informed. It is vitally important that the kinds of participation that are envisaged for different social actors (institutions, academics, students) in different activities (national policy-making, institutional governance, academic matters) and in different arenas (council, senate, IFs, etc.) are clarified as a matter of urgency.

A number of national student organisations of differing strengths are active across and within the university and technikon sectors, and held large national conferences and meetings during the past year. Their focus ranged from building student organisation and participation in national policy issues to discussions around the *National Plan*.

At many institutions, overall student participation in student government activities is limited. Electoral turnout in Student Representative Council elections remains generally very low. At some campuses there have been interesting efforts to improve participation in student government activities and elections. Structures such as the consultative forums and Student Parliaments have been established. The Student Parliament at UCT functions as an alternative to a General Council meeting and comprises representatives of various clubs and societies. Run by a Speaker and Deputy-Speaker, the structure mimics the national parliament and is indicative of efforts to promote the practice of parliamentary democracy.

2. Funding and finance

As has been noted, the proposed new funding framework is one of the principal levers by which the transformation of the HE system will be effected in relation to the *National Plan*. The funding framework will necessarily generate a range of institutional responses and behaviours, and it will be important to assess these in terms of the policy goals of equity, quality, effectiveness and efficiency. There could be tensions in the simultaneous pursuit of these goals, which emerge clearly in anticipated changes in the funding and financing of the system.

Table 1 shows trends in government allocations over the past six years.

Table 1: Government appropriations for universities and technikons (rands millions)

Category/ Institution	1995–1996		1996–1997		1997–1998		1998–1999		1999–2000		2000–2001		2001–2002	
Subsidy funds														
Universities	2 710	66%	3 276	63%	3 591	66%	3 854	64%	4 155	63%	4 498	64%	4 880	65%
Technikons	856	21%	1 120	22%	1 296	24%	1 455	24%	1 648	25%	1 706	24%	1 837	24%
Subtotal	*3 566*	*87%*	*4 396*	*85%*	*4 887*	*90%*	*5 309*	*88%*	*5 803*	*88%*	*6 204*	*88%*	*6 718*	*89%*
Earmarked funds														
Universities	356	9%	574	11%	385	7%	482	8%	493	7%	503	7%	474	6%
Technikons	150	4%	236	4%	160	3%	208	4%	248	4%	271	4%	266	4%
Other														
NSFAS							4	<1%	5	<1%	6	<1%	30	<1%
College incorp.													43	<1%
Redress									60	<1%	30	<1%		
Subtotal	*506*	*13%*	*810*	*15%*	*545*	*10%*	*694*	*12%*	*806*	*12%*	*810*	*12%*	*813*	*11%*
													/continued ...	

Total allocations															
Universities	3 066	75%	3 851	74%	3 976	73%	4 337	72%	4 648	70%	5 001	71%	5 355	71%
Technikons	1 006	25%	1 356	26%	1 456	27%	1 663	28%	1 897	29%	1 977	28%	2 104	28%
Other								<1%	65	1%	36	<1%	73	1%
Overall total	4 072	100%	5 207	100%	5 432	100%	6 004	100%	6 610	100%	7 014	100%	7 532	100%

Source: DoE (2001). These figures update those previously published in the 1998–1999 CHE Report. Earmarked funding includes redress funding, contractual interest and redemption on government-approved loans, capital allocations for new buildings, property tax and land purchases. NSFAS funds are only for administration of the scheme (not total government contributions to the scheme itself). In FY2001–2002, this includes an additional R20 million for teacher training.

It can be seen that the overall allocation in nominal terms has risen from just over R4 billion in 1995–1996 to about R 7,5 billion in 2001–2002. Within this, the ratio of allocations to universities and technikons has shifted from 75:25 to 71:28 over this period, reflecting a corresponding shift in the ratios of student enrolments. What is noticeable is the fact that the proportion of earmarked funding has not increased, and in fact has shown a slight decrease over the period (down to 11% in 2001–2002). Relatively small amounts have been allocated to redress (an amount of R27 million allocated in 1998 is included in these figures). Clearly, the various equity and redress goals enunciated in the *White Paper* and the *National Plan* will not be achieved unless substantial additional amounts are procured and/or allocated.

2.1 Redress funding

When the allocations of earmarked funds to the NSFAS on the one hand and for institutional redress on the other are considered, it can be seen that government priority is clearly social (or individual) redress, as opposed to institutional redress. This is evident in Figure 1 below, which shows the relative allocations to the NSFAS and for institutional redress in recent years.
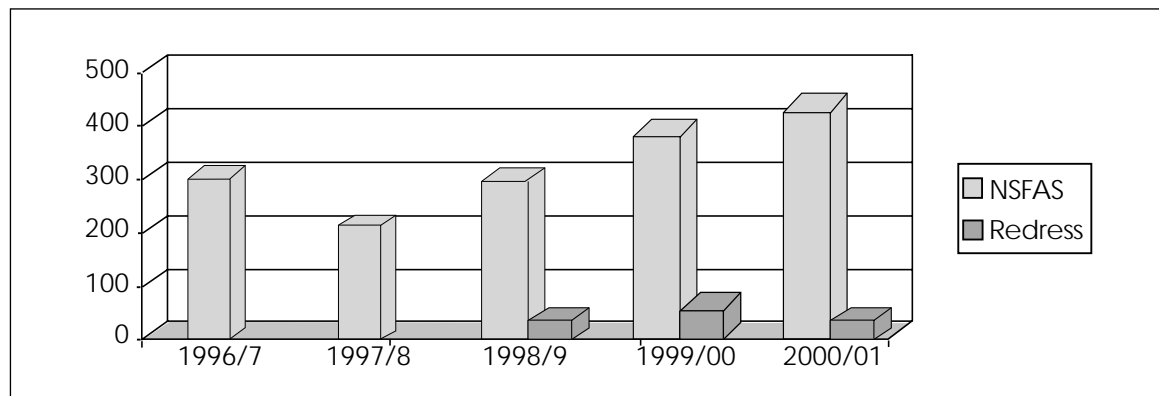

Figure 1: Government allocations to National Student Financial Aid Scheme and institutional redress
Source: DoE (2001)
Note: Figures for the NSFAS include allocations for administrative costs.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme

The government established the NSFAS in 1996 in order to give effect to its commitment to redressing the inequities of the past and to addressing the rising student debt problem in HE institutions. Government could not have given effect to its stated goal of increasing and broadening access to HE without a national financial aid strategy.

The establishment of the NSFAS was based on the interim proposals of the NCHE. The NCHE emphasised that its proposals should form the basis for the development of a more comprehensive and long-term set of policies for student financial aid. This was endorsed in the *White Paper,* which suggested that further

research, including identifying and assessing alternatives to the NSFAS, was necessary to underpin the development of a comprehensive and sustainable student financial aid scheme.

A report, *A Framework for a National Student Financial Aid Scheme*, which outlined the DoE's framework for a comprehensive and sustainable student financial aid scheme, was released in August 1998. It examined the feasibility of three options: loan schemes, graduate taxes and payroll (or employer) taxes for providing financial assistance to HE students. It also evaluated the administrative efficacy and the principles that should underpin the then existing loan and bursary scheme administered by the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA).

The central recommendations for an expanded national financial aid scheme that was affordable and sustainable were:

❖ The NSFAS should take the form of a national loan and bursary scheme based on the then scheme administered by TEFSA.

❖ Loan repayment to the scheme should be income contingent, i.e. loan recipients only start repaying once in employment and earning above a threshold level of income.

❖ TEFSA (which was a section 21 company) should be converted into a statutory agency, with a Board appointed by the Minister of Education on the basis of nominations from stakeholders. The Board should be responsible for advising the Minister on the overall policy and administration of the NSFAS.

❖ Public opinion in support of the principles of a loan and bursary scheme, in particular, should be mobilised particularly as they relate to the responsibilities of recipients with respect to repayment.

❖ The main source of funding for the NSFAS was to be the National Treasury, especially if government's commitment to access and redress was to be addressed.

The *National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act* 56 of 1999 incorporates the above policy framework. In July 2000 the Minister appointed the following persons to the NSFAS Board for a term of four years:

❖ Ms Vuyisa Tanga (Chairperson)   Vice-Rector, Technikon Peninsula
❖ Mr Andrew Johnson   Human Resources Manager, Anglo Vaal
❖ Mr Jack Klaas   Education Sector, ANC
❖ Prof. Bennito Khotseng   Vice-Rector, University of the Free State
❖ Mr Khaya Matiso   Director, Student Services, University of Port Elizabeth
❖ Mr Ivan Mzimela   Acting General Manager, NEDCOR
❖ Mr Raymond Olander   Vice-Rector, University of Fort Hare
❖ Ms Laura Schultz   Director, SA Medical Scholarship Trust
❖ Ms Sanette Boshoff   Director, Higher Education Management Support, DoE
❖ Mr Theuns Tredoux   Director, National Treasury
❖ Ms Babalwa Ntabeni*   First Education Specialist, DoE
❖ Ms Bridget Mohlala*   Marketing Co-ordinator, Ukupha
❖ Mr Ignatius Molapo*   Regional Manager, Vista University's Centre for Community

(* Appointed from the nominations received from student organisations.)

The NSFAS operates in partnership with 43 Financial Aid Bureaus based on the campuses of public HE institutions, and provides financial aid to students at these technikons and universities. Students apply through the Financial Aid Bureaus of the universities and technikons where they are registered. Applications are assessed by the institutions on the basis of certain criteria and a means test. The NSFAS office issues contracts. Up to 40% of each award to a student is converted to a bursary, subject to academic performance.

To be eligible an applicant needs to be:

❖ A South African citizen.

❖ A registered student at a public university or technikon at the time of the application.

❖ Studying for a first higher education qualification or for a second qualification if that is required to enable the student to practise in a chosen profession.

❖ Judged to have potential to succeed.

❖ Regarded as financially in need and unable to finance his or her studies without a NSFAS loan.

There is currently no single cut-off point for annual family income at which eligibility for NSFAS loans ceases. However, on average, awards are usually made to students whose family income is below R90 000 per annum. Currently, different types of means tests are used by the institutions to determine who their most financially needy students are. However, the NSFAS Board has decided that all institutions must in future use the means test developed by the NSFAS, which determines the family contribution and the size of the award from the NSFAS by calculating the family contribution as a percentage of the disposable income of a family.

NSFAS loans are income contingent. NSFAS loan recipients become liable to start repaying their loans once they are employed and earning in excess of R26 300 per annum. At an annual salary of R26 300 a loan recipient will pay 3% of his or her gross annual salary (equal to monthly repayments of R65.75). Employers are required to deduct loan repayments from salary source. Any employer who fails to make such deduction is guilty of an offence and may face prosecution. The NSFAS Act also makes it incumbent on the South African Revenue Service (SARS), at the request of the NSFAS, to furnish the employer details of NSFAS loan recipients, if such information is known to SARS. Loan recipients are required to provide information, such as postal and residential addresses, employment status and the name and address of their employer, to the NSFAS at regular intervals.

Since 1991 over 232 000 students have been assisted with over 492 000 awards worth R2.4 billion. The number of awards is greater than the total number of students since a student is eligible for support for more than one year. Table 2 below indicates the total number of awards made to date.

Table 2: Number of awards granted to date, 1991–2000

Year	Number
1991	7 240
1992	14 160
1993	20 811
1994	28 260
1995	43 876
1996	72 788
1997	70 574
1998	75 764
1999	75 344
2000	83 251
Total	**492 068**

By 2000, 93% of the awards had been made to African students, 3.8% to coloured students, 2% to Indian students and 1.2% to white students. 53.8% of awards were allocated to females and 46.2% to males.

Table 3 illustrates the study fields of loan recipients.

Table 3: Study fields of loan recipients

Study field	Awards	%
Commerce, Administration, Business	31 762	38.15
Arts and Humanities, Librarianship, Education, Religion	13 701	16.46
Engineering, Information Systems	9 574	11.50
Science, Computer Science	9 941	11.94
Law	5 896	7.08
Medical, Health, Nursing, Dentistry	4 154	4.99
Social Science	4 126	4.96
Agriculture	1 571	1.89
Fine Arts	1 011	1.21
Environment Studies	972	1.17
Journalism, Media	317	0.38
Architecture	226	0.27

Currently, there is no earmarking of funds for specific disciplines. In 2001, however, R20 million was specifically earmarked for students studying education in an effort to ensure an increase of qualified teachers. Some donor funding has also been earmarked to provide support in identified fields of study. Consideration is being given to improving the targeting of funding to allow for greater synergy between fields of study funded and national HRD needs.

Funding received by the NSFAS is indicated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Funds received from government and donors 1991–2000 (rands millions)

Year	IDT	Foreign donors	State	Total
1991	21.5			21.5
1992	25.0	14.0		41.3
1993	30.0	29.0		55.2
1994	30.0	37.0	10.5	70.5
1995	20.0	76.5	57.1	154.3
1996		38.0	283.8	333.4
1997		153.3	197.7	351.0
1998		98.0	296.0	394.5
1999		56.3	384.9	441.2
2000		73.4	437.4	510.8
Total	**126.5**	**575.5**	**1 667.4**	**2 373.7**

Table 5 indicates the loan amounts that have been recovered since 1993.

Table 5: Recovery of loans, 1993–2000

Loan year	Amount recovered R
1993	983,456.00
1994	2,364,000.00
1995	6,861,344.00
1996	18,973,606.00
1997	24,814,200.00
1998	30,372,190.00
1999	68,408,652.00
2000	90,763,154.54
Total	**R243,540,602.54**

In line with the proposal in the *National Plan*, the Minister has requested the Board to review the effectiveness of the NSFAS as a mechanism for increasing access and participation rates, in particular, the access of poor but talented students to HE. The review is to focus on:

❖ The size and coverage of the loan allocation. Currently few students receive loans to cover the full costs of their studies, which may be adversely impacting on students whose families are unable to make up the difference. In the early 1990s, the average award size equalled just less than half of the average full cost of study. The average award size is now just more than a third of the full cost of study. The award of full cost loans/bursaries has been limited by resource constraints.

❖ The eligibility criteria. It seems that the current financial cut-off point for eligibility may be too low, thus precluding deserving students from qualifying for NSFAS awards.

❖ The suitability and likely impact of targeting priority fields of study and/or institutions that can demonstrate the implementation of successful academic development programmes, especially in programmes in which black students are under-represented.

❖ The effectiveness of the existing administrative mechanisms for the disbursement of the NSFAS awards.

The Board is to provide the Minister with its recommendations in late 2001.

The current allocation from the Treasury for the NSFAS is not sufficient to fully meet the needs, despite the recycling of loan funds. In 2000, 104 000 students qualified for aid on the basis of their financial need and their academic potential to succeed. However, only just over 75 000 could be supported. If 104 000 students are to be assisted, then an additional R134 million, R163 million and R188 million to the indicative MTEF (Medium-term Expenditure Framework) allocations would be required for 2002–2003, 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 respectively. While the aim over the medium to long term is for the annual allocation from the Treasury to plateau, this point has not been reached. Increased resources will be required if the *National Plan* target of a 20% participation rate in HE is to be attained in the coming 10 to 15 years.

Institutional redress

In contrast to the increases in NSFAS funding, the total allocated to institutional redress funding since 1998–1999 amounts to just R117.6 million. Allocations have to date been relatively small, with R27 million being allocated in 1998–999 on an unspecified and pro rata basis. This amounted to no more than 0.45% of total HE allocation. In 1999–2000, R60 million (0.9% of the total HE allocation) was provided to three institutions — Fort Hare, Transkei and Medunsa — to ensure their continued viability. In 2000–2001, redress funding was reduced to R30 million, and was targeted at academic development on the basis of submitted proposals.

The *National Plan* makes allowance for a balanced approach to both social and institutional redress. The latter will, however, materialise only if sufficient funds are allocated for redress in the context of the new missions and programme mixes and niches of HDIs. Without such intervention, structural inequities will be

reproduced, redress will remain a largely symbolic policy, and equity and quality for students at HDIs will be compromised.

The level of redress funding within the new funding framework of earmarking funds for redress and student financial aid support is likely to remain inadequate to the task. This means that additional resources will be necessary or a significant reallocation will have to occur within the existing budget.

The CHE has established a project whose purpose is to produce a report that will assist it to advise the Minister of Education on institutional redress policy and strategy and the planning, implementation and funding of that policy and strategy. The Minister has agreed that such advice would be useful. The specific aims of the project are to:

❖ Conceptualise the meaning that should be attached to 'institutional redress' in the context of creating a new HE landscape.

❖ Analyse the place of 'institutional redress' policy in an overall policy of redress and equity.

❖ Identify and discuss the strategies that could contribute effectively to institutional redress in the context of creating a new HE landscape.

❖ Analyse issues related to financing effective institutional redress strategies — the duration of strategies, required budgets, possible sources of finances, etc.

❖ Analyse issues related to the planning and implementation of redress strategies and funding — determination of areas for institutional redress, the basis of redress allocations, the required infrastructure, the monitoring of implementation, etc.

❖ Advance specific recommendations on institutional redress policy and strategy and the planning, implementation and funding of that policy and strategy.

An additional issue that may be worth exploring is institutional redress policy and strategy in the context of a merger between a HDI and an HAI.

2.2 Allocations to HE

Current government allocations to HE have remained steady, but have dropped slightly in recent years.

Table 6: Government expenditure on education (rands millions)

| Education sector	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Schools and colleges as	29,4	36,6	38,7	38,8	40,2	43,3	46,7	49,6	52,6
% of total govt expenditure	19,0%	20,0%	19,3%	18,8%	18,3%	18,4%	18,0%	17,9%	17,7%
Higher education as	4,1	5,2	5,4	6,0	6,6	7,0	7,5	7,8	8,3
% of total govt expenditure	2,6%	2,9%	2,7%	2,9%	3,0%	2,9%	2,9%	2,8%	2,8%
Total education as	33,5	41,8	44,1	44,8	46,8	50,8	54,9	58,1	61,6
% of total govt expenditure	21,6%	22,9%	22,0%	21,7%	21,3%	21,6%	21,2%	20,9%	20,7%

Source: DoE (2001), Table A1.
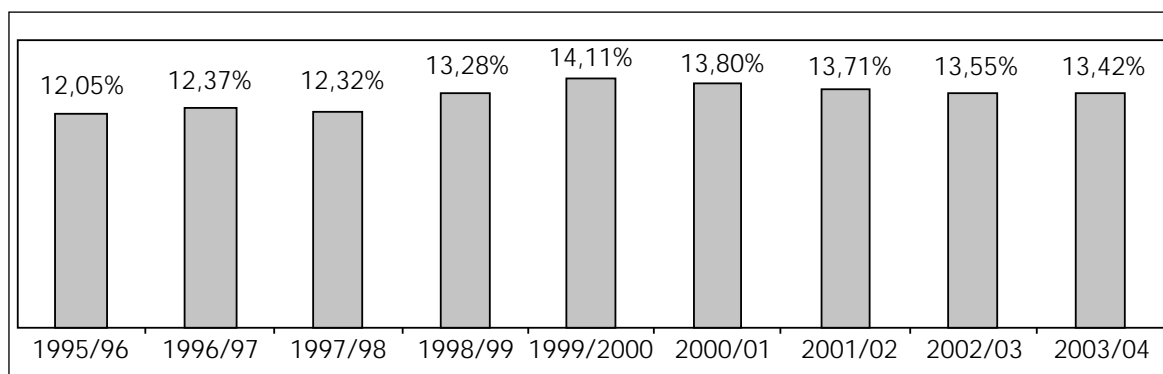
Figure 2: Government expenditure on higher education as proportion of total government expenditure on education

As a percentage of the total government expenditure, a slight downward tendency is evident in the allocation to education and to HE. However, allocations to education remain relatively high at around 20%, and that to HE at just under 3%. The proportion of the education budget allocated to HE has also remained fairly constant over the past few years at 13–14%. Government has consistently indicated that, given these relatively high proportions of allocation to education and HE in particular, increases are not likely.

The 1998–1999 CHE report highlighted the potential crisis inherent in the unforeseen decline in enrolments in the HDIs. In particular, the negative implication of this for the sustainability of these institutions through the resultant reduced subsidy allocations was clearly set out in a number of projections. In addition, the negative impact on HRD needs was also clearly delineated. Reviewing these trends two years on reveals that the worst scenario outlined in the 1998–1999 report did not materialise.
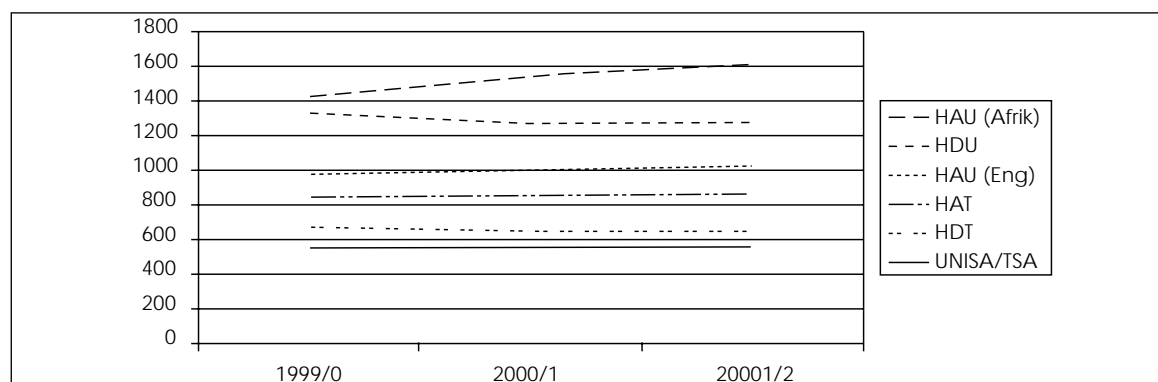

Figure 3: Actual and estimated subsidy allocations in real 1999 rands by historical institutional category, 1999–2002 (rands millions)

Table 7: Actual and estimated subsidy allocations by historical institutional category, 1999–2002 (rands millions)

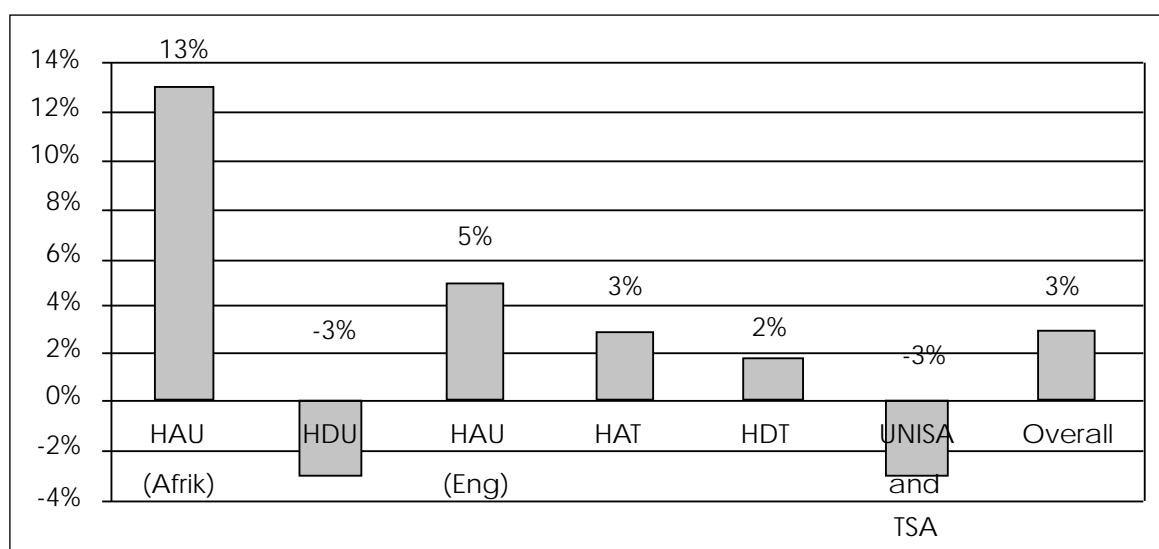| Subsidy in year	1999–2000	2000–2001	2001–2002
Based on enrolments for year	1996–1997	1997–1998	1998–1999
HAU (Afrikaans medium)	1 432	1 548	1 615
HDU	1 328	1 279	1 284
HAU (English medium)	977	1 005	1 026
HAT	847	855	869
HDT	550	550	560
UNISA and TSA	669	647	651

Figure 4: Changes in real 1999 rands in subsidy allocations: 2002 compared to 1999

As is evident from Figures 3 and 4 and Table 7 above, the drop in subsidy allocations in real terms at the HDUs was far less significant than that which was projected in the 1998–1999 CHE report (from R1 328 million to R980 million). Instead, the actual decline was to R1 284 million. This was partly the result of inflation-based increases that were built into the subsidy increases. Noticeable, however, is the sharp increase in the subsidy awarded to the Afrikaans-medium HAUs, as a result of the rapid expansion of their distance education programmes. This issue is directly addressed in the *National Plan*. Also evident is the decline in the dedicated distance education institutions as a possible result of these developments. The other institutional types showed very little change from 1999 levels.

SECTION 5

CHALLENGES

At the launch of the *National Plan for Higher Education* on 5 March 2001, the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, declared:

> We are seven years into our new democracy, yet a single higher education system, with shared goals, values and principles has not been realised. But, it must be achieved if the higher education system is to become a key engine driving and contributing to the reconstruction and development of South African society.

The *White Paper* of 1997 established a comprehensive agenda for transforming HE. Internally, HE was to be transformed in the direction of greater equity, co-ordinated, integrated and differentiated institutional provision, quality, effectiveness and efficiency. At the same time, HE was to be mobilised to help overcome social-structural inequities, contribute to reconstruction and development and position South Africa to engage effectively with globalisation.

South African HE **is** changing, both at the level of individual institutions and the system as a whole. One impulse for change has been the post-1997 HE policy framework. Change, however, has also been the result of global and changing local macro-economic and fiscal policies and conditions. As a consequence, changes in HE have not always been in the direction of the desired policy goals and objectives, but have sometimes reinforced the undesirable features of the apartheid legacy.

Overall, in a number of areas, good, if mixed and uneven, progress has been made towards creating the kind of HE system and institutions envisaged by the *White Paper*. These areas include policy direction and steering on the part of government, the social composition of student enrolments, responsiveness to social and economic development needs, curriculum restructuring and staff equity. However, in a number of other areas, progress remains limited and tardy. These include increased participation in HE, institutional co-operation and collaboration, the creation of a new differentiated institutional landscape, effectiveness and efficiency, redress funding and the mobilisation of additional funds to effect restructuring.

1. Regulatory instruments

Substantial progress has been made towards more robust national planning, a funding framework to drive the achievement of key HE policy goals, and a programme for the enhancement of quality of HE provision. As these instruments mature, they will play an important role in shaping and reshaping the HE institutional landscape. The main challenges that lie ahead have to do with establishing more explicit strategic and operational links between and among the different elements of planning, funding and quality assurance in ways that reinforce the many common objectives that underlie all these dimensions of HE restructuring.

The new funding framework is a welcome introduction of a form of goal-directed funding which seeks to support the goals of the *National Plan*. While it is likely to succeed in varying degrees, it could also manifest major weaknesses in supporting the policy objectives in the areas of equity/redress, specifically in relation to institutional redress, and research. The Ministry will be challenged to mobilise extra funding for HE, and especially earmarked funding for equity/redress and developing the capacities of institutions around their programme niches. A number of key issues remain to be resolved in finalising the new funding framework.

The platform for a national quality assurance system as a steering instrument to achieve the required transformation objectives in HE is under construction. Good progress has been made during the past year around HE quality assurance, with the launch of the HEQC and expanding activities around the accreditation of HE programmes, institutional audits and quality promotion and capacity development.

However, as has been stressed, in using quality assurance as a transformation lever in South African HE, we must be alert to the dangers of excessive accountability demands stemming from the proliferation of quality assurance bodies in HE. The search for coherence, lack of duplication and a tolerable accountability regime for HE providers are urgent priorities. Without successful or effective co-ordination of quality assurance in HE, the costs of accountability will be raised enormously and perhaps unacceptably, both in financial and

human resource terms. Analysis of the existing and desired balance between the investment in quality assurance structures in HE and the benefits produced by their operations beyond formal and quantitative indicators will need to be undertaken.

There are also developing tensions between the education and training objectives and requirements of the NQF and the way these are being pursued by different actors in HE. HE providers are being pulled in different directions by the different HE priorities of the DoL and bodies associated with it, and those of the DoE and its associated bodies. This will have to be addressed as a matter of urgency if quality assurance is to play a significant role in shaping HE transformation.

2. Institutional landscape

Creating a rational, coherent landscape and moving towards a single, co-ordinated and differentiated HE system remains the overriding immediate challenge. Many of the features of apartheid fragmentation continue within the system and between institutions. Neither the previous planning instruments nor leaving it to the institutions themselves has produced meaningful co-ordination or collaboration. Major problems include the lack of focus and mission incoherence of institutions, destructive competition in which HAIs reinforce their inherited privileges, and continuing duplication of activities and programmes. There is also the danger of an exclusive focus on 'paying' programmes, which could result in the decimation of not only the arts, humanities and social sciences, but also the pure natural sciences.

The advantages of reconfiguring the present system and institutions are compelling. Reconfiguration can lead to a more rational landscape for the investment of resources to pursue excellence and equity. This includes a much more clearly specified range of institutional missions that encourages institutions to have coherent and more defined purposes with respect to the production of knowledge and graduates.

A more rational landscape for HE, in turn, can promote the distribution of the goals and objectives of the *White Paper* across the entire system. While the system would still have uneven capacities, it would have a clearer and more targeted set of objectives for the investment of resources to strengthen quality and equity. A more rational landscape for HE can also provide a more focused framework for innovation. Innovation in teaching and learning, in research and in community service is more likely through a concentration of resources and attention on niche areas — centres of excellence grounded in real intellectual and physical capabilities — rather than across all areas within the system.

In the coming year, government will face a critical challenge in mediating diverse interests and making decisive choices. This is unavoidable. The resolution of a number of subsidiary issues depends in large part on the initial choices and decisions made about the institutional landscape. In the absence of decisions and active steering, a new landscape will emerge through a market-driven 'Darwinian' resolution. There should be no doubt that the 'winners' and 'losers' will be powerfully conditioned by past privilege and disadvantage. More important, it is highly unlikely that such a resolution will deliver the kind of HE system called for by the *White Paper*.

Once the important choices and decisions are made about the institutional landscape and the missions, programme mixes and niches of institutions, a major challenge for government will be to mobilise the resources to support institutions in developing capacities congruent with their missions and programme offerings.

3. Student participation in higher education

The increased enrolments in HE projected by the NCHE and called for by the *White Paper* have not materialised. Indeed, the overall head count student enrolment in HE has declined since 1998. The decline will have unfortunate social and economic consequences since there is a considerable demand for high-level human resources. While one reason for the decline in enrolments is the fall in the output of students with matric passes, a comprehensive explanation has yet to be developed. In this regard, there is a need for a national study to gain a better understanding of the changes in student enrolments.

Substantial progress has been registered in ensuring that enrolments in HE become more representative of the general social ('race' and gender) composition of the South African population. Women constitute about 53% of HE enrolments, and African students 60% of total enrolments. There has also been progress

towards achieving the kind of balance that the *National Plan* seeks in enrolments between humanities, science, engineering and technology (SET), and business and commerce. However, a number of challenges remain.

First, black and women students continue to be concentrated in particular fields and at particular levels of study. Female students tend to be clustered in the humanities and, in particular, teacher education programmes. They remain seriously under-represented in programmes in SET and in business and commerce. These are programmes that produce higher levels of private benefits to successful graduates than those in education and in the humanities. Large proportions of African students are enrolled in distance education programmes, most of which are humanities and teacher-upgrade programmes. The numbers and proportions of African students in programmes in SET and in business/commerce remain low. Post-graduate enrolments across most fields are also extremely low. At historically Afrikaans-medium universities, the predominant form of incorporation of African students has been through the enrolment of distance students.

Second, there are specific efficiency and effectiveness challenges with respect to success and outcomes. Throughput rates are low, resulting in fewer students graduating annually. Unacceptably large numbers and proportions of students drop out of the system each year without completing their qualifications. This is particularly true in the case of first-time entering undergraduates, that is students who had not previously been registered at an HE institution. A final problem is the retention of failing students in the system. A number of institutions report poor success rates by course (averages of 70% and below), and low graduation rates (often 15% or below), and yet record no academic exclusions. This means that their enrolment (and subsidy student) totals are inflated by repeating students who may have little or no prospect of completing their studies. Of course, such prospects are not unrelated to whether there are appropriate academic support and development initiatives at institutions.

Two further issues will shape participation in HE: the extent to which access and opportunity are provided to learners with disabilities and the HIV/Aids pandemic.

The DoE *White Paper* 6 of 2001, *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, challenges HE institutions to consider the minimum levels of provision that would guarantee the incorporation of learners with disabilities into HE. Providing equal access for learners with disabilities will necessitate systemic change to address the barriers that limit some learners' access to institutions and/or prevent particular learners from being able to participate equally in the learning process.

All HE institutions are expected to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for learners with disabilities. The provision of more specialised, cost-intensive support that may be needed by some learners with disabilities can be organised on a regional basis. The imperative for a regional-level organisation of support services has important implications for regional collaboration.

While many HE institutions provide student support services, including academic development or learning support initiatives, health units and counselling services, only a few have developed these initiatives so that they are able to accommodate the needs of all existing and potential students, particularly those with disabilities. Some institutions have set up 'disability units' or 'desks', but these vary considerably in the work that they do and the services they offer. While the lack of attention to this area is often blamed on resource limitations, of most concern is that the 'disability' services that do exist tend to operate apart from broader academic or learning support initiatives. Where they are linked, the collaboration is mostly with student health or counselling services, rather than with those dealing directly with teaching and learning, such as academic development programmes.

Priorities for change include a respect for diversity, which is translated into non-discriminatory policies and practices, and the overcoming of prejudice. This also involves the provision of enabling mechanisms, such as particular forms of academic development and support. It further entails flexibility in the planning, organisation, delivery and assessment of the teaching and learning process so as to ensure that the curriculum in its entirety is accessible to all learners. Most important, however, it requires a commitment to and the application of a process of institutional development that is focused through all aspects of organisational life on facilitating access and full participation by all learners. Together, these strategies provide the framework for an inclusive HE system.

With respect to HIV/Aids, a formidable challenge is to convince generally healthy, young, and sexually and socially adventurous, students of a threat that is highly personal, often takes years to manifest, and

threatens their very futures. Despite experimentation in the public health sector aimed at finding the right messages and the most efficacious strategies, the difficulty is the complexity and uncertainty of behaviour change.

Despite HE institutions' early involvement in HIV/Aids research, the first serious engagement between HE institutions, stakeholders and the government was in 1999 through the 'Beyond Awareness Campaign' conference. In 2000, SAUVCA sought to define its own position by investigating how universities were responding to the epidemic in terms of policy, programmes, management and planning. Its report also included input from the technikon sector and a range of experts. The main findings were that there was very little information available about the actual impact of HIV/Aids; that there was no systemic response to HIV/Aids; that the focus was mainly on prevention; and that HIV/Aids was generally treated only as a health problem.

In mid-2001, the DoE released the *Tirisano* implementation programme for 2001–2002, which clearly identified its approach to HIV/Aids in HE. At the system level, the DoE calls for tools to be developed to better understand the impact of the epidemic, and the updating of all policies to take account of HIV/Aids. At institutional level, it proposes the integration of life skills into the curriculum, appropriate training for educators, and promoting open and supportive environments for people infected and affected by HIV/Aids.

The impact of HIV/Aids on students and staff poses major challenges for all HE institutions. The first is reliable information and projections based on actual seroprevalence data derived from institutional samples. The second challenge is to move from a focus on prevention only to one that also deals with the actual reality of infected students and staff. The third challenge is to establish minimum standards for prevention, treatment and care to which all institutions can subscribe. The final challenge is to give policy and practical expression within the HE system to the fact that HIV/Aids is not purely a health problem.

The challenge for HE institutions is to act collectively, act decisively, and to lead in an environment where the stakes are high. The impact of HIV/Aids may well jeopardise the enrolment targets of the *National Plan* and the output of graduates, with a downstream effect on economic and social development.

4. Staff participation in higher education

Some progress has been made with regard to staff equity. However, given the apartheid legacy, there is a long way to be travelled before the social composition of academic and management personnel will approximate that of the general South African population. A serious concern is the general problem of HE institutions in attracting and retaining good quality academic and management staff, as well as producing a new generation of academic staff that will enable HE to become equitable in terms of representation by 'race', gender and disability.

A number of structural constraints obstruct the pursuit of staff equity. With growing competition from the private sector and government, it is becoming increasingly difficult to offer attractive and competitive remuneration packages. Competitiveness in the high-skills job market is likely to be exacerbated by the implementation of the *Employment Equity Act*, as both public and private sector employers vie with each other to fulfil their equity plans and targets. Further, the pool of black and women candidates in the academic and executive management categories is small and not likely to increase rapidly from within the HE system itself since the output of appropriately qualified and high quality postgraduates is inadequate to meet the demand.

The challenge within a competitive environment is to improve HE conditions of service as part of national policy, and for the HE system as a whole to publicise and market the appeal and intrinsic rewards of academic life in order to attract and retain staff. A range of new, proactive and innovative recruitment and retention strategies, with targets, will also have to be developed, as will initiatives to enhance staff quality and capacities around research and teaching.

5. The contribution of higher education

Earlier in this section, it was noted that tensions were emerging between the **education** and **training** objectives and requirements of the NQF, and the way these are being pursued by different actors in HE, and that this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. It is beyond dispute that HE institutions need to take

as their point of departure the HRD requirements of South Africa, the knowledge, skills and competencies required by the private and public sectors and, where necessary, need to restructure curricula to achieve the desired high-level HR outputs. It is also recognised that the mode of delivery of HE programmes must become dynamic, flexible and responsive to the demands of the labour market and that there should be mechanisms for workplace in-service learning. Finally, it is widely accepted that the assessment and recognition of prior learning and experience should become embedded in the policies and practices of HE institutions to enhance access for workplace and adult learners.

However, it is crucial that HE should guard against becoming responsive in only a narrow economistic and individualistic sense. This runs the risk of an unwitting crude separation between 'training' and 'education', and could underlie a social stratification of 'doers' and 'thinkers/doers'. This would undermine the spirit of all the HRD documents discussed earlier as well as the *White Paper* on HE. In developing high-level human resources, HE must contribute to both the growth and development of the economy **and** to the consolidation of democracy and social justice. These contributions are complementary. Both these goals are of critical importance to the survival and sustainability of South Africa, to its ability to participate effectively in a competitive global arena and to meet the needs of citizens.

Universities and technikons are attempting to meet the challenge of producing relevant, coherent, interdisciplinary programmes. Almost all are involved in some form of curriculum review and renewal. However, not for lack of will, both universities and technikons have struggled to construct 'interdisciplinary' curricula, and academics have encountered difficulties in forging curricula on grounds other than on a discipline or subject basis. New fields of enquiry develop gradually over time. Responsiveness to labour market and employment needs cannot be achieved through any simple constructing of interdisciplinary curricula.

In October 2001, the DoE released a discussion document, *A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education*, developed for it by the CHE. This is a vital matter for HE, since the proposed *New Academic Policy* will become the overall academic planning framework that will underpin all HE qualifications and programmes.

There are a number of key issues that require thorough discussion and debate. These include:

❖ The number of levels allocated to HE on the NQF, and whether these are sufficient for the range of HE offerings.

❖ The proposed 'nested approach' to standard-setting for HE qualifications on the NQF, which has implications for the registration of qualifications with SAQA.

❖ The classification of technikon qualifications.

❖ The meaningfulness and appropriateness for labour market needs and for employment purposes of proposed qualification types.

❖ The designation (naming) of qualifications.

An intensive and vigorous debate on the proposed *New Academic Policy* is necessary and consensus must be achieved so that enabling policies and regulations can be adopted.

Pilot initiatives in community service in HE are bearing fruit. There is greater conceptual understanding of the forms of community service most appropriate for HE. 'Service learning' emphasises integrating community service with the scholarly activities of learning, teaching, and research. Community service is enriched through scholarly activity and scholarly activity, particularly student learning, is enriched through community service. Service learning has at its heart developing and transforming HE in relation to community needs. A challenge will be to define the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of service learning within HE and to put in place quality assurance procedures for its accreditation and review.

Finally, South African policy documents reflect a strong adherence to the idea of HE as serving the public good. However, the dramatic global changes that are captured by the concept 'globalisation', and the social and economic ideologies, policies and practices that are currently hegemonic are having a significant impact on HE in developed and developing countries. They also impact on conceptions of the 'public good' generally as well as in relation to HE. With globalisation and the increasing marketisation of HE it appears

that locally and internationally the notion of HE in relation to the public good is being eroded. At the same time, it may be that HE's relation to the public good is not self-evident and the benefits of HE are not immediately obvious to or felt by particular social groups.

If we wish to continue advancing some notion of the public good in relation to HE, it is necessary to:

❖ Critically revisit this notion, specifically in relation to HE, but also more generally.

❖ Encourage greater writing, discussion and debate around how the notion is being conceived currently.

❖ Promote work on how, in what ways and to what extent the notion is being eroded, modified and/or pursued, and with what results.

❖ Stimulate debate on how the notion should be conceived and pursued at the levels of policy and practice.

We also need to address whether HE can advance the public good on its own, irrespective of conditions in the broader polity, economy and society.

6. Governance and funding

Four years of a system of co-operative governance have produced mixed results. It is necessary to review the state of governance at HE institutions, with particular focus on the role of university councils, senates, institutional forums and management, and the relationship between these structures. The key issues are whether, how effectively and with what consequences co-operative governance has been implemented at public HE institutions, and how to improve democratic practice and efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in HE governance. A CHE investigation that is underway will report to the Minister of Education in mid-2002.

An ongoing challenge is building the leadership, management and administrative capacities of HE institutions, since these are a critical variable in the ability of institutions to undertake and manage change. Tied to good governance is the building of the information and information processing systems of HE institutions and the system as a whole. Progress in this area has been tardy, and greater effort is required. The building of students' capacities to enable their meaningful participation within the framework of co-operative governance is also a continuing challenge. Unless this is appropriately addressed, student participation in governance processes could remain merely formal rather than substantive, and their effective participation will be circumscribed. This requires resources to be made available to student organisations to develop both the organisational and, through leadership and policy education and related skills training, the intellectual capacities for effective participation.

The funding of HE has remained constant. However, improving the current levels of allocation to institutions, undertaking the restructuring of HE and effecting equity and redress will require additional funds from the National Treasury. The proportion of earmarked funding has not increased, and in fact has shown a slight decrease. The various equity and redress goals enunciated in the *White Paper* and the *National Plan* will not be achieved unless substantial additional amounts are procured and/or allocated. Increased resources will be required if the *National Plan* target of a 20% participation rate in HE is to be attained in the coming 10 to 15 years. The current allocation from the Treasury for the NSFAS is not sufficient, and an additional R134 million, R163 million and R188 million to the indicative MTEF allocations are required for 2002–2003, 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 respectively.

The *National Plan* seeks to find a balanced approach to social and institutional redress. The latter will, however, only materialise if sufficient funds are allocated for redress, which must be the case if the present HDIs are to be capacitated to undertake their new missions and programme mixes and niches. Without such intervention, structural inequities will be reproduced, redress will remain a largely symbolic policy, and equity and quality for students at HDIs will be compromised. The CHE has established a project whose purpose is to produce a report that will assist it to advise the Minister of Education on institutional redress policy and strategy and the planning, implementation and funding of that policy and strategy.

7. Change trajectory in higher education

The present phase of national planning has continued the volatility in the HE system. Institutional managers, academics, administrators and support staff are all experiencing uncertainty and showing signs of bewilderment, fatigue and even demoralisation because of the demands of restructuring. This must affect the responsiveness of HE institutions to the economic and social development needs. HE, more than any other enterprise, crucially depends on the quality, creativity, innovation and commitment of its staff — as role models, producers and disseminators of knowledge, and producers of new generations of high-level human resources. While flux in the system is likely to continue into 2002, it is crucial that measures are developed to address the concerns and morale of staff and bring about stability in HE.

At the same time, the current phase of national planning cannot be seen only as a threat. It must also be seen as a major opportunity to engage vigorously in shaping the future trajectories of institutions, to build institutions with clearer missions and focused niches and to bring about the dawn of a new era in HE. While the difficulties being experienced by HE institutions are real, it is crucial to also look outwards to conditions and challenges in the broader society. These include the imperatives of equity and redress; the building of a substantive democracy, including a vibrant civil society; the need for economic growth and development and the ability to compete globally; job creation and the reduction of poverty; the effective delivery of social services; the development of a rich, varied and inclusive national culture and identity; and the threat of HIV/Aids.

HE institutions have a major contribution to make in this regard. Institutional leaders and staff, government and HE stakeholders must together fashion and innovate the technologies, instruments, mechanisms and processes for transforming HE. At stake is an HE system that is progressively characterised by equity, quality and effective and efficient provision and management, and that makes a vital contribution to the pressing economic and social development needs and challenges of South Africa.

PART TWO

THE COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

PART TWO

THE COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Introduction

The CHE was established in May 1998 in terms of the *Higher Education Act* of 1997. Its mission is to contribute to the development of an HE system characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs, and effective and efficient provision and management.

The CHE seeks to make this contribution:

❖ By providing informed, considered, independent and strategic advice on HE issues to the Minister of Education.

❖ Through the quality assurance activities of its sub-committee, the HEQC.

❖ Through various activities that include the dissemination of knowledge and information on HE through publications and conferences.

2. Membership

The *Higher Education Act* makes provision for a chairperson, 13 ordinary members, co-opted members (a maximum of three) and six non-voting members. The Minister of Education appointed the members of the CHE following a call for nominations from HE stakeholders and the public. Presently the CHE comprises the following members:

Chairperson:
Prof. W Nkuhlu*

Ordinary members:

Prof. H Africa	Mr K Diseko	Prof. B Figaji*	Ms J Glennie
Ms N Gordimer	Dr N Magau*	Mr V Nhlapo	Prof. N Segal
Prof. R Stumpf*	Prof. M Ramashala		

Co-opted member:
Mrs M Keeton

Non-voting members:

Dr R Adam	Ms N Badsha*	Mr S Isaacs	Ms A Bird
Dr K Mokhele			

Ex officio:
Prof. S Badat*

(* Members serving on the Executive Committee of the CHE.)

| Prof. W Nkuhlu | Dr N Magau | Prof. B Figaji | Ms J Glennie | Mr K Diseko | Dr. K Mokhele |

Following vacancies which arose during 2000, the Minister appointed Mr V Nhlapo, Prof. M Ramashala and Ms N Gordimer to the CHE from a list of 40 nominations. During 2001, Ms M Fouche, an ordinary member, and Mr B Khumalo, a co-opted member, resigned due to work pressure.

CHE members are appointed in their own right as people with specialist knowledge and expertise on HE matters. In this regard, and despite the members of the CHE being drawn from various constituencies, the CHE functions as an independent, expert statutory body rather than a body of delegates or representatives of organisations, institutions or constituencies.

The term of office (four years) of the current ordinary CHE members will come to an end in May 2002. The Ministry will issue a public call for nominations to the CHE in January 2001.

3. Responsibilities of the CHE

The *Higher Education Act* and *White Paper* accord the CHE six key responsibilities and a large number of subsidiary responsibilities. The numerous and varied responsibilities require the CHE to engage in many different forms and types of activities. The CHE is required to be both reactive and proactive in the rendering of advice to the Minister. It is also required to provide advice on both a formal and informal basis. On occasion it has needed to provide advice at short notice and in considerable haste, while at other times it has been relatively cushioned from immediate time and other pressures.

The key responsibilities revolve around:

❖ **Advising** the Minister, at his request or proactively, on all matters related to HE — including active information gathering and research to sensitise government and stakeholders to immediate and long-term challenges and issues.

❖ **Assuming executive responsibility** for quality assurance within higher education and training — including **decision-making related to programme accreditation**.

❖ **Monitoring and evaluating** whether, how, to what extent and with what consequences the vision, policy goals and objectives for HE are being realised.

❖ Contributing to **developing HE** — giving leadership around key national and systemic issues, promoting quality in learning and teaching, capacity-building around quality assurance, producing publications, convening conferences, etc.

❖ **Reporting to Parliament** through an annual report on HE and the CHE itself.

❖ **Consulting with stakeholders** around HE and convening an annual consultative conference.

The effective discharge of these responsibilities requires comprehensive knowledge, understanding and experience of the state and condition of HE in South Africa, and an extensive understanding of the broader polity, economy and society. What is important here is the development of the capacity to rigorously and sensitively monitor and evaluate the progress that is being made around HE policy goals and objectives. It also requires knowledge of developments in HE elsewhere and in general and thus keeping abreast of international trends and developments. Finally, also of importance is an understanding of the public value of HE and its crucial role in economic, social and political transformation and development in South Africa.

| Prof. S Badat | Dr R Adam | Prof. R Stumpf | Mr S Isaacs | Prof. N Segal | CHE Members (Photos not available: Ms N Gordimer, Mr V Nhlapo, Prof. M Ramashala Mrs M Keeton, Ms N Badsha, Ms A Bird) |

4. The character and role of the CHE

The CHE is a product of the intense debates around relations between state and civil society — debates that resulted in the establishment of a number of independent statutory bodies which are composed in a similar way to the CHE and have similar mandates. There was consensus that there was virtue in having a body, such as the CHE, composed of persons with special knowledge and experience of HE and HE-related matters who are nominated by a public process, rather than a body of delegates or representatives of stakeholders.

The activities of the past two years have been significant in unfolding, at the level of practice, the institutional character and role — the **identity** — of the CHE. At the CHE Strategic Planning Workshop in January 2001 it was agreed that the CHE has three policy roles — policy advice, policy development and policy implementation. However, the three functions vary depending on the issue involved:

❖ **Policy advice:** This is the most encompassing and principal role of the CHE since it has to advise on policy matters both reactively and proactively.

❖ **Policy development:** This role is limited and depends on issues and conditions — for example, the CHE was requested by the DoE to undertake work on a new academic policy for HE.

❖ **Policy implementation:** This role pertains exclusively to the quality assurance (programme accreditation and review, institutional audits and quality promotion) function of the CHE.

The CHE has sought to work closely and co-operatively with stakeholders (including the DoE), to hear their views on a number of issues and to be responsive to their concerns and interests. Representatives of, and participants from, national stakeholder organisations and individual HE institutions have contributed tremendously to the work of some committees and activities of the CHE. At the same time, the CHE has tried to accommodate all invitations and requests from stakeholders and individual institutions related to participation in meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars and other activities.

Some of the views of the CHE and its advice to the Minister of Education have found favour among a large number of stakeholders and institutions, but have left a few dissatisfied. Other views and advice have corresponded with the views of some stakeholders and institutions, but not with those of others. Yet other advice has received endorsement from only a few stakeholders.

Overall, the CHE has not hesitated to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister that have been at odds with the views of individual stakeholders or sectors of HE, but which the CHE believed to be in the best interests of the system at large. This, of course, has not always endeared the CHE to stakeholders. Such a situation is to be expected and should be seen as an outcome of its legislative mandate. Indeed, it is almost guaranteed by the nature of the CHE.

The understanding of itself that the CHE has publicly promoted through its practice is that it is not a transmission belt for the views of stakeholders. Stakeholders must and do communicate directly with the Minister. The CHE is also not a buffer body, as it has sometimes been described, in the sense of mediating between institutions and government, though if such a role is required nothing in principle precludes this. Instead, the understanding of itself that the CHE has promoted is that it has been purposively and deliberately established to provide to the Minister of Education, without fear, informed, considered and independent advice which is in the national interest. That is, while the CHE must and does take the views of stakeholders seriously, it is required to do considerably more than simply collate and aggregate these views in advising the Minister. It is also required to interrogate and mediate these views, and offer its own independent advice to the Minister.

Ms M Sebolai   Dr J Reddy   Dr M Qhobela   Prof. H Africa   Mr I Sehoole

HEQC Members

(Photos not available: Prof. P Eagles, Prof. N Kok)

Thus, as an alternative to both the transmission belt and the buffer modes of operation, the CHE has tried to contribute to a central steering model by trying to carve out a space for an independent, proactive and intellectually engaged type of intervention. The appropriateness and value of such a role seems to be confirmed by two statements made by the Minister of Education in his address at the CHE consultative conference in November 2000. On the one hand, Minister Asmal pointed out that he expects a far greater level of intellectual engagement from the HE community on issues of transformation and criticised the lack of this:

> (There is a) deafening silence and lack of engagement of the academic and institutional community on the transformation challenges that face us not only in education but in social and economic development in general.

At the same time, discussing redress and equity as one of the challenges for HE, Minister Asmal made clear his expectations of the CHE, thereby highlighting the proactive role the CHE should take around specific issues:

> I am relying on the CHE to take the lead in stimulating debate on redress and equity in higher education and providing me with appropriate advice on the matter.

This proactive role in putting issues on the agenda of stakeholders and stimulating debate seems particularly necessary in order to counteract two relatively generalised tendencies in terms of policy-making and implementation. First, there is the tendency on the part of some actors to interpret and implement policy in highly selective ways, with the effect of almost distorting and undermining the original policy goals and objectives. Second, there is the equally unsatisfactory tendency to formulate policy without giving sufficient consideration to both conceptual and practical issues that implementation would raise.

The past year has alerted the CHE to the need to draw attention to conceptual aspects of policy when they are overshadowed by concern with implementation, and also to critique policy if it is lacking conceptually or technically or when implementation is insufficient, poor or haphazard. The steering model also implies another kind of intellectual engagement — keeping up with the current international debates on HE, bringing to the fore issues deemed relevant to South Africa and stimulating discussion among stakeholders.

Of course, the CHE does not operate in a vacuum, nor does it have a blank cheque. The CHE's activities and advice to the Minister of Education are and will be shaped by a number of factors. These include:

❖ The legislative framework for HE and the values, principles and policy goals and objectives contained in the *White Paper* and the *National Plan.*

❖ The changing requirements of economy and society and different social groups.

❖ The goals, aims, aspirations and initiatives of national stakeholders and HE institutions and science and technology institutions.

❖ The local and international knowledge and information base with respect to HE issues, questions and practices.

❖ The financial and human resources capacities of the CHE.

The institutional character of the CHE as an independent body is embodied in its roles of:

❖ Providing to the Minister, without fear, informed, considered and independent advice which it considers to be in the national interest.

Ms K Sattar   Prof. B Khotseng   Ms L Gordon-Davis   Mr N Bickett   Prof. D Maughan-Brown
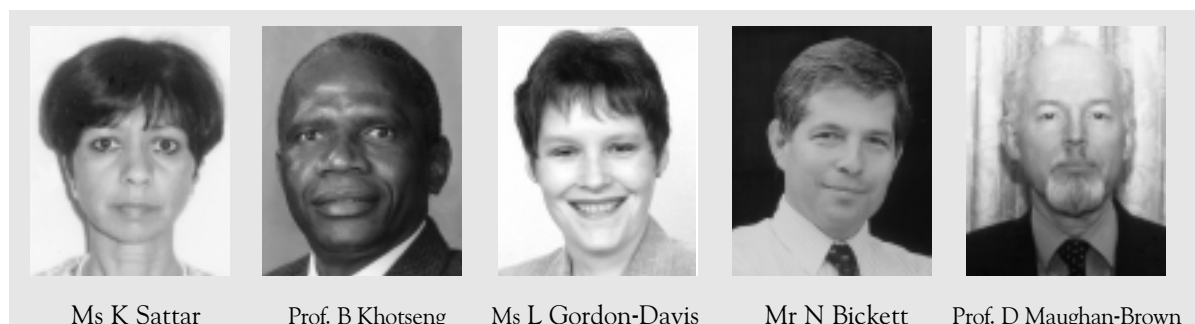
HEQC

Members

❖ Having to make considered, fair and objective decisions and judgements around quality matters.

❖ Providing intellectual leadership around key national and systemic issues.

For example, the CHE must certainly take as its point of departure the values, principles and policy goals of the *White Paper*, and the policy instruments and mechanisms that are advanced for the achievement of policy goals. However, it must also, where necessary, subject these goals and instruments to critical scrutiny and raise their appropriateness in relation to the fiscal environment, the capacities of HE institutions, the available human and financial resources and so forth.

Such a role may occasionally bring the CHE into disagreement and conflict with stakeholders, including the DoE. This cannot be avoided without compromising the independence (and value) of the CHE. It does demand tremendous wisdom, integrity, honesty and fairness on the part of the CHE.

5. Fulfilling the mandate of the CHE

The table overleaf lists the responsibilities of the CHE and its progress and activities to date towards their fulfilment. In addition, the information below on CHE task teams and projects provides a further indication of CHE activities.

Mr Z Mlonyeni
Resource Officer

Dr L Lange
Projects Manager

Ms L Ismail
Office Manager

Prof. S Badat
CEO

Dr J Carneson
Director

Ms S Tyeku
Director

Ms K Menon
Manager

Mr O Seale
Projects Officer

Mr D Zitha
Project
Administrator

Dr M Singh
Executive
Director

Ms P du Toit
Personal
Assistant

Mr T Magabane
Project
Administrator

CHE Staff Members

(Photos not available:
Ms C Smit, Mr P Naidoo,
Ms L Rheeder, Ms J Maloi)

Table 1: Progress towards fulfilling the mandate of the CHE

Responsibility	Progress/Activities
Advising the Minister on all HE issues on which the CHE's advice is sought	❖ Advice on: ➢ HE Amendments Bills of 1999, 2000 and 2001 ➢ 1999 NSFAS Bill ➢ Size and shape ➢ Regulations for the registration of private providers of HE ➢ *New Academic Policy* for HE ➢ Private HE ➢ Redress ➢ Proposed new funding framework
Advising the Minister on its own initiative on HE issues which the CHE regards as important	❖ Advice on: ➢ Private HE ➢ Redress policy, strategy and funding ➢ NQF ➢ Governance
Designing and implementing a system for quality assurance in HE and establishing the HEQC	❖ Established an Interim HEQC in June 1999 ❖ Applied to SAQA and received accreditation as an ETQA in 2001 ❖ Produced *Founding Document* for the HEQC ❖ Called for nominations and constituted the HEQC in 2001 ❖ Publicly launched the HEQC in May 2001 ❖ Established and convened Interim Joint Committee and manual to process accreditation of programmes of public providers (with DoE and SAQA) ❖ Took over from SAQA the accreditation of programmes of private providers ❖ Took over from SERTEC and delegated to CTP (with HEQC participation) until end of 2002 quality assurance visits to technikons, agricultural colleges and polytechnics in neighbouring countries ❖ Produced new draft manual and piloted the accreditation of programmes of private providers ❖ Convened Joint Implementation Plan Committee for implementation of NQF within HE ❖ Established national forum of quality assurance managers at HE institutions ❖ Conducted evaluation of QPU and SERTEC and produced publication ❖ Conducted assessment of professional councils and SETAs and produced publication ❖ Commissioned report on quality assurance terminology /continued ...

	❖ Commissioned report on conditions and criteria for the use of the designation 'university' ❖ Organised numerous conferences, seminars and training workshops ❖ Extensive and ongoing consultations with all key stakeholders
Advising the Minister on the appropriate size and shape of the HE system, including its desired institutional configuration	❖ Established CHE Task Team ❖ Produced extensive Memorandum and met with the Minister (December 1999) ❖ Established extended Task Team and produced Size and Shape report (July 2000) ❖ Extensive engagements with HE institutions and stakeholders around Size and Shape report ❖ Obtained and analysed stakeholder submissions on Size and Shape report in preparation for *National Plan* ❖ Discussions with Minister and DoE around *National Plan* ❖ Awaiting documents from Ministry in early 2002 for CHE advice on institutional reconfiguration
Advising the Minister in particular on the new funding arrangements for HE	❖ Established CHE Financing and Funding Task Team ❖ Advised Minister on weighting of student subsidy and earmarking funds for black students for academic development ❖ Produced draft document on new funding framework ❖ Obtained and analysed stakeholder submissions ❖ Produced final document as advice to the Minister ❖ Established extended Task Team on Redress Policy, Strategy and Funding
Advising the Minister in particular on language in HE	❖ Established CHE Language Policy Task Team ❖ Established extended Language Policy Task Team to produce report on language policy framework for HE ❖ Discussed and finalised report of extended Language Policy Task Team ❖ Advice and report to Minister on language policy ❖ Preliminary interaction with Minister around advice ❖ Awaiting full discussion with the Minister /continued ...

Developing a means for monitoring and evaluating whether, how, to what extent and with what consequences the vision, policy goals and objectives for HE defined in the White Paper on HE are being realised	❖ Task Team on Achievement of Policy Objectives established ❖ Activities of the Task Team suspended due to Size and Shape activity ❖ Re-established as Project of secretariat ❖ Project and funding proposal produced and submitted to donor — initial approval ❖ Meeting held around building a national system of HE monitoring and evaluation ❖ Annual Reports of 1998–1999 and 2000–2001 provided as detailed an analysis of progress towards policy goals as feasible ❖ Project implementation with receipt of funding

Promoting the access of students to HE	❖ The Size and Shape report:
	   ➢ Motivated increasing the participation rate from about 15% to 20%
	   ➢ Called for increased and widened access, especially for historically disadvantaged
	   ➢ Called for increased support for the NSFAS and increasing size of grants
	❖ Engagements around RPL and monitoring of work in this area

Providing advice to the Minister on the proposed new Education Management Information System for HE	❖ Recommendations made to DoE following presentation on HEMIS in 1999 ❖ Contact with DoE and SAQA regarding their databases in relation to CHE databases for monitoring and quality assurance ❖ No formal advice to the Minister as yet
Formulating advice for the Minister on a *New Academic Policy* for HE, including a diploma/degree structure which would advance the policy objectives of the *White Paper*	❖ Academic Policy Task Team with representatives from key constituencies established to undertake work for DoE ❖ Work suspended for decisions related to Size and Shape ❖ Reactivation of work during late 2000 ❖ Work of CHE convened Joint Implementation Committee and IJC fed into work of the Academic Policy Task Team ❖ Report approved as discussion document by CHE ❖ Report handed over to the DoE in October 2001 for public comment process and finalisation /continued …

Formulating advice for the Minister on stimulating greater institutional responsiveness to societal needs, especially those linked to stimulating South Africa's economy, such as greater HE-industry partnerships	❖ Established in 2001 as project of secretariat ❖ Project and funding proposal produced and submitted to donor — approved ❖ Report handed over to the DoE in October ❖ Project and funding proposal produced and submitted to donor — approved ❖ Meeting with Minister and discussions with other government ministers and departments and prospective partners ❖ Studies commissioned ❖ National conference scheduled for mid-2002 ❖ Publication to be produced ❖ Advice and recommendations to Minister following national conference
Appointing an independent assessment panel from which the Minister is able to appoint particular issues at public HE institutions during 2000	❖ An initial panel established in 1998 ❖ Panel supplemented with new members during 2000 ❖ Panel supplemented with new members during 2001 ❖ Minister has utilised panel members for investigations at a number of institutions
Establishing healthy interactions with HE stakeholders on the CHE's work	❖ Bilateral meetings with CTP and SAUVCA during 1999 ❖ Bilateral meetings with SASCO and CTP during 2000 ❖ Consultative Conference serves as major forum for interaction ❖ National stakeholders and individual HE institutions contribute to the work of the CHE in various ways ❖ Extensive engagements with national stakeholders and HE institutions around size and shape during 2000 ❖ Extensive relations with DoE and joint activities in a number of areas
Producing an Annual Report on the state of HE for submission to Parliament	❖ Produced an Annual Report 1998–1999 — extensive report on the state of HE and the work of the CHE ❖ Produced an Annual Report 1999–2000 — focused largely on the activities of the CHE ❖ Produced an Annual Report 2000–2001 — extensive report on the state of HE and the work of the CHE ❖ Need to develop the basis for producing evermore comprehensive and incisive annual reports on the state of HE /continued ...

	❖ Will be facilitated by: ➢ CHE Triennial Review of HE Project for which donor funding has been obtained ➢ CHE Monitoring the Achievement of Policy Objectives Project ➢ Effective HEMIS system
Convening an annual consultative conference of HE stakeholders	❖ Convened 1st Consultative Conference in November 1999, 2nd Consultative Conference in November 2000 and 3rd Consultative Conference in November 2001
Participating in the development of a coherent human resource development framework for South Africa in concert with other organisations	❖ Contributions through attendance of workshops ❖ Informal contributions through HRD discussions in context of NQF ❖ Key issue for Responsiveness of HE conference of mid-2002

6. CHE task teams and projects

The Strategic Planning Workshop of the CHE in January 2001 agreed that a distinction should be made between CHE task teams and CHE projects.

Task teams are focused on systemic or major HE policy issues on which the Minister has required the CHE's advice or the CHE seeks to provide advice proactively. Members of task teams, including the Chair, are appointed by the CHE. Following a request by a student organisation that consideration be given to participation by non-CHE members, the CHE agreed that this could occur with the approval of the Council.

Issues that are not related to the immediate policy advice responsibilities of the CHE are, with the approval of the CHE, directed and managed by the CHE secretariat as projects. These include:

❖ Research projects to give effect to and/or inform the diverse work of the CHE. The results of these may, of course, following discussion by the Council, lead to advice to the Minister.
❖ The production of the annual report to Parliament.
❖ The annual consultative conference.
❖ CHE publications and other media.
❖ CHE conferences and discussion forums.

CHE members may be part of projects or relate to them as expert resource persons. Non-CHE members are generally invited to participate in projects on the basis of their special expertise and experience.

6.1 Task teams

Five task teams have operated during the course of the past year.

Size and Shape

The CHE met with the Minister for a presentation and discussion of the *National Plan* immediately prior to its public release. The CHE welcomed various aspects of the *National Plan* but also expressed some concerns around certain issues.

The Task Team considered the *National Plan* of the Ministry and facilitated discussions within Council on the *Plan*. Especial attention was given to positioning the CHE to discharge the critical responsibilities that are accorded it by the *White Paper* in relation to national planning and to developing a CHE response to the

various demands that are made on it in the quality assurance domain. Discussions were held with the DoE in this regard.

The Minister will seek advice from the CHE on institutional reconfiguration in early 2002, once the proposals and recommendations of almost all the working groups have been received and processed. The Task Team will have a busy few weeks facilitating the CHE's provision of advice to the Minister.

Governance

Last year's annual report highlighted the importance of initiating an investigation on the state of co-operative governance at HE institutions in the context of the findings of the 1998–1999 CHE Annual Report and the keen awareness of the DoE of shortcomings at various institutions. During late 2000, the CHE established a Task Team to conduct the investigation. Earlier this year, the Minister also requested the CHE to advise him on the state of co-operative governance at public HE education institutions by June 2002.

The Minister's request accelerated the finalisation of the project proposal, its submission for donor funding and the constitution of an extended Task Team. The purposes and aims of the project were noted in Section 4 of Part One under 'governance and financing of HE'. The CHE invited the following non-CHE members, who have understanding and experience of governance issues, to participate in the Task Team:

❖ Prof. Derek Swartz
❖ Dr Marcus Balintulo
❖ Mr Richard Wilkinson

Funding for the project was secured from the British Department for International Development (DFID), a first meeting of the Task Team has been held and the investigation is under way under the co-ordination of a senior academic. The investigation will be completed in April 2002.

Academic Policy

The reasons for the need to develop a new academic policy for HE were detailed in the last annual report of the CHE. The DoE requested the CHE to develop a report on academic policy.

In summary, existing academic policy for universities and technikons, including the requirements for the various categories of qualifications, does not reflect the *White Paper's* goal and also does not take into account the new requirements of SAQA and the NQF. The issues here are highly complex and include such matters as level descriptors for the NQF levels 5 to 8; qualification descriptors; credits for certificates, diplomas and degrees; a new qualifications structure for HE; naming conventions; articulation between institutions and portability of credits; and incorporating multiple entry and exit points in qualification structures. A new set of norms and standards for teacher education programmes was already introduced during 2000 and there is necessity for alignment between this and any new academic policy for HE.

The proposed *New Academic Policy* is intended to achieve the following:

❖ To provide a coherent and comprehensive framework for the development and provision of HE programmes and qualifications which gives effect to the goals for HE as set out in the *White Paper* and in the *National Plan* and also takes into account the goals of the NQF.

❖ To provide a framework for the provision of HE programmes and qualifications that will inform the work of the HEQC with respect to the accreditation and evaluation of programmes.

❖ To provide guidance to HE institutions as they develop appropriate programme mixes in accordance with their institutional missions and three-year rolling plans.

❖ To provide for the effective and efficient utilisation of public resources expended on HE, by minimising wasteful overlap and duplication of programmes and qualifications.

The new policy will apply to all public and private institutions that offer programmes leading to the award of qualifications registered on levels 5 to 8 on the NQF. It must take into account the responsibilities of the following bodies and also inform their work:

❖ SAQA, which is responsible for developing the NQF and for registering qualifications on the framework.

❖ The HEQC, which is responsible for the accreditation and evaluation of HE programmes.

❖ The DoE, as the principal funder of public HE institutions and which approves the programme mixes and niches of institutions and also funds programmes.

The work of the Academic Policy Task Team, which includes representatives of the key national stakeholders, was revived in late 2000 and accelerated during 2001. An extensive report was approved by the CHE at its Council meeting in September 2001 for handover to the DoE. The DoE released the report of the CHE as a discussion document in October 2001 and called for public responses. The DoE also requested the CHE to facilitate discussion of the *Academic Policy* document among key stakeholders.

Language Policy

During 2000 the CHE established an extended Task Team under the chairpersonship of Prof. Neville Alexander to produce a report for it on a language policy framework for HE. HE institutions and national stakeholders were invited to make submissions to the Task Team.

The report was extensively discussed by the CHE and a document finalised and approved in mid-2001. The document and advice of the CHE has been provided to the Minister and there has been initial engagement around the report with further detailed engagement pending.

Funding and Financing

Funding is viewed by the *National Plan* as a crucial steering mechanism in the transformation of the HE system, and in March 2001 the DoE released its proposed new funding framework for discussion. The CHE Funding and Financing Task Team engaged with the DoE's proposed framework by producing a draft document for consideration by the CHE; thereafter, analysing the comments of stakeholders; and, finally, producing a document for approval by the CHE. The CHE document critically analyses whether, to what extent and how the new funding framework advances the objectives of the *National Plan*, and specifically:

❖ The achievement of increased systemic and institutional efficiencies.
❖ The achievement of increased institutional diversity.
❖ The achievement of the desired graduate profiles.
❖ The sustaining and promotion of research.
❖ The achievement of equity and redress.

The CHE's advice to the Minister was submitted in October 2001.

The CHE Funding and Financing task team has also been involved in developing a project on redress policy, strategy and funding. In the course of engagements around the CHE's Size and Shape report, one of the serious issues that was raised by some national stakeholders and HE institutions was the lack of any substantive institutional redress policy and strategy. The purposes, aims and duration of this project were discussed in Section 4 of Part One of this report. Non-CHE members with expertise and experience around redress and funding issues have been invited to participate in the extended Task Team.

6.2 Projects

The projects of the CHE seek to give effect to the responsibilities that have been accorded to the CHE. The requirement to contribute to the development of HE provides considerable leeway for the CHE to identify systemic and national HE issues that deserve critical reflection, and to initiate projects in this regard. The privileged vantage point that the CHE enjoys with respect to national HE and HE-related developments also facilitates identifying issues for investigation.

The CHE is convinced that its own ability to provide considered, independent and especially proactive advice is dependent on promoting and helping to sustain high quality critical scholarship on South African

HE and HE in general. In the South African context this requires encouraging and helping to develop and nurture a community of HE scholars and policy analysts within and outside HE institutions. Through a number of its projects — monitoring and evaluation, critical triennial review of HE, and the role of HE in social transformation, to mention just a few — the CHE seeks to involve established and emerging academics and researchers and contribute to building especially institutional capacity for HE studies.

Review of the NQF

There are widespread and strong concerns around the NQF and its implementation in the HE and training sector. The concerns have been expressed by some national HE stakeholders, HE institutions, and administrators and academics and include:

❖ The complex architecture of the NQF and its sustainability in a context of limited human and financial resources.

❖ The proliferation of Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQAs) — the HEQC of the CHE, the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and professional councils — many with claims to quality assurance roles in HE and often with overlapping responsibilities.

❖ The possibility of HE institutions being inundated with visits by several ETQAs and being subject to multiple and diverse quality assurance requirements, instruments and processes at a time when the demands of system restructuring are enormous.

❖ The cost (financial and human) implications for HE institutions of meeting the quality assurance requirements of numerous ETQAs.

❖ Concerns about the uneven development and capacity of the NSBs and SGBs in relation to the important function of standard-setting and the registration of qualifications.

❖ The possibility of a simpler model of the NQF as an important precondition for its successful implementation.

The CHE agreed in early 2001 that there should be an investigation with the purpose of producing a report which will assist the CHE to:

❖ Advise the Minister of Education on the development of the NQF and its implementation in relation to the HE band.

❖ Make an informed and considered submission to the NQF Study Team that has been established by the Ministers of Education and Labour to undertake 'a focused study of the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)'.

❖ Discharge its ETQA responsibilities in an effective and efficient way (through the HEQC).

❖ Contribute to constructive debate around the NQF and its implementation in the HE sector.

The specific aims of the project are to:

❖ Describe and analyse the goals and objectives of the NQF, with particular attention to HE.

❖ Describe and analyse the critique of the conceptual basis of the NQF with respect to HE, with particular attention to how HE could contribute to the progressive goals of the NQF while not formally within the NQF.

❖ Describe and analyse the implementation of the NQF in relation to HE. This should include reflections on the extent to which NQF goals (for example articulation, mobility, etc.) have been achieved or advanced.

❖ Identify, describe and critically analyse the concerns expressed around the NQF and its implementation in relation to HE. This should include concerns about whether strong vocational strains (an emphasis on training) are predominating over the NQF ideal of a total learning framework. It should also include concerns about delays and shortcomings in the design and registration of national qualifications through the NSB/SGB structures.

❖ Identify, describe and analyse the implications of the current implementation model of the NQF for the work of the HEQC.

❖ Identify, describe and critically analyse proposals that may be advanced for the effective and efficient achievement of the goals and objectives of the NQF in HE.

❖ Establish to what extent the goals of the NQF have been internalised within the HE community.

The project was initiated in August 2001 and will be completed in December 2001.

Building Relationships between Higher Education and the Private and Public Sectors to Respond to Knowledge and High-Level Human Resource Needs in the Context of Inequality and Unemployment

Following a commission at the 2000 CHE Consultative Conference, the secretariat established a project to look into the responsiveness of HE to private and public sector needs. The project is related to the statutory responsibility of the CHE 'to formulate advice to the Minister on stimulating greater institutional responsiveness to societal needs, especially those linked to stimulating South Africa's economy such as greater higher education-industry partnerships'.

The title of the project captures the CHE's approach to this issue. The purpose of the project is to initiate select activities that will provide a basis for providing informed and considered advice to the Minister of Education on:

❖ The changes in knowledge, skills and competencies taking place in the world of work and necessary to the transformation of South African society, and the implications of these changes for the work of the HE system. This will enhance the conceptualisation and understanding of the **relationship** between HE and business and assist in the definition of 'HE responsiveness'.

❖ The mechanisms to develop a responsive, effective and socially useful relationship between HE and the private and public sectors to respond to the challenges of economic and social development in the context of the problems of unemployment and inequality.

The specific aims of the project are to:

❖ Conceptualise and understand the nature of the relationships between HE institutions and employer and employee bodies in the context of global changes in the knowledge, skills and competencies required in the workplace and in society while engaging with South Africa's national human resource development strategy.

❖ Explore the incidence and nature of dialogue and partnerships between HE and private and public sector employer and employee bodies about these issues in selected countries.

❖ Initiate dialogue between HE leaders and the departments and ministries of Education, Labour, Trade and Industry and Public Service and private and public sector employer and employee representatives and organisations about knowledge and high-level human resource needs and explore ways of institutionalising such dialogue and meaningful partnership.

A key activity of this project is organising a major and high-level colloquium during mid-2002 initiated by the CHE and the Minister of Education. The colloquium intends to bring together the leaders of HE and the leaders of the private sector and key officials of select government ministries and departments. The objectives of the colloquium are to:

❖ Begin a dialogue about the nature, strengths and weaknesses of present relationships between HE and the private and public sectors.

❖ Explore mechanisms and ways to build robust and durable relationships between HE and the public and private sectors that can advance South Africa's economic and social development through the production of appropriate knowledge and high-level human resources.

❖ Provide an opportunity for leaders of both HE and the public and private sectors to engage with issues concerning the knowledge, skills and competencies required by the world of work and the diverse social purposes of HE.

The proceedings of the colloquium should assist in mapping the way forward for an effective and socially involved relationship between HE and the private and public sectors. A publication will be produced that draws together the background papers, presentations and the proceedings of the colloquium.

The British Department for International Development is providing support for this project.

Building a Monitoring and Evaluation System for South African Higher Education

The CHE is required to monitor and evaluate whether, how, to what extent and with what consequences the vision, policy goals and objectives for HE are being realised.

The *White Paper* specifically refers to advising the Minister of Education on:

❖ The performance of the system, having regard to available performance indicators.

❖ The progress being made towards achieving national equity and human resource development goals and measures to overcome impediments to achieving transformation goals. (DoE, 1997:3.25, l, n)

During the year the Task Team in this area was de-established in favour of this activity becoming a project. A project proposal has been developed, discussed with an ad hoc reference group and has been submitted to a donor. Initial approval of the project has been received.

The purpose of the three-year project is to begin establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework and system for HE that will assist the CHE to:

❖ Describe and analyse the state of HE in relation to the transformation agenda of the government.

❖ Establish the direction in which the HE system is moving in relation to the goals and objectives of the *White Paper* and whether this direction is desirable.

❖ Establish the role and efficacy of policy, structures, instruments, strategies and processes in the implementation of change in HE and at HE institutions.

The creation of a monitoring system is an extremely important, major and complex undertaking. The establishment of a Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) is the responsibility of the DoE. Thus, effective monitoring will require inputs from the DoE. The project takes into account the need to forge partnerships and co-operation with HE institutions, HE research and development agencies, science and technology agencies and individual specialists.

In formulating the project, the CHE has become aware of the conceptual inconsistencies that characterise international literature and practice on monitoring, evaluation and the use of performance indicators. One dimension of the project is the conceptual clarification of a number of terms currently used in the evaluation field. Another dimension is the elaboration of the methods, techniques and indicators that can take into account not just structures, mechanisms and outcomes, but also the process aspects of policy implementation.

The Ford Foundation has provided a grant of just over R2 million for this three-year project.

Triennial *Review of Higher Education*

The business plan of the CHE states that the CHE should produce a critical biennial 'Review of Higher Education'. Given the lead-time that is involved, producing a critical review of HE biennially may be ambitious. Instead, it may be more appropriate and advisable to produce the review triennially. Such a triennial review will enable the CHE to:

❖ Analyse and crystallise the key trends within South African and international HE.

❖ Analyse and identify the major challenges that confront South African HE.

❖ Proactively identify issues and areas that require further investigation for the purposes of advice to the Minister of Education.

The process of producing a triennial *Review of Higher Education* is intended to have some important developmental effects:

❖ Identifying and commissioning scholars and policy analysts to undertake research for the triennial *Review* will help to develop a community of critical HE analysts.

❖ Attaching especially young black and women scholars and postgraduate Master's and doctoral students to the scholars and policy analysts that are commissioned will ensure that the present rather small community of HE analysts is expanded and also becomes more representative in terms of 'race' and gender.

The Rockefeller Foundation has provided a grant of R1.6 million for this three-year project.

Higher Education and Social Transformation

The CHE was invited to take part in an international research project on the role of universities in the transformation of societies. The project was initiated by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information at the British Open University and the Association of Commonwealth Universities.

The general aim of the project is to understand the roles played by HE in radical or large-scale social, economic and political change through a number of country case studies, including South Africa.

A national working group has been constituted that will supervise the conceptualisation and implementation of the South African component of the international research project.

A grant of R190 000 was secured from the Rockefeller Foundation for this project.

Higher Education and the Public Good

South African policy documents reflect a strong adherence to the idea of HE as a public good. However, the dramatic global changes that are captured by the concept 'globalisation' and the social and economic ideologies, policies and practices that are currently hegemonic are having a significant impact on HE in developed and developing countries. They also impact on conceptions of the 'public good' generally as well as in relation to HE. With globalisation and the increasing marketisation of HE it appears that locally and internationally the notion of HE as a public good is being eroded. At the same time, it may be that HE as a public good is not self-evident and the benefits of HE are not immediately obvious to or felt by particular social groups.

In this context, there seems to be a good case for those who are persuaded that it is important and worthwhile to continue advancing some notion of the public good in relation to HE to:

❖ Critically revisit this notion, specifically in relation to HE but also more generally.

❖ Encourage greater writing, discussion and debate around how the notion is being conceived currently.

❖ Promote work on how, in what ways and to what extent the notion is being eroded, modified and/or pursued, and with what results.

❖ Stimulate debate on how the notion should be conceived and pursued at the levels of policy and practice.

The CHE initiated this project with the organisation of a focused dialogue on 'Higher Education Transformation and the Public Good' at the 'Globalisation and Higher Education: Views from the South' conference that took place in Cape Town in March 2001. Since then, the CHE has devoted the first issue of its newly launched publication, *Kagisano* (the *Discussion Series* of the CHE), to the theme of HE transformation and the public good. Regional CHE Discussion Forums on this theme are planned for early 2002.

7. Other activities of the CHE

During the past year, the CHE was involved in numerous other activities. These include:

❖ The 2nd Annual Consultative Conference of the CHE, held on 23–24 November 2000. The conference, which is required in terms of the *White Paper*, serves as a valuable mechanism for the exchange of ideas between HE stakeholders and the CHE, and for the identification of key challenges.

The Minister of Education delivered the keynote address at the conference. Commissions presented the opportunity for structured discussion around:

➢ Building public confidence in HE

➢ HE responsiveness to public and private sector needs

➢ Private HE: Trends and issues

➢ Redress policy for HE

❖ In accordance with its mandate to contribute to the development of HE through publications and conferences, the CHE has initiated *Kagisano* as a *Discussion Series* to stimulate discussion and debate around important issues related to the development of HE.

'Kagisano' is a Sotho/Tswana term which means 'to build each other' or 'to collaborate'. The CHE hopes that this publication will serve as a mechanism for collaboration in building our knowledge base on and around HE and each other intellectually.

❖ In accordance with its mandate to contribute to the development of HE through conferences, a CHE Discussion Forum was held on 'Key Global and International Trends in Higher Education: Challenges for South Africa and Developing Countries'. The forum was addressed by Prof. Philip Altbach, who is world renowned in the field of HE and Director of the Centre for International Higher Education at Boston College in Massachusetts in the United States.

Another CHE Discussion Forum that was to be held on 12 September 2001 with Prof. Samir Amin had to be cancelled due to events beyond the control of the CHE.

A number of workshops were held, especially around quality assurance related issues, including a major five-day training workshop on institutional audits and programme reviews in conjunction with the UK Quality Assurance Agency.

❖ The Chief Executive Officer of the CHE and the HEQC Executive Director, on behalf of the CHE, addressed and represented the CHE at numerous local, national and international seminars, workshops and conferences of stakeholders, HE and HE-related organisations, and HE institutions.

The CHE web site — http://www.che.org.za — provides a full indication of the activities of the CHE.

8. The Higher Education Quality Committee

The *Higher Education Act* assigned to the CHE statutory responsibility for quality assurance and quality promotion in HE, to be carried out through a permanent body, the HEQC. The work of the HEQC, in carrying out its mandate of giving effect to the NQF, is subject to the requirements of SAQA. The functions of the HEQC, according to the *Act*, are:

❖ To promote quality assurance in HE
❖ To audit the quality assurance mechanisms of HE institutions
❖ To accredit programmes of HE

8.1 Membership

As a permanent committee of the CHE, the HEQC has its own Board. The CHE called for nominations for the HEQC at the end of 2000, and 50 nominations were received from a range of HE sectors. The CHE

appointed 13 nominees to constitute the first HEQC. HEQC members were all appointed in their own right, although they bring expertise and experience from different stakeholder domains.

The membership comprises:

Prof. H Africa	:	Member of the CHE, Chair of the HEQC
Ms J Glennie	:	Member of the CHE, Director, South African Institute of Distance Education
Prof. D Maughan-Brown	:	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Natal
Prof. B Khotseng	:	Vice Rector, University of the Orange Free State
Prof. N Kok	:	Senior Vice-Rector (Academic), Cape Technikon
Ms K Sattar	:	Head: Quality Assurance, ML Sultan Technikon
Ms M Sebolai	:	Manager: Corporate Affairs, EduCor
Mr I Sehoole	:	Executive President, South African Institute of Chartered Accountants
Ms L Gordon-Davis	:	Executive Officer, South African Tourism Institute
Mr M Ka-Mabuza (resigned)	:	Student
Dr P Eagles	:	Chairperson, Forum of Statutory Health Councils
Mr N Bickett	:	Director: Business Strategy and Human Resources, Old Mutual
Dr J Reddy	:	Independent Consultant

The ex officio members are:

Dr M Singh	:	Executive Director, HEQC
Prof. S Badat	:	Chief Executive Officer, CHE
Dr M Qhobela	:	Chief Director, DoE — Higher Education Branch

A non-voting Department of Labour representative has yet to be appointed.

8.2 The activities of the HEQC

2001 has been a watershed year in the process of setting up a national system of quality assurance for South African HE. The finalisation and release of the HEQC *Founding Document* in 2000 was a fundamental first step in the conceptualisation of the mission and function of the CHE's quality assurance arm. However, much needed to be done in order to develop an efficient and effective system of quality assurance that is seen to add value to the work of HE providers.

The year saw:

❖ The accreditation by SAQA of the CHE as an ETQA body for HE.
❖ The establishment of the HEQC as a permanent committee of the CHE.
❖ The public launch of the HEQC by the Minister of Education.
❖ The first steps in the conceptualisation and design of HEQC programmes.
❖ The securing of funding to implement planned activities.
❖ The appointment of staff to undertake the tasks and responsibilities of the HEQC.

Terms of reference are being developed for HEQC sub-committees, for example the Accreditation Committee. These sub-committees will be established in the course of the coming year.

SAQA accreditation of CHE

As required by SAQA regulations, the CHE submitted an application to be recognised by SAQA as the ETQA for HE. SAQA approved the accreditation of the CHE as the band ETQA for HE on 14 February 2001. The CHE formally assumed its ETQA status on 1 March 2001, and is now fully responsible for the accreditation of new programmes of public providers and all programmes of private providers. The HEQC and SAQA co-operated on a handover plan to facilitate the smooth transition of accreditation arrangements for private providers which SAQA had handled up to that point. The Alliance of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development (APPETD) was briefed on the new arrangements and all stakeholders informed about the changes.

The HEQC launch

The HEQC was officially launched by the Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal, on 8 May 2001. The function was attended by 188 people, including Vice-Chancellors and senior staff of HE institutions, quality assurance personnel from HE providers, representatives from private HE institutions, professional councils, SETAs, donor organisations, some government departments and international quality assurance agencies.

The launch was accompanied by a workshop that was used to reflect on the function and identity of a new quality assurance agency, taking advantage of the presence of international representatives of quality assurance agencies from several developed and developing country contexts. The workshop, with the theme 'Lessons for a New Agency', was attended by 143 people, including quality assurance managers of public HE institutions, representatives of SETAs, professional councils and private providers of HE. The workshop was intended to begin a dialogue between the HEQC and the HE community and to demonstrate the HEQC's commitment to engage in serious debate about the content of its quality assurance policies as well as their implementation. Papers presented at the launch and discussions on them will form part of a CHE publication.

HEQC strategic planning

Soon after its establishment, the members of the HEQC and secretariat staff held a strategic planning exercise in June 2001.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

❖ Make all relevant information available to HEQC members on contextual issues, current HEQC plans and activities, funding and staffing arrangements, etc.

❖ Develop a consensual understanding of key principles, approaches, definitions, responsibilities and challenges in the *Founding Document*.

❖ Arrive at some consensus on the identity of the HEQC in the first three years of its operations.

❖ Prioritise HEQC responsibilities and tasks, and set goals and targets for the three-year period.

❖ Reach agreement on the role and responsibility of HEQC members.

❖ Identify subcommittees and their membership.

The workshop was a very useful step in establishing key principles and approaches for the operations of the HEQC for the next three-year period, clarifying relationships with other role-players, for example the DoE and SAQA, and developing action steps and deadlines for the three directorates. It was agreed that the HEQC would use the rest of 2001 and 2002 to put the building blocks of a new quality assurance system in place. This would include the development of new accreditation and auditing systems and instruments, the facilitation of quality development and improvement at system and institutional level, and the identification and dissemination of good practice in a number of aspects of quality provision.

Programme accreditation

The HEQC has continued to discharge its responsibility to accredit programmes of both public and private providers.

The table below provides data with regard to the accreditation of programmes of public providers by the Interim Joint Committee (which consists of members and staff of the CHE, and representatives from SAQA, the DoE, SAUVCA and the CTP).

Table 2: Accreditation of programmes of public providers, 2000–2001

Year	Committee meetings	Applications	Applications not tabled	Applications tabled	Programmes not accredited	Programmes accredited
2000	10	2 587	264	2 323	991	1 332
2001	3	597	164	433	206	227

With respect to private providers, there were applications from 104 providers. The HEQC has processed 220 applications since taking over this responsibility from SAQA on 1 March 2001. The Joint Committee (consisting of CHE members and staff, and representatives from APPETD, the DoE and SAQA) granted interim accreditation for 77 programmes.

In addition to the above accreditation activities, the HEQC has initiated the process of revising the accreditation systems and manuals which are currently in use. The 'Blue Book' has been revised and APPETD members have assisted the HEQC in testing the revised version. Analyses of the comments on the revised document are being integrated into the revised version and it is hoped that the new version will be introduced into the system at the beginning of 2002.

The HEQC has worked closely with the CTP to develop a revised process for technikon applications following the closure of the Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC). This initiative is designed to develop a common accreditation process for universities and technikons. Following a workshop in August 2001 to discuss critical issues in accreditation, the HEQC has taken steps to develop a new accreditation framework whose quality requirements will be the same for all providers of HE. A first version of such a new framework is planned for early 2002. Consultations with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken before a new HEQC accreditation system is finalised.

Co-ordination

SAQA has accredited a number of professional councils and SETAs as ETQAs, and many of them have quality assurance interests and claims in HE. The *Addendum to the Criteria and Guidelines for ETQAs* has assigned to the CHE a co-ordinating role with regard to quality assurance in HE. This includes the facilitation of a co-operative approach to quality assurance on the part of different ETQAs in HE in order to ensure a coherent approach to quality, as well as lightening the burden of multiple quality assurance demands made on providers. SAQA has required the conclusion of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between the CHE and other ETQAs in HE as a mechanism for co-operation. Nine draft MOUs have been developed with a number of other ETQAs and, on finalisation, will serve as pilots to test co-operation on quality assurance in fields of common interest, but different jurisdictions. The MOUs seek to articulate a joint approach to the activities of accreditation, auditing and evaluation on the basis of certain common commitments to quality and quality assurance. The MOUs may not address every single issue of jurisdiction, but they are intended to support a coherent approach to the implementation of an integrated system of education and training.

Quality promotion

HEQC staff presented information on the HEQC's plans and projects, and addressed general quality assurance concerns at five separate meetings arranged by the different regional consortia of HE institutions. Discussions on co-operative quality assurance activities with the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions in the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM), Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (ESATI), Adamastor Trust, Eastern Cape Higher Education Association (ECHEA) and the Free State Higher and Further Education Training Trust (FSHFETT) were also initiated. HEQC staff have also begun visiting individual public HE institutions in order to publicise the work of the HEQC. Such visits will be continued and expanded in the course of the coming year.

The HEQC had meetings and a workshop with APPETD on quality assurance issues of concern to private providers. Visits to individual private providers will commence in the coming year as the HEQC increases its capacity. As part of its quality promotion mandate, the HEQC is planning a programme of activities on the sharing of good practice in quality assurance.

A very successful meeting was held with the co-ordinators and managers of quality assurance at universities and technikons in July 2001. It was the first meeting of quality assurance practitioners from the entire public HE sector. It was called by the HEQC to discuss issues pertaining to a national quality assurance system for the country as well as to explore how best to take forward two HEQC projects (on teaching and learning, and the development of an internal quality management system). The South African University Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA), Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) and the regional consortia were represented at the workshop, and it was agreed that the HEQC would facilitate co-operative projects in the two areas identified for discussion.

Quality capacity development

Despite operating under severe staff constraints, the conceptualisation and implementation of a training programme to strengthen quality assurance capacity at all levels of quality assurance activity was initiated. The first leg of the programme was a training workshop planned jointly with the Qualifications Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the United Kingdom. A cohort of senior academics and administrators from public and private HE and professional councils together with HEQC staff participated in a five-day workshop in September 2001. The workshop covered local and international quality assurance issues, the conduct of institutional audits and programme evaluations, and the development of necessary competencies for auditors and reviewers. The HEQC plans to draw on the workshop participants to assist with quality assurance system development, participation in site visits and further training initiatives, especially during the following eighteen months.

A second training programme is being developed that will focus on the needs of quality assurance co-ordinators at provider level.

Quality assurance research and development

In the course of the year, a number of studies were commissioned to assist with the development of appropriate HEQC systems. The Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) produced a report for the CHE on the usage of terms like accreditation, validation and endorsement. The report is intended to clarify the HEQC's own use of such terms in giving effect to its accreditation mandate.

The Community Higher Education Service Partnership (CHESP) project of the Joint Education Trust (JET) has been commissioned to produce a report on the quality assurance aspects of service learning programmes which are being monitored by CHESP, as well as a report on criteria for service learning for possible inclusion in a new HEQC accreditation system. The HEQC has also contracted a project co-ordinator to develop a proposal on teaching and learning which will seek to provide information on good practice as well as identify training opportunities for educators. A project co-ordinator has also been contracted to produce a new accreditation framework and accreditation instrument for the HEQC. All reports that are commissioned will be used in consultative workshops with relevant HE stakeholders.

HEQC staff and the chair of the HEQC participated in the triennial conference of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in India in March 2001. Dr Singh, the Executive Director of the HEQC, was elected onto the Board of INQAAHE and also serves as a member of an international advisory group commissioned by the Centre for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in the United States.

Liaison with colleagues in quality assurance agencies in other countries is ongoing as a mechanism to exchange information, keep abreast of international developments in quality assurance and feed good practice into the systems development activities of the HEQC.

Other activities

HEQC staff have been involved in a wide variety of additional activities. These include generating discussion and planning documents, responding to a variety of policy initiatives from government departments and other organisations, fielding queries about quality assurance, accreditation and other matters, assisting some institutions to improve their accreditation documentation, and making presentations at workshops and conferences.

The closure of SERTEC has made it necessary for the HEQC to take urgent steps to address quality assurance at technikons, agricultural colleges and polytechnics in certain SADC countries. The CHE has mandated the CTP to undertake quality assurance visits to an agreed number of institutions until the end of 2002. HEQC staff are participating in the visits that have been arranged.

8.3 Conclusion

With some measure of increased capacity in the form of additional financial resources and staff, the HEQC is now in a stronger position to begin implementing programmes to give effect to the principles and commitments outlined in the *Founding Document*. The coming year brings the challenge of completing the

development of many of the systems and instruments needed by the HEQC to carry out its quality assurance mandate and responsibilities.

Important other challenges in the coming year will include:

❖ The continuing volatility in public HE stemming from the reconfiguration of HE institutions and the implications of this for quality assurance activities.
❖ The insertion of a new academic policy into HE planning.
❖ The need to clarify the issues of quality assurance jurisdiction and responsibility among multiple ETQAs in HE.
❖ The integration of different HE provider sectors into a single quality assurance dispensation.

9. CHE organisation

The CHE comprises the Council, an Executive Committee (EXCO), and a Secretariat headed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

During the past year, the Council of the CHE met every two months and the EXCO met monthly. Task teams and projects teams have met as required. The Council met formally with the Minister of Education on two occasions, while the CHE Chair and CEO met with the Minister on numerous occasions.

The CHE offices are in a wing on the first floor of Sol Plaatje House, 123 Schoeman Street, Pretoria. This location helps ensure ongoing and effective communication with key HE stakeholders, in particular the DoE. However, major problems and inefficiencies have also been experienced, especially in relation to ICTs, requiring the CHE to investigate obtaining its own independent ICT infrastructure. The closure of SERTEC and the transfer of its assets to the CHE meant that the CHE became the beneficiary of considerable assets in the form of furniture and equipment.

10. Secretariat/personnel

To support the work and activities of the CHE, including the HEQC, the CHE has appointed a core of full-time professional staff with knowledge and experience of HE, supported by able administrators and support staff. Where necessary, the CHE has requested institutions to second personnel with special expertise and skills to the CHE and has also made use of a number of local and international consultants.

The present personnel structure and complement is noted below.

Table 3: Personnel structure of the CHE and incumbents

Post	Incumbent
1. Chief Executive Officer (CHE)	Prof. Saleem Badat
2. Projects Manager (CHE)	Dr Lis Lange (contract)
3. Research Officer (CHE)	Vacant — to be advertised
4. Personal Assistant (CHE)	Ms Christa Smit (contract)
5. Secretary (CHE)	Vacant — to be advertised
6. Media/Resource Officer (CHE, HEQC)	Mr Zizi Mlonyeni
7. Office Manager (CHE, HEQC)	Ms Louise Ismail
8. Executive Director (HEQC)	Dr Mala Singh (NRF secondment)
9. Director: Quality Promotion and Development (HEQC)	Ms Sheila Tyeku
10. Director: Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination (HEQC)	Mr Prem Naidoo
11. Director: Institutional Audits and Evaluation (HEQC)	Dr John Carneson

12.	Projects Manager (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
13.	Projects Officer (HEQC)	Mr Oliver Seale
14.	Manager: Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
15.	Manager: Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
16.	Manager: Institutional Audits and Evaluation (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
17.	Manager: Quality Promotion and Development (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
18.	Project Administrator: Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination (HEQC)	Mr Tshepo Magabane
19.	Project Administrator: Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination (HEQC)	Mr Derrick Zitha (contract)
20.	Project Administrator: Institutional Audits and Evaluation (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
21.	Project Administrator: Quality Promotion and Development (HEQC	Vacant — to be advertised
22.	Personal Assistant (HEQC)	Ms Pam du Toit (NRF secondment)
23.	Secretary: Programme Accreditation and Co-ordination (HEQC)	Ms Jenny Maloi (contract)
24.	Secretary: Institutional Audits and Evaluation (HEQC)	Vacant — to be advertised
25.	Secretary: Quality Promotion and Development (HEQC)	Ms Lehanda Rheeder (contract)

The CHE also had the services of five staff members who were seconded for various periods from HE institutions. Extensive use continued to be made of consultants, especially on projects, and of short-term contract staff because of inadequate state funding and an excessive reliance on donor funding.

The success of the CHE depends on high quality, effective and efficient staff with the necessary knowledge, expertise, skills and competencies, as well as adequate funding. The filling of senior posts with high quality personnel has been a major achievement. The challenge now is to find good quality middle-level personnel and support staff and to ensure that, overall, there is a strong adherence to employment equity.

11. Finances

Government funding that is adequate for the discharge of all the responsibilities that have been allocated to the CHE, and particularly the quality assurance responsibilities, continued to be a major problem during the past year. Whereas the CHE required almost R14 million for the financial year 2001–2002, the state grant was only R4 million. The CHE is committed to raising donor funding for various projects and specific initiatives. However, it believes that core personnel costs and the major part of CHE funding should be derived from the government. In this regard, considerable progress was made with the commitment provided by the Minister to explore the funding of the HEQC through a top-slicing of the HE budget.

The development of programme, project and associated funding proposals consumed considerable energy and time during the past year. The quality of the proposals, however, yielded major success. Table 4 below indicates the various grants that have been secured from donors.

Table 4: Donor grants to the CHE, 2001

Activity	Donor	Grant amount
Projects development and strategic planning	Ford Foundation	Just over R1 million (from existing 2000 grant)
Language Policy Task Team report	United States Agency for International Development	R302 000
Governance Task Team investigation; HE Responsiveness project and NQF Review project	British Department for International Development (DFID)	Just over R2 million (1 April 2001 to 31 August 2002)
Monitoring the Achievement of Policy Objectives project	Ford Foundation	Just over R2 million (1 September 2001 to 31 August 2003)
Triennial Review of HE project	Rockefeller Foundation	$190 000 (1 September 2001 to 31 August 2003)
Role of HE in the Transformation of Societies project	Rockefeller Foundation	R190 000
Quality assurance	Carnegie Corporation	$400 000 (1 September 2001 to 31 March 2003)
Quality assurance	Ford Foundation	Just over R2.7 million (1 September 2001 to 31 March 2003)
Projects-related travel to and from the UK	British Council	Various

The closure of SERTEC and the transfer of its assets to the CHE contributed about R2.4 million in cash to the CHE coffers.

The CHE is still exploring Dutch government funding for quality assurance, awaiting a DFID response to requested support for quality assurance activities, and awaiting a response to an R8 million application for quality assurance support from another international donor. The DoE has provided access to foreign government and international agency support.

12. Conclusion

Despite limited human and financial resources, the CHE made tremendous progress during the past year towards fulfilling its mandate. Much of this is due to an extremely committed and hard-working secretariat, the generous support of HE institutions who have seconded their staff to the CHE for varying periods, and effective and competent consultants who have contributed to various CHE projects and initiatives. Not least, there has existed a wise, considerate and diligent Council with a conscientious EXCO, and individual members who have made major contributions to the various activities of the CHE. The Council and EXCO have provided exemplary support to the secretariat and have facilitated its work.

Overall, the CHE is in a healthy state and is well poised to discharge the mandate and responsibilities accorded to it by the *Higher Education Act* and the *White Paper* altogether more comprehensively, effectively and efficiently in the coming years.

AUDIT REPORT

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2001

1. AUDIT ASSIGNMENT

The financial statements as set out on pages 105 to 106 for the year ended 31 March 2001, have been audited in terms of section 188 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), read with sections 3 and 5 of the Auditor-General Act, 1995 (Act No. 12 of 1995) and section 18 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997). These financial statements, the maintenance of effective control measures and compliance with relevant laws and regulations are the responsibility of the accounting officer. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements and the compliance with relevant laws and regulations, applicable to financial matters, based on the audit.

2. REGULARITY AUDIT

2.1 NATURE AND SCOPE

2.1.1 Financial audit

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards which incorporate generally accepted auditing standards. These standards require the audit to be planned and performed in order to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes:

❖ examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements;
❖ assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management; and
❖ evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

I believe that the audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

2.1.2 Compliance audit

Furthermore, an audit includes an examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting compliance in all material respects with the relevant laws and regulations which came to my attention and are applicable to financial matters.

I believe that the audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.
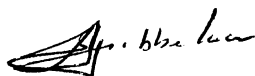
2.2 AUDIT OPINION

2.2.1 Financial audit

In my opinion, the financial statements fairly present, in all material respects, the financial position of the council at 31 March 2001 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the prescribed accounting practice and in the manner required by the relevant Act.

2.2.2 Compliance audit

Based on the audit work performed, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe that material non-compliance with laws and regulations, applicable to financial matters, has occurred.

3. APPRECIATION

The assistance rendered by the staff of the Council during the audit is sincerely appreciated.

JS GROBBELAAR
for Auditor-General

Pretoria
19/9/2001

SCHEDULE A

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2001

1   Legislation
The Council on Higher Education has been established in terms of section 4 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No.101 of 1997).

2   Accounting policy
The principal accounting policies set out below have been consistently applied and conform in all material aspects to generally accepted accounting practice.

2.1 Accounting basis
The annual financial statements are prepared on the historical cost basis and incorporate the following principal policies.

2.2 Depreciation
To ensure full write-off over the useful life of assets, depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis as follows:
    Computers 33% per annum
    Equipment 20% per annum
    Furniture 10% per annum

Additions to library books and fixed assets below R2,000 (two thousand rand) are charged directly to the income and expenditure statement

2.3 Retirement benefits
The policy of the Council on Higher Education is to allow permanent staff to decided on their own individual retirement fund and health care instruments. The Council's liability is restricted to the monthly employee contributions towards these benefits.

2.4 Revenue
In terms of the Higher Education Act, the CHE's funds consist of: a) Government grants to fund the operational infrastructure; b) Donor funding for specific earmarked projects; c) Monies the CHE may charge for any services rendered and any donations received.

3 Revenue for the period	2000–2001 R	1999–2000 R
Government grants	4,663,000	1,418,000
Donations received	2,061,365	1,442,248
Sundry income	299,545	0
	7,023,910	2,860,248
Interest received	298,742	199,759
Total revenue received	**7,322,652**	**3,060,007**

4 Operating expenses for the year	2000–2001 R	1999–2000 R
Personnel costs	1,177,942	505,197
Directors remuneration	536,424	351,026
Consultancy costs*	1,838,240	529,198
Operational costs	1,706,488	784,842
Total operating cost before depreciation	**5,259,094**	**2,170,263**
Depreciation costs	14,544	153
Total operating cost after depreciation	**5,273,638**	**2,170,416**

* Consultancy costs:
In accordance with GAAP, 'consultancy costs' refer to: a) Staff seconded to the CHE, contract staff and consultants employed against unoccupied established posts that have been budgeted for; and b) Contract staff and consultants employed against donor project funds.

SCHEDULE A

5 Reconciliation between net surplus & cash generated

from operation	2000–2001	1999–2000
Net surplus for the year	2,049,014	889,744
Adjusted for:		
- Depreciation	14,544	153
- Interest received	-298,742	-199,759
Operating surplus before changes in working capital	**1,764,816**	**690,138**

Changes in working capital	-373,250	522,763
Increase/(decrease) in trade & payables	-352,860	522,763
Decrease/(increase) in trade & receivables	-20,390	0
	1,391,566	**1,212,901**

6 Cash & cash equivalent comprise:

	4,332,319	2,859,055
Short-term investment	4,069,738	2,655,578
Cash & cash equivalents	262,581	203,477

7 Property, plant & equipment

1999–2000

	Computer	Office equipment	Furniture	TOTAL
Carrying amount at beginning of the year	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Cost	0	0	0	0
Accumulated depreciation	0	0	0	0
Movement during the year	**12,352**	**0**	**0**	**12,352**
Addition	12,505	0	0	12,505
Depreciation	-153	0	0	-153

2000–2001

	Computer	Office equipment	Furniture	TOTAL
Carrying amount at beginning of the year	**12,352**	**0**	**0**	**12,352**
Cost	12,505	0	0	12,505
Accumulated depreciation	-153	0	0	-153
Movement during the year	**90,658**	**31,669**	**80,173**	**202,500**
Addition	103,039	33,283	80,722	217,044
Depreciation	-12,381	-1,614	-549	-14,544
Carrying amount at the end of the year	**103,008**	**31,669**	**80,173**	**214,852**
Cost	115,542	33,283	80,722	229,549
Accumulated depreciation	-12,534	-1,614	-549	-14,697

STATEMENT 1

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2001

	Notes	2000–2001 R	1999–2000 R
ASSETS			
Non-current assets		**214,852**	**12,352**
Property, plant & equipment	7	214,852	12,352
Current assets		**4,352,709**	**2,859,055**
Trade & other receivables		20,390	
Short-term investment		4,069,738	2,655,578
Cash & cash equivalents		262,581	203,477
TOTAL ASSETS		**4,567,561**	**2,871,407**
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Capital and reserves		**4,397,658**	**2,348,644**
Accumulated funds		4,397,658	2,348,644
Current liabilities		**169,903**	**522,763**
Trade and other payables		169,903	522,763
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		**4,567,561**	**2,871,407**

MS Badat   LM Ismail

Pretoria, 29/05/2001   Chief Executive Officer   Accounting Officer

STATEMENT 2

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION
INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2001

	Notes	2000–2001 R	1999–2000 R
Revenue for the year	3	7,322,652	3,060,007
Less: Operating expenses for the year	4	5,273,638	2,170,263
Surplus at the end of the period		2,049,014	889,744

STATEMENT 3

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2001

	Notes	Accumulated funds	
		2000–2001 R	1999–2000 R
Opening balance		2,348,644	1,458,900
Surplus for period		2,049,014	889,744
Closing balance		**4,397,658**	**2,348,644**

STATEMENT 4

COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION
CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2001

	Notes	2002–2001 R	1999–2000 R
Cash flow from operating activities		**1,690,308**	**1,412,507**
Cash received from government & donors	3	6,765,910	2,860,248
Cash payments to suppliers & employees		-5,374,344	-1,647,500
Cash generated from operations	5	**1,391,566**	**1,212,748**
Interest received		298,742	199,759
Cash flow from investment activities		**-217,044**	**-12,352**
Additions to assets			
- Computers		-103,039	-12,352
- Office equipment		-33,283	
- Furniture		-80,722	
Movement in cash and cash equivalents		**1,473,264**	**1,400,155**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		2,859,055	1,458,900
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	6	**4,332,319**	**2,859,055**

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❖ *The Council on Higher Education*

❖ *The CHE Higher Education Quality Committee*

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❖ Public handover to the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, of the CHE Size and Shape Task Team Report, *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the Twenty-first Century* (18 July 2001)

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