

THE FIRST MERGER: THE DURBAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY¹ CASE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Durban Institute of Technology (DIT), a university of technology with just over 20 000 students as of 2005, was formed in April 2002 as a result of the merger of the former ML Sultan Technikon (MLS) and Technikon Natal (TN). It became a university of technology in 2003. The MLS had been designated an Indian institution in the apartheid period, while the TN was designated to serve white students. The other technikon within the Durban area, Mangosothu Technikon, which catered for African students, was excluded from this merger, partly because it was situated in Umlazi, which is some distance from the other two institutions, which were more centrally located in the city. Both the institutions participating in the merger had followed the general trend of racial diversification in tertiary education as apartheid entered its terminal phase.

This particular case predates the main wave of mergers in higher education, which began two years later. It is of interest as part of the wider study of mergers because it was the first one to take place and because it did so relatively independently of central direction. A brief account of its experience is warranted, because of the particular circumstances of the case, which may make it of some comparative interest.

The DIT case is often described as ‘voluntary’, because it was not a direct result of ministerial intervention. It was based on agreement between the two technikons, which had recognised in the late 1990s that they were strong candidates for merging, primarily because of their physical locations. The main campus of the former TN is within easy walking distance of its MLS counterpart, from which it is separated by a minor road, so that it is often said that an outsider could pass from one institution to the other without noticing the difference. Although the picture is complicated by the existence of other campuses that were linked to the TN, including one in Pietermaritzburg some 80 kilometres away, it can be argued that the two institutions were natural and obvious candidates for merging. Indeed, the merger may be seen as pre-emptive in the sense that the government would have probably made these two institutions prime candidates in any case. For more details on the merger, see Soobrayan (2003, especially pp. 93–96). She makes the valuable point that government pressure was very much part of the picture, especially when inter-institutional tensions threatened to derail the process (Soobrayan, 2003: 96).

The merger became a legal reality through an issue of the Government Gazette dated 4 January 2003, and signed by the Minister of Education acting ‘in accordance with section

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23(1) of the Higher Education Act 1997 (Act No. 10 of 1997)'. This instrument *inter alia* provided for the following:

- Date of establishment: 1 April 2002.
- Institution to be known as the Durban Institute of Technology.
- The establishment of an Interim Council with five members, including a chairperson appointed by the Minister.
- The transfer of assets to the new technikon.
- Existing agreements of employment to continue to apply after the merger.

2. FACTORS CONDUCTIVE TO SUCCESS

Although the factors involved were complex, in broad terms there were four situational factors outside of the direct control of institutional management that were conducive to success in handling student matters; these probably made it possible to handle the pipeline issue fairly well. The factors were as follows:

1. The physical location, referred to earlier. About 70 percent of activity takes place in a consolidated area of about two square kilometres, although there is an important two-site campus at Pietermaritzburg 80 kilometres away (former TN) and for a brief period DIT included a former College of Education 200 kilometres to the south (Gamalake near Margate). TN's history is one of much greater geographical dispersal than MLS, whose constituent parts were considerably more physically integrated.
2. The fact that both institutions were technikons meant that, where both were offering the same diploma, the rules, syllabi, credits, etc. were very similar, albeit not necessarily the same in every sense. This was a direct consequence of a situation in which all technikons found themselves. The 'convener' system, which applied to all technikons, ensured a large degree of uniformity. This system meant that a particular technikon was designated to take responsibility for these matters in liaison with the other institutions, and to communicate with the Department of Education accordingly. A key document here is Report 151 (DoE, 2001), the two volumes of which spelt out in a comprehensive way the components of each national qualification. This system and its implications for pipeline students are discussed in more detail later in this report.
3. The two institutions were quite similar in size (measured in terms of student numbers and staff) and financial standing. While MLS was slightly smaller at the time of the merger, it had the better financial position. These factors, in combination, created a balance of circumstances that meant there was never likely to be a dominating partner (it would have been much more difficult if the former white institution had been seen as driving the show), although there were inevitably rivalries and tensions. Some of these were rooted in historical and racial factors. It should be noted that TN was undergoing a financial crisis during the preparation period. This appears to have caused some anxiety and controversy within MLS, as staff organisations expressed

concern over the implications of inheriting problems of indebtedness and the like – they wanted the merger called off (Soobrayan, 2003: 95). Paradoxically, this factor may be interpreted as a positive one, because it allowed MLS to occupy the key position of the higher ground within the negotiation arena and thus offset fears of TN domination of the merger.

4. Unlike the situation in some other mergers, there appears to have been little difference in the quality of delivery between the programmes offered at the two technikons. The infrastructure at MLS was certainly not of the quality enjoyed at TN, but the differences were not extreme enough to be a major consideration. In terms of staffing, the degrees of difference were similarly negligible.

Although the above factors were conducive to success, the difficulties of merging were considerable. However, the argument of this report is that the problems of the pipeline students were rather less taxing than were other aspects of the merger such as staffing, which affected these students indirectly rather than directly. It is not argued here that the merger was an overwhelming success but that, as far as the pipeline issue is concerned, major difficulties were largely absent. Discussions with managers who have been involved throughout the series of episodes making up the merger suggest that the pipeline issue was handled with considerably more efficacy than any of the others.

3. THE DIT EXPERIENCE: A REVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Preparation for the merger

A key element at DIT was the extent to which pre-merger planning enabled the institution to subsequently manage pipeline students relatively smoothly. Although the merger took place formally on 1 April 2002, a plan setting out proposed general academic rules appeared in August 2001 and was submitted to the respective Senates and Faculty Boards of TN and MLS (Student Administration Merger Task Group, 2001). Prior to this there had been a great deal of planning activity in which several consultants played roles, although review of the relevant documentation indicates that in April 1999 pipeline students and similar matters were not a major concern. See, for example, the discussion about a proposed merger charter (TN–MLS, 1999).

A basic principle was that all ‘level one’ students would be in receipt of a ‘common educational experience’ (Starkey, 2004: 5). In addition, the pre-merger discussions at senior management level stressed that this could not be a cosmetic change, but that ‘for the merger to succeed it should be experienced as an actual rather than a virtual, merging of the two institutions’ (Starkey, 2004: 7). There was agreement that certain areas of commonality needed to be debated and agreed upon before the merger, or soon afterwards: programme rules, tests, assessment, syllabi, examinations and contact time (Starkey, 2004: 9).

These matters were the subject of prolonged and sometimes tense debate, but were ratified by the ‘Committee of Thirteen’ (COT) that had been playing the role of Interim Council since December 2001.

Other elements of preparedness affecting pipeline students dealt with in 2001 were the following:

- The academic calendar.
- Lecture periods (duration, starting times, forum – a non-teaching period).
- A rule book for students.
- Programme rules for diplomas and bachelor's degrees, including admission criteria, which were agreed to between merging departments; but note that there were several 'unique' departments without a counterpart in the other institution (for example, Postgraduate Nursing).

Inevitably, several other matters were left hanging, such as rules relating to research students, the student data management system, cooperative education and student fees, but the groundwork as outlined above not only resolved a number of important matters, it also enabled staff of the two institutions to develop a measure of understanding and cooperation before the merger itself.

Communication with students also received attention: a letter from both Vice-Chancellors was sent out four months before the merger to explain the process. Headed *The New Institution*, it read in part:

This letter serves to inform you of how you will be affected by this process (*merging*) when you register in January 2002.

- A returning student will re-register at the Technikon where they first registered.
- First time registering students will register at the Technikon where they have applied and been accepted.
- During the course of 2002, we will start to merge the various departments of the two institutions. This will be a gradual and ongoing process.
- When you have completed all the requirements for the programme you have registered for, you will receive your qualification from the 'new institution'.
- Students who meet all the requirements of their programme by the end of February 2002 will receive their qualifications from the Technikon at which they were registered at 31 December 2001.

(Letter from both Vice-Chancellors to all prospective, returning and qualifying students, December 2001)

This letter, signed jointly by the two incumbent Vice-Chancellors, also noted that the announcement of the new name by the Minister of Education was still awaited.

Students were asked to sign a declaration at registration to the effect that they agreed to register at the new institution, to abide by the new rules and regulations, and to receive the appropriate DIT qualification upon successful completion.

3.2 Admission requirements and access

The 2002 intake was registered with one of the two partner institutions since the merger did not prove to be feasible from the start of that year. Agreement was reached, however, largely because the disparities in terms of matriculation examination points required were not large, although they were generally higher for TN. Part of the difference was not the criteria themselves, but the degree of flexibility allowed: TN was more rigid in applying minimum criteria than MLS. Another matter requiring decision was that MLS admissions were not fully linked with the Central Applications Office set up in KwaZulu-Natal Province to coordinate applications to tertiary institutions (including the other technikon in the province – Mangosuthu). Naidoo reports that former TN staff were worried about standards falling because of the merger – mainly because it had the effect of bringing into the institution more students for whom English was not their home language (Naidoo, 2004). This meant that in certain classes a different teaching approach was called for.

Fees were, however, a different story and took nearly two years to harmonise. TN fees tended to be higher but, perhaps of more importance, the institution used a levy system, which in effect meant students made two payments – fees per se and a levy (sometimes as large as the fee), which was supposed to be allocated to the registering department to offset some delivery costs, such as equipment used in teaching. This issue had not been finalised even at the time of writing, as the jury was still out on the scrapping of levies.

As far as student codes were concerned, harmonisation was achieved by the start of the 2004 academic year. The parallel coding that persisted until then resulted in a number of late registrations in 2003 and there are, of course, students who want to complete their studies at DIT having left short of completion pre-merger; they will obviously have to have codes changed.

3.3 Duplication of programmes and overlap

Many of the programmes at the two institutions were essentially the same (because of the national curricula system that had governed technikons), so the merger aided integration, since it eliminated duplication rather than causing it. In several cases there was no problem, as a programme had only been run at one institution. These ‘unique’ programmes still had to be covered by general rules, but otherwise the process was quite simple. In the Commerce Faculty, for example, there were six diplomas in this category. In at least one case, closely related but separate diplomas were re-curriculated so that they could be unified; examples of this were in the areas of Catering, Food and Hospitality. Other decisions that had to be taken were whether to run programmes on a semester (as at TN) or annual basis (as at MLS). In practice, a compromise was struck and a mixed system was agreed upon, but with consequential difficulties in coordination. These remained unsolved at the time of writing and planning the academic year was more than usually difficult as a result.

From 2003, DIT graduation certificates were awarded, but students originally registered with MLS or TN had this fact indicated at the foot of the certificate. In 2003 this was still the practice for the remaining pre-2003 entrants.

3.4 Credits and weights

As both institutions were technikons, the national framework (contained in Report 151, DoE, 2001) provided for uniformity here. The courses/modules offered in each diploma were allocated codes and credits. In three-year programmes (the normal minimum duration), the student needed to obtain three credits in total, which were broken down into decimal figures. For example, in the National Diploma in Town and Regional Planning, the weighting of credits varied from 0.083 (Computer Skills and Communication Skills) to 0.300 (Development Planning and Planning Design) (DoE, 2001[1]: 77). The scope for difference between MLS and TN was minimal as a result of the centralised way these matters were determined.

3.5 Academic infrastructure

The physical moving of departments was done in the vacation at the end of 2002, though by 2005 some moves had still not taken place. The old TN site (now the Steve Biko campus) hosts two faculties (Engineering Science, and the Built Environment and Health Sciences), whilst MLS is mainly host to Commerce. TN's old city campus, two kilometres away, is occupied by Arts. There are, however, still some anomalies that hinder integration of faculties; for example, the Photography programme is in Arts, but is located at MLS.

The movement of staff from one place to another has not been easy and has affected morale. It can be hypothesised that white staff from TN who were moved to MLS felt uncomfortable, some failing to adjust to what they saw as a downgrading of their status. This trauma condition did not help students in the throes of coping with change themselves. Similarly, students who had been located at the old TN campus were uncomfortable about moving to MLS.

Even the whereabouts of some departments was a mystery for a while for all stakeholders. Signage was changed very slowly and had still not been fully updated by late 2005; this obviously makes the institution less user-friendly. One dean has been forced to adopt the habit of periodically touring sites where he has the responsibility for identifying anomalous and misleading signs. This has been the only way to ensure that changes do take place.

For discussion of library facilities and student accommodation, see the section on multi-campus issues.

3.6 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

This was not a major issue, for the perhaps somewhat negative reason that neither institution had made significant progress on this front prior to the merger, although both had similar procedures and practices in the related area of 'conferment of status' which provided for

admission and exemption for applicants without the regular admission qualifications. Status conferred students were treated in the same way as others. An RPL policy was developed approximately two years after the merger, its implementation not significantly affected by the creation of the new institution.

4. MULTI-CAMPUSES

DIT operates in two cities – Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The former hosts the main campus – the core area referred to earlier – and two in other parts of the city (one of these is devoted entirely to Fashion and Textile Design). Some programmes are offered in both Pietermaritzburg and Durban, but only two (Education and Tourism) are offered in Pietermaritzburg and not in Durban. As was the case prior to the merger, students are not permitted to change sites except under very exceptional circumstances. It is rare for such requests to be made.

At the time of the merger, steps were taken to ensure that the status quo remained so that the quality of provision was as far as possible the same for students at both sites, and this seems to have been largely achieved, although there have been problems. Students registered in Pietermaritzburg can argue that, although the standard of teaching there may be on a par with Durban, elements of the physical infrastructure and other services such as libraries and clinics may not be, and their studies may suffer as a result.

Staff teaching loads tend to be higher in Pietermaritzburg; this has given rise to some concern. The more senior and better-qualified academics tend to be located in Durban (there is only one professor holding a doctorate in Pietermaritzburg and she is on a short-term contract). However, this tends to be offset by the argument that student numbers in Pietermaritzburg are generally lower. The student residences in Pietermaritzburg are generally agreed to be of inferior quality. Library facilities continue to be a headache as equality of provision is a challenge that demands a substantial increase in resources. With regard to all these matters, the Pietermaritzburg staff (and in particular its decentralised managers) tend to argue that the campus is a ‘stepchild’ and that redress is called for. A number of initiatives are being undertaken including a donor-assisted project to improve coordination between programmes offered in a multi-campus fashion.

While it can be argued that these problems would have been present within the TN even if there had been no merger, the creation of DIT has in some ways been a complication, in that managers and academics from MLS are now required to deal with issues unfamiliar to them. This is compounded by the more centralised mode of operation, and possibly a corresponding centralist culture, as far as MLS is concerned. It is clear that to head a department in which everyone has an office in the same corridor is very different from what obtains when some staff are 80 kilometres away, electronic communication notwithstanding.

How does this affect the students? It has certainly in some ways affected the responsiveness of the system to student registration problems and the like (it might be worthwhile carrying out an analysis comparing the Durban and Pietermaritzburg students in this respect). It is of interest, however, that there do not appear to be significant differences in academic performance.

5. POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

It was the case that both institutions had very few students beyond BTech level (less than one per cent). However, TN had a significant number of coursework programmes in Health Sciences and Commerce. These proved relatively easy to incorporate and subsequent accreditation problems (such as the closing of the Master's in Business Administration) cannot be attributed to the merger. Research supervision and other forms of support probably benefited, as the merger created a wider pool of staff qualified to supervise and opened up new opportunities for funding, thus assisting in the managed expansion of postgraduate study within the DIT.

6. PROFESSIONAL BODIES

There do not appear to have been major problems here, as the departments and faculties had regularly communicated with these bodies, which play an important role in fields such as the Health Sciences, Engineering and Accounting. The new name of the institution apparently caused some confusion, especially the use of the term 'institute' rather than 'technikon'. Professional bodies continue to play a role in curriculum matters, but the difficulties sometimes encountered do not appear to be merger related. Of particular importance has been the role of the Engineering Council of South Africa, but the reviews this august body has undertaken do not seem to have been greatly affected by the merger, although clearly this has been a factor in their deliberations.

7. DURATION OF PIPELINE PROGRAMMES

It is difficult to provide an exact figure, but harmonisation of rules and programmes, as already explained, kept the transition time short. By the beginning of 2004, codes had been unified and this is perhaps one way to identify the cut-off point, making the duration a period of about 22 months. Students who were required to repeat part of their studies had to be absorbed into the cohort of students they now entered as a result. Thus a 2001 entrant – if required to repeat – would register as per the rules for 2002 entrants.

8. RULES

Because of the similarity between programmes, the harmonisation of rules was not hugely difficult and was mostly done before the 2003 academic year. This was the essence of the massive pre-merger effort in which the student administrations (i.e. registrars etc.), the COT, the faculties and senates all played a key role, but obviously the key players were the departments themselves. If agreement had not been achieved in 2001, the pathways embarked on from 2002 could almost certainly not have been followed.

According to the Student Administration Merger Task Group reporting in 2001, a Joint Academic meeting held in December 2001 agreed that 'commonality in the offering' in most programmes that were being offered by both technikons had been attained. In four disciplines (Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Surveying), all in the Faculty of Engineering, Science and the Built Environment, this agreement applied to all

years. Most of the other departments had reached agreement on the first year only (14 in Commerce, four in Arts and one in Health Sciences). In only seven departments had insufficient agreement been reached (Student Administration Merger Task Group, 2001: Annexure 3).

As already mentioned, the technikon sector had always been centrally regulated, significant roles being played by the convener system and the Department of Education. This meant, in essence, that if a technikon chose to offer a particular diploma and received approval to do so, it had to comply with the regulations as applicable. In the DIT case, this meant that programmes operating in both institutions would be very similar, if not identical. While Report 151 (Volume 1) declared that there should be more flexibility, it still placed emphasis on national standards and regulation, a far cry from the autonomy associated with the university sector. This was ‘to ensure the national character thereof and to promote articulation’ (DoE, 2001, Vol. 1: 4). Such flexibility as outlined in terms of the report could not, in any case, be particularly meaningful prior to the merger, as the report appeared only about a year prior to the DIT coming into existence.

Many of the programmes listed in the above report were drawn up to permit little scope for variation. For example, in the National Diploma in Public Management – which was offered in both the institutions – nineteen instructional courses on offer are listed, and all are stipulated as compulsory (380). In the National Diploma in Hotel Management, 27 subjects are listed, all being compulsory (120–121). Among similar cases was the National Diploma in Fashion (310).

Where there were options available, these were also prescribed nationally, as for example in the National Diploma in Office Administration (115–117) and in the Engineering fields (266–280). In cases where more flexibility was allowed for (as in Tourism Studies, for example, which still has two versions at DIT), it was harder to resolve the issues (394–395) and the reality is that such matters can be allowed to drift on indefinitely.

For the most part, this uniformity created a situation in which transition was relatively easy. However, it should be noted that this may be interpreted as a short-term benefit which, by discouraging innovation and independence, can be argued to be potentially detrimental to the future of the institution; a difficulty exacerbated by the acquisition of university of technology status in 2003, which implied that the institution had to function rather more like a university.

9. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The merging of data management had largely taken place early in 2003, using the 2002 window of opportunity. It does not appear to have been problematic, despite some ‘glitches’. The process was essentially complete by early 2004, which saw the harmonisation of student registration codes.

9.1 Quality assurance

Here the picture was different at each of the two institutions, with TN combining quality and academic development functions in one office, whilst MLS was perhaps at a more advanced stage in that it had a quality control office, albeit one on a very small scale. While quality issues were factored into the merger, they were not mediated by quality control specialists, because these had only become prominent players from 2003 onwards. The merged institution opted for the separation of quality matters from academic development, on the possibly dubious grounds that referees cannot also be players. There is therefore still debate about the relationship between these activities.

After the merger, quality fell directly within the Vice-Chancellor's portfolio, while academic development went to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). This remains an unresolved post-merger matter, as the arguments for the two possible locations are intricate and finely balanced.

9.2 Academic development and support

Both institutions had units to provide support to staff and students, with MLS perhaps doing more as it was regarded as a disadvantaged institution and, as such, had greater needs in this area. It also qualified for additional financial support because of this status. After the merger, a new Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) was created and the emphasis on academic development shifted to a mainstreaming approach in which academics working for 'line' departments are supported to enable them to deal with learning issues more effectively. The former TN entered the merger processes concurrently with an in-house questioning of the existing practices designed to help disadvantaged students, by additional tutorials to improve language skills and the like; the idea of mainstreaming was being advanced as a better option (McKenna, 2003). The new approach was outlined in the institute's newspaper at the start of 2003 (DIT, 2003), at which stage the new unit was known as the Integrated Learning Development Department. It became the CHED shortly afterwards.

The issue affecting pipeline students here was that, because of mainstreaming, services previously designed to benefit MLS students were no longer available when the new system came into being. This was a consequence of post-merger shifts in approach. For example, in 2001 MLS was proposing a Writing Centre to support students (and to help staff prepare material). Emphasis was to be placed on tutorial work (MLS, 2001). This proposal was abandoned once the merger had taken place. For details about academic development at MLS, see an audit document compiled by its Dean in 2000 (MLS, 2000).

This shift in academic philosophy also had an indirect consequence of some importance, as teaching staff from MLS, at least theoretically, now found that they had to rethink aspects of their teaching strategies for students who were experiencing difficulties accruing from weaknesses in their schooling experience. It should not be concluded from this that staff saw this as a major problem or indeed as a problem at all. In reality, a 'business as usual' ethos seems to have prevailed, despite changes in the provision of academic support.

Besides promoting the mainstreaming of teaching and learning in the standard academic courses, the CHED has also launched foundation programmes and plays a not insignificant role in helping plan teaching development, work load criteria, RPL and other areas of

priority. It thus has a substantial portfolio of work, which is different from that which obtained in the form of academic support pre-merger.

10. ASSESSMENT

Here, the main concern was the greater use of continuous assessment at TN, as the MLS staff members were less familiar with it. This matter had to be negotiated between and within departments. Whilst there are still differences of opinion and practice, these are quite minor and not necessarily merger related. Increasing concern about throughput has made this issue a priority for DIT.

Some students found that their progression through the system was inhibited, because the names of the subjects to be assessed had changed. An example of this can be taken from recent experience in the Commerce Faculty where a change in the name of a subject from Mercantile Law to Law for Marketers led to a situation where a student was told he had failed when in fact he had passed. The error occurred because the name changes had for some reason been misunderstood by the faculty clerical staff. Thus, a student first registered in 2000 could find graduation delayed by more than a year, because the bureaucracy had not made the appropriate adjustments.

11. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

There was a difference in the extent of centralisation and decentralisation. MLS had tended to operate along centralised lines, examples being faculty management, and cooperative education and integrated learning. In both these areas, TN managed student academic issues in a more decentralised way, making more use of faculty offices and giving departments more scope to place students in industry. There is, partly as a consequence of these differences, an ongoing debate at DIT about the extent to which there should be decentralisation (or 'devolution', as it is sometimes termed). Decisions were made to follow a structure closer to that of TN; of some importance to all students has been the decentralisation of much student administration to faculties led by executive deans assisted by faculty officers with substantial responsibilities.

As far as work integrated learning is concerned, the failure to resolve the debate has been unsettling and has certainly contributed to the delay some students have experienced in completing their qualifications. Pipeline students were certainly affected by what was effectively a policy vacuum.

Changes in various procedures have thus occurred and in the process some students have had a confusing and rather stressful time. This was especially so at the end of 2002 and early 2003. A factor that may be mentioned here is staff-student relations within the 'line' departments. Evidence exists (albeit circumstantial) to suggest that immediately after the merger TN staff in some departments tended to favour 'their students', with the result that ex-MLS students felt they were being treated and regarded as second-class citizens. It is not clear if the converse was also true (MLS staff favouring 'their' students), but it is possible.

The merging of faculties and departments was quite problematic in certain ways, notwithstanding the cooperation noted earlier. It was decided to base the number of departments on existing diplomas where possible so that, in many cases, departments only ran a single diploma. In practice, this meant that DIT found itself with some massive departments and some minute ones, a matter still receiving attention. Some departments have over 40 staff members, while some have only two. Faculties were also a problem. The compromise struck resulted in the formation of one huge faculty (Commerce), one large one (Engineering Science and the Built Environment), and two small ones (Health Sciences and Arts). In conclusion, there are several institutional issues, perhaps only indirectly affecting all students including pipeline students, which DIT has yet to resolve to its own satisfaction.

12. CONCLUSION

More than three years after the merger, it is possible to look back over the DIT experience and conclude that the institution was well placed to handle the pipeline student issue, and did so. The merger as a whole has not been trouble free, but on this particular issue there was an emphasis on preparedness to cooperate, which enabled DIT, in the main, to avoid significant difficulties. However, what may well be appropriate as a closing note is the sobering reality that, after almost three years, issues flowing from the merger remain very much on the DIT change agenda.

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