

Institutional feedback report

Name of Institution	Durban University of Technology
Date of institutional visit	18 May 2016
Names of peer reviewers	Dr Rita Kizito Dr Andre Van Zyl
Name of CHE person involved in the visit	Prof Diane Grayson
Date draft report submitted to institution	28 February 2017
Date of final report	20 July 2017

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO QEP PEER REVIEWER REPORTS

Four focus areas were selected for Phase 1 of the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) with which all institutions were asked to engage, namely: (1) enhancing academics as teachers, (2) enhancing student support and development, (3) enhancing the learning environment, and (4) enhancing course and programme enrolment management. In September 2014 each university produced a baseline submission that addressed the following questions for each focus area:

- Which aspects of your institution's Strategic Plan relate to this focus area? (Please be specific by quoting from the Strategic Plan).
- What activities do you currently have in place related to this focus area that are successful? What evidence do you use to conclude that they are successful? (Do not provide detailed evidence, just a description of the type of evidence you collect and a short summary of the results.)
- What activities related to this focus area have you initiated during the past three or four years that have not been as successful as you had hoped? In what ways were they unsuccessful? What do you think might be the reasons for the lack of success?
- What activities have you recently implemented or are you planning to implement in the next 12 to 18 months related to this focus area? Why have you chosen these particular activities? What is the need or problem they are intended to address?
- What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

The submission also included an introductory section on the contextual features of the institution that are salient to student success, a description of how the submission was prepared, and a concluding section on other activities the institution was undertaking to promote student success and challenges being faced.

Universities were asked to submit final reports by 11 December 2015 that indicated improvements that had been made or were being planned since the baseline reports were submitted. The stated aim of the report is shown below.

The aim of the institutional report is to demonstrate efforts to bring about enhancements in each of the four Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) focus areas since the beginning of Phase 1 of the QEP in February 2014, reflect on the journey towards enhancement and assess the extent to which the efforts have resulted in improvements.

Because of widespread student protests in the last few months of 2015, some reports were submitted early in 2016. In the final report, for each focus area universities responded to the following questions:

- Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in [this focus area] in one or two paragraphs.
- During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing academics as teachers?

- Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the changes that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.
- Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.
- If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.
- Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.

The document also included an introduction that described how the report was prepared and a concluding section on reflections on Phase 1 of the QEP.

During 2016 and early 2017 individual institutional visits were carried out by two peer reviewers and the Director: Institutional Audits. The CHE communicated with the DVC Teaching and Learning or Academic to find a suitable date for the visit, and then a formal letter was sent to the Vice-Chancellor, which included the names of the peer reviewers and a request to indicate whether he or she felt there was a serious conflict of interest. In addition to logistical matters, the letter described the purpose and format of the visit as follows:

The purpose of the institutional visit is to provide a structured opportunity for institutional leaders to engage with peer reviewers external to the institution about the journey they are taking towards improvement in the QEP focus areas, the milestones achieved, the challenges encountered along the way and the plans for further improvement. It is also an opportunity for institutions to receive feedback on their engagement with the focus areas and suggestions for what else they might consider doing, or doing differently, based on what is being learned in and with the sector. Please note that we are interested in what is being done at your university that relates to the four Phase 1 focus areas, not just designated QEP activities.

The broad frame for the visit is appreciative inquiry (AI), originally developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987)¹. AI is a strengths-based approach to change management that uses the “positive core” of an organisation as the starting point for growth and improvement. In contrast to problem-solving – trying to fix what is – it employs a generative method to envision what does not yet exist. While it is impossible for peer reviewers to engage in a full-blown AI process, the institutional visit is intended to focus on the positives as a springboard for thinking about what to enhance and how.

During the visit we would like to meet with the following groups of people over the course of the day:

1. Senior management (60 minutes)
2. Key role players involved with Focus Area 1 (80 minutes)
3. Key role players involved with Focus Area 2 (80 minutes)
4. Key role players involved with Focus Area 3 (80 minutes)

¹ Cooperrider, D.L. & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In Woodman, R. W. & Pasmore, W.A. (Eds), *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, Vol. 1, Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 129-169.

5. Key role players involved with Focus Area 4 (80 minutes)
6. Senior management (30 minutes for feedback)

The team will have read the university's QEP baseline report and final report. At the meetings, the team may ask for further information beyond what was in the two documents. The university may also wish to bring additional information to the meetings.

The selection of participants is up to you. However, we hope that you will be able to be part of the first meeting, and if possible, the last. For the meetings with senior management, we would like to speak with people who have the authority and responsibility to implement and drive initiatives at institutional level that relate to the four focus areas of Phase 1 of the QEP². For the meetings on the focus areas, we hope that students will be included.

Several weeks before the institutional visit, the two peer reviewers were sent the institutions' two reports, two articles on Appreciative Inquiry and the peer reviewer manual, which contains, among other things, a list of possible questions and detailed guidelines for the peer reviewer report. Immediately prior to each institutional visit, the peer reviewers and the Director: Institutional Audits spent most of a day preparing for the visit by going through the institution's two submissions in detail. During this preparatory meeting, several specific questions for the senior management were formulated and areas in which the panel wanted more information were identified for each focus area. The meetings that took place during the institutional visit were audio-recorded, and the audio files were sent to the peer reviewers after the visit for reference.

Each peer reviewer report is based on three data sources: the institution's baseline submission, the institution's final report and the content of the meetings during the institutional visit. As stated in the letters to the VCs, institutions could provide additional information during the visit. Some institutions did provide further documentation to elaborate on specific issues during the visit or, by agreement, emailed additional documentation immediately after the visit; in these cases such documentation was also taken into account in writing the report. It was necessary to limit the scope of the work in this way to ensure that the work could be completed within a specified time frame and also to be fair to all institutions.

Following receipt of the peer reviewers' reports, the CHE undertook a process of editing and harmonisation of the reports (to ensure a reasonable level of consistency among them) before sending them to institutions. In the initial letter to each VC it was indicated that the reports would be sent to the institutions for corrections, but that institutions were not expected to add new information at this stage. After the corrections were received from institutions, the final report was produced; new information was not included. It is hoped that the report will be a useful resource for an institution in its own journey to improvement. In addition, the reports will be among the documents that the CHE will use to produce a document synthesising what has been learnt during Phase 1 of the QEP across the sector. The final reports will serve at the Institutional Audits Committee and the Higher Education Quality Committee for information.

² (1) Enhancing academics as teachers, (2) Enhancing student support and development, (3) Enhancing the learning environment, (4) Enhancing course and programme enrolment management.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the result of the merger between the ML Sultan Technikon and the Technikon Natal, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) was established in 2006. According to its 2014 report, DUT has a strong commitment and mission to produce ‘globally portable citizens, able to engage effectively with knowledge generation and management in increasingly diverse and globalised workplaces’. During the 2014-2016 period, the university had a population of approximately 26,000 students enrolled each year, with the vast majority (97%) enrolled in undergraduate diplomas and first degrees.

The executive management of DUT comprises the Vice Chancellor; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Operations; and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Engagement. The academic structure is based on six faculties: Accounting and Informatics; Applied Sciences; Arts and Design; Engineering and the Built Environment; Health Sciences; and Management Sciences, in two centres (Durban and Midlands), distributed over seven campuses (ML Sultan Campus, Steve Biko Campus, Brickfield Campus, Ritson Campus, City Campus, Riverside Campus and Indumiso Campus). In the strong Faculty structure evident at DUT, each Faculty is led by an Executive Dean.

DUT’s operational decision making is guided by a strong institutional vision as laid out in the University Strategic Plan (2015-2019). Numerous references were made to this document and its guiding influence in the second institutional submission, as well as during the institutional visit. The Strategic plan is clearly an effective guiding light in providing institutional direction within DUT. Four strategic areas were identified in this strategic plan, namely: building sustainable student communities of living and learning; building research and innovation for development; building a learning organisation; and building a sustainable university. Each area is further expanded into strategic objectives which provide a framework for action. Overall, the university strives to position itself as a student-centred and critically engaged university. Student-centeredness and engagement are the two DUT DNA strands or ‘threads which make up the fabric of the University’ (DUT Strategic plan 2015-2019). As one interviewee said, “We do not talk about student centeredness as a buzz word but we are trying to make sure that we implement it to our university.” The university strives to cater for the emotional, social and intellectual development of its students.

The University has also started serious engagement with two significant transformational projects linked to the aims of the QEP: an e-learning initiative and a Curriculum Renewal Project (CRP). These projects are used to shape institutional initiatives and direct expenditure and commitment of institutional resources. Focusing their effects in this way also makes it easier for the institution to evaluate the impacts of the interventions adopted. In addition, the University has approved a set of graduate attributes, which it expects all students to develop during their time at DUT.

The university has developed a well-thought out strategic approach to enhancing teaching and learning, articulated in its Strategic Plan (2015-2019). From the interviews, it was evident that efforts are being made to begin discussions among staff from the different

faculties regarding the institutional teaching and learning plan, which, in turn, is linked to the institutional strategic plan. This has resulted in the creation of faculty-specific initiatives aimed at fulfilling the strategic objectives mentioned in the plan. The university now has the task of trying to collect, synthesise and share the good practices in the different faculties to ensure that the desired institutional culture is supported and maintained.

A particular strength at DUT is that transformative and humanistic pedagogy were selected as theories to underpin the ongoing development of academics as teachers. This theoretical approach is in line with the stated philosophy of student-centeredness.

DUT has put in place several academic support structures aimed at facilitating student success. These include: the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT); the Centre for Quality Promotion and Assurance (CQPA); the Library; Writing centres and a Student Services Division. These entities all work closely with each other to improve teaching and learning across the institution.

CELT has been instrumental in providing an integrated support to academic development (AD) in line with the strategic directions of the university. It adopts a collaborative approach by building links with other support units and administrative divisions of the university. Concurrently, each faculty is engaging with and developing its own unique plan which aligns with key areas of the University Strategic Plan.

Another important influence on its approach to promoting student success is the fact that DUT is one of the universities involved in the Siyaphumelela project, in which five selected universities have provided a plan to improve their institutional capacity to collect and analyse student data and integrate it with institutional research, information technology systems, academic development, planning and academic divisions within their institutions to increase student success.

A task team, under the leadership of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Academic, was established to develop the institutional QEP submissions. The Academic Executive Management (AEM) team served as the reference group to provide oversight and ensure coherence of the activities presented in the reports. Each area had a designated coordinator who oversaw and lead the creation of the institutional submissions. Students did not make up a core element in QEP processes at DUT, but some involvement of students in departmental discussions was reported. Senior staff at DUT indicated that the QEP provided an opportunity for the institution to start working towards creating an environment conducive to the success of all of its students.

2. FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS

(Including professional development, rewards and recognition, workload, conditions of service and performance appraisal)

THE INSTITUTION'S STRENGTHS

DUT has created a system of staff development activities that has both centralised and decentralised components. The CELT, the CQPA and other support units offer some activities, while faculties and departments facilitate other initiatives. The institution has a clear plan for effectively engaging and supporting staff. Staff evaluations of the majority of the initiatives show that these are well received, although these initiatives tend to attract the same group of academics.

Some of the successful professional development programmes and initiatives being offered are outlined below.

Induction programme for new academics. A compulsory, three-day block seminar followed by weekly meetings for a period of 12 weeks in one semester. The programme explores higher education pedagogy, teaching and assessment. The CELT, Library, CQPA, and the Writing Centres facilitate sessions. Attendees are required to submit a reflection paper and share their findings in a sharing day.

Learning, teaching and assessment symposium. The university has been holding an annual internal Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (LTA) Symposium since 2012.

E-Learning. An e-Learning Project Coordinator was appointed in 2013. The e-Learning Coordinator reported to the Vice Chancellor and the DVC: Academic at the time of the launch of the e-Learning Project. The Coordinator's main responsibilities included ensuring a systems approach to the adoption of e-learning and thus creating platforms for collaboration between the ITS team, e-learning team and the faculties.

Teaching portfolios. The CELT assists academics in the compilation of teaching portfolios. Submissions to the HELTASA-CHE National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Awards are selected from a pool of submitted portfolios. The university's Academic Staff Promotions Policy (2012) requires applicants to submit teaching portfolios when they apply for promotion. The DUT Health Sciences Department is congratulated for producing HELTASA-CHE winners in 2010, 2011 and 2012. An Accounting and Informatics staff member received a commendation in 2013. Each faculty offers an annual Faculty Teaching Excellence award and the winners compete for the annual Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award.

Transformation in Higher Education project. DUT is part of a consortium of three universities conducting research dealing with inclusivity, multiculturalism, multiracialism and multilingualism in the curriculum.

Curriculum Renewal Project. This project was launched in 2010 and aims to involve all academics in renewing and developing curriculum and aligning DUT's programmes with the HEQSF. It provides numerous opportunities for academic staff development. It has also led to the inclusion of general education credits into the curricula of all undergraduate programmes.

DUT has effectively leveraged the available Teaching Development Grant funding to carry out a number of the above initiatives. This support from the Department of Higher Education and Training was appreciated by the institution.

THE APPROACH TAKEN TO IMPROVEMENT

The university is moving toward a systematic approach to enhancing teaching and learning, CELT has the potential to be an effective mechanism to bring about a comprehensive approach to supporting and improving teaching and learning practices. The approach is enhanced by work done at faculty and departmental levels. The university employs a range of processes in setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards. This includes, for example, the Academic Executive Management (AEM) overseeing the work done by the QEP teams.

The DUT strategic plan, with clearly defined strands, focus areas and drivers, forms the core guiding document in the improvements being effected at the institution. This plan is supported by faculty and divisional plans, as well as department plans, ensuring institutional buy-in and alignment of goals. The University also has a Teaching Development Plan, which articulates, among other things, the importance the university places on helping academics develop both disciplinary expertise and pedagogical competence.

IMPROVEMENTS UNDERTAKEN AND PROGRESS MADE

DUT has made progress across a range of activities related to this focus area. Noteworthy advances are described below.

Curriculum Renewal. The university has continued with its Curriculum Renewal Project (CRP) in which faculties and departments attend workshops and are assisted with designing or re-designing their programmes. The project has had the effect of engaging virtually all academics in curriculum development, a rare and important achievement. The project seems to be having a positive impact on staff, as illustrated by the following comment from one of the interviewees:

“What the programme has done is to make sure that people not only know the area of their subjects they teach but also know how the subjects are taught. Programme renewal has been a very enriching experience.”

Several programmes have been submitted to the CHE for accreditation. A new focus in the CRP is to support the embedding of the recently approved DUT graduate attributes into curriculum through appropriate staff development.

E-learning. DUT houses its e-learning unit under the CELT. The unit offers technical support as well as training for academics across all campuses. The e-learning unit has staff assigned to specific faculties and seems to function well.

The University reported an increased uptake of the use of the Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard, and has an e-learning strategy that is being implemented across the institution. In 2014, 37% of all DUT programmes had a presence on Blackboard. The target for 2015 was 50%. There are plans to offer more training and support in this area, with topics such as the use of smart boards, videos, and Turnitin software.

Post Graduate Diploma in Higher education (PGDipHE). In terms of a more structured approach to staff development, DUT reported a new induction programme that was in the process of being designed and would be implemented from 2016. It will comprise four modules and will be open to both new and existing academic staff. During the institutional visit there were reports of its first implementation having been a success. This was, in the view of the institution, an important step towards establishing an accredited Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education.

Academic literacies symposium. DUT expanded its established series of staff development symposia with the establishment of a new annual symposium focused on academic literacies. This symposium was well attended and is aimed at enhancing the abilities of academic staff to integrate the development of academic literacies into their teaching and learning activities.

Teaching portfolio development training. Staff members are being assisted with the development of their teaching portfolios using a blended approach to learning. The aim of this approach is to make the appropriate knowledge more accessible to all staff.

Development of Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECP) staff. A number of opportunities were created to assist staff teaching on ECPs with their professional development as university teachers.

A workload model and performance appraisal system have not yet been rolled out beyond the management level.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

As is the case historically at universities of technology, there is still a heavy reliance on part-time lecturers at DUT. Among the problems with this situation is the fact that these part-time members of staff often do not have full access to staff development and orientation activities. The institution should attend to this issue as it has important implications for staff morale and potentially for teaching and learning quality at DUT.

Launching a strategy for the identification and dissemination of good teaching and learning practices would be useful for the university. This could be implemented either through the CELT or by the faculties, or jointly. The existing annual Teaching, Learning and Assessment symposium would then be linked to the strategy and would help highlight innovative approaches being used in various places in the University.

The strands of the formal professional development programmes should be structured to meet the needs of different groups of academics, including new and experienced staff. The more experienced staff could help support the less experienced. This could be formalised by assigning mentors for new lecturers. In terms of technology adoption, younger academics might be able to support the older academics.

It is not clear from the documentation and discussions how the teaching portfolio is linked to promotion, and DUT is encouraged to make this link explicit. In addition, teaching and learning should be explicitly rewarded. Enabling academics to be promoted (all the way to full professor) primarily on the basis of teaching-related activities would fit in well with the philosophy underpinning a teaching-focused institution like DUT. There are a number of examples of good practice where this is being done, such as UKZN and UJ. The growth of the professionalisation of teaching at DUT would further be supported by the establishment of a PG Dip in Higher Education.

DUT should also ensure that the core activities aimed at improving teaching and learning are implemented institutionally and not left to the discretion of the faculties.

The University is encouraged to ensure implementation of its proposed performance management system, with a focus on development, and to consider developing a workload model to ensure equitable distribution of work. Interesting work in this regard has been undertaken at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT).

3. FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

(Including career and curriculum advising, life and academic skills development, counselling, student performance monitoring and referral)

THE INSTITUTION'S STRENGTHS

The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) is a centralised academic development unit working with other support units and faculty academic development structures to enhance student success. This institutional approach is further enhanced by the establishment of formal faculty-based committees that focus on teaching and learning and are responsible for implementing strategies for enhancing student success. The combination of centralisation and decentralisation allows flexibility of academic support provision. This, in turn, ensures that both discipline-specific and generic student development needs are effectively addressed. This approach is further enhanced by the fact that five of the six faculties have a dedicated Academic Development Practitioner (ADP) working very closely with Faculty staff and students. Some Faculties have established their own faculty-based

academic development units, such as the Faculty of Health sciences, with staff who are able to assist students with academic support. Others, such as the Faculty of Accounting, have developed specialised interventions to support their students.

To enhance the quality of student life, DUT has a Student Services Division lead by the Dean of Students in Durban and Director in the Midlands campuses. The units have highly qualified staff with expertise in the development and implementation of student support programmes, and work to ensure that students have a positive university experience. The units offer core activities of psychotherapy, career counselling and assessment, psycho-educational training and several education programmes. The units also offers HIV/AIDS testing, counselling, and peer education programmes. The units are actively involved in general orientation and other leadership programmes.

The services offered by these units include:

- Student Counselling and Health
- Financial Aid
- Student Housing and Residence Life
- Sport Administration
- Student Governance and Development

DUT has collected student-related data from a number of sources and this is being used for decision making in a number of ways. The institution is also making use of known High Impact Practices (HIPs), such as writing centres and tutorials.

In addition, the institution has well-established Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs). DUT offers foundation provision in the form of ECPs to students who require additional help in succeeding at university. ECP students receive additional and varied academic support integrated into a number of programmes. These programmes are offered in five of the six faculties. DUT has also developed specific staff development initiatives targeting ECP lecturers.

DUT recognises and rewards excellent student academic performance through several awards, such as faculty and departmental awards, the Dean's awards and the Vice-Chancellor's award.

Some of the other programmes aimed at improving student success offered by CELT include:

Tutors/Mentors/Advisors (TMA) training development program. These are designed to train student tutors, mentors and advisers; tutors help with conducting and supporting tutorial sessions, mentors guide and support less experienced students in academic and university related activities, while advisers are senior students who offer information and guidance related to academic programmes. Some faculties have scheduled tutorials, facilitated by

lecturers, forming part of the mainstream timetable. Tutors are used in different ways, depending on the faculty. All post-graduates are encouraged to be tutors.

The First Year Student Experience programme. The First-year Student Experience (FYSE) project was piloted in two faculties (Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment), before drawing up a plan for adoption by the institution as a whole. The data collected in the pilot have fed into other schemes, such as the Residence Educational Programme.

Residence Education Programme (REP). The REP consists of workshops and tutorials, which complement other activities in residences that contribute to making the residences places of living and learning. These tutorial sessions consist of discipline specific as well as generic academic skills. REP tutors are senior students with above average academic performance. The programme has been successful and is extended to all students requiring help at all levels of study (first, second, third and the final year).

In addition to the CELT programmes the University offers the following:

Writing Centres. DUT has established Writing Centres on most of its campuses. These centres are designed to provide tutorial support to students in the areas of reading and writing. Tutors or writing respondents support students in improving their academic as well as their creative writing.

Information Literacy. The Library offers a non-credit bearing introductory module on information literacy to all first-year students. Each department is then required to reinforce this by providing additional discipline-specific support to students. Information Literacy (IL) training takes place across all Faculties. Subject Librarians liaise with academics to customise IL training into their curricula so that students are able to locate information to support their learning needs. The IL programme covers the Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECP), mainstream, and BTECH students. The extensive ECP programmes offer the students more sessions in IL, allowing them time to master the critical skills needed to access, evaluate and use information.

The teaching of mainstream IL varies in form from single sessions to highly integrated, multiple sessions with integrated assignments and projects; the latter includes formal assessments for some departments.

Further, in order to support the IL programme effectively, various tools have been implemented for library users. These include LibGuides, a one-stop subject guide for students looking for information; an orientation video highlighting the libraries and its key services; a Virtual Tour Tutorial of the Library; the Cranfield IL Tutorial, a customized tool that supports IL blended learning; the IL classroom on BlackBoard and finally, a LibChat service for students to ask questions directly to subject librarians.

THE APPROACH TAKEN TO IMPROVEMENT

Improvement in this focus area is once again guided by the DUT Strategic Plan, which contains three strategic objectives that are relevant to this focus area:

- Provision of enabling living and learning environments that promote student success and advance the intellectual, social and emotional growth of our students;
- Cultivation of a shared understanding of student-centredness that underpins students' attainment of the desired DUT graduate attributes;
- Development and strengthening of ethical citizenship amongst students and their sense of critical social and political agency.

The university is also moving towards utilising evidence-based interventions in the area of student success, hence an investment in data-informed systems. One such system is the OTRACK (online pupil tracking software) system, which has been adopted and customised by some faculties to generate reports about the student experience. DUT also makes use of access and placement tests, such as National Benchmarking Tests (NBT), Standardised Assessment Tests for Access and Placement (SATAP) and other departmental diagnostic tests. In addition to these, the university also regularly conducts student surveys.

IMPROVEMENTS UNDERTAKEN AND PROGRESS MADE

Although there have been improvements made in number of areas, three areas are highlighted in this review: the DUT writing centres, HIV campaigns and strengthening student governance.

The DUT Writing Centres. DUT has set up five Writing Centres (WrC) which are spread across five campuses. This means that there is a level of support distributed over the different campuses, which is commendable. The centres have 20 post-graduate tutors, funded by the TDG, who assist students and staff with a number of writing strategies, including writing in different disciplines; assignments for reading, researching and referencing; proposals (academic and business); proposal and dissertation writing and writing articles, book chapters and books for publication.

The WrCs at DUT have extended their operating hours since 2014 and have also started making more extensive use of Turnitin software to allow students' work to be tested for plagiarism. The activities offered extend beyond academic writing and have embraced elements of creative writing too.

Writing Centres offer the following activities:

- One-on-one, small group and online writing consultations with staff and students
- Workshops on academic and creative writing
- Annual creative writing competitions
- Roadshows for awareness of Writing Centres
- Reading groups meant to encourage a reading culture amongst students and staff

There is increased collaboration between the Writing Centres and academics in several faculties. In the Faculty of Arts and Design, for example, students are required to submit written work that is stamped by the Writing Centre, and they receive marks for using the Centre.

HIV Campaigns. DUT is one of the few universities that has an HIV centre dedicated to ensuring that students are tested and also learn how to behave responsibly as adults, particularly in the area of sexual activity. The use of participatory/interactive modes to engage with student communities as part of peer education is to be commended. The existence of an interactive online support group for students is another strategy that other universities can model. DUT also runs an annual campaign, 'First things First', to increase awareness around HIV/AIDS and other related social issues.

Exemplars of where the university is addressing other social issues beyond the scope of focusing on HIV/AIDS are illustrated in programmes such as:

- A programme on gender-based violence supported by MAC AIDS funding.
- Programmes such as alcohol and drug abuse, empowerment of Women (ZAZI program), and issues of Masculinity (Brothers for Life). Supported by funding from HEAIDS Global Fund
- The MSM/LGBTI Programme at DUT directed towards sexual minority individuals, supported by NACOSA MSM/LGBTI

Strengthening student governance. DUT is also trying to strengthen student governance by offering general student leadership development programmes, as well as capacity building of the Student Representative Council (SRC).

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

One of the ways the university could strengthen the student support initiatives is by more extensively and intensively using available student data. While individual faculties have different ways of identifying students at risk, institutional data have the potential for allowing the institution to more accurately identify students who might struggle and in a more timeous way. The institution should investigate ways to use the available data more productively and consider an institution-wide system for identifying students who need support early enough to enable them to get support and succeed.

Interventions could, for example, include creating a personal tutor or academic adviser and peer mentoring scheme. A personal tutor system provides general support to students in matters such as academic development but also addresses areas such as employability, co-curricular activities combined with pastoral and supportive roles. This system could be implemented alongside the existing tutors/mentors/advisers and REP programme. DUT has all the elements and structures to enable this type of arrangement using existing structures.

To increase employability preparedness, some universities, such as Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, have introduced mechanisms for supporting and tracking student

co-curricular activities and formalising them into a co-curricular transcript that is available in addition to the normal academic transcript. Student participation in personal development programmes and voluntary activities are structured and coordinated to build employability skills such as time management, public speaking and team leadership. Students progressively develop these skills through levels of development. DUT is encouraged to reflect further on the ways in which co-curricular activities may be used as a vehicle for the development of graduate attributes and formally recognised by the University.

The University recognises that its planned growth in the number of students enrolling at the university will have implications for the management of the student experience, especially with regards to support provision. The roles of student advisers and academic and social support becomes critical in such instances. DUT is encouraged to plan proactively for future student needs in order to maintain the quality of the learning experience across the different faculties.

A lot is already being done to allow students to work on campus and a number of work integrated learning programmes exist. It is recommended that DUT consider establishing a central work-study office that could assist with the coordination of opportunities for students to obtain on-campus work (beyond WIL activities that are part of the curricula of some programmes).

The First Year Student Experience (FYSE) at DUT is a good initiative and should be pursued further. It does seem, however, that it has been difficult to establish the FYSE and to ensure that it reaches deeply enough into the institution. An institutional initiative like the FYSE should be mandatory across the institution if it is going to have a real effect, although Faculties should be allowed sufficient leeway to adjust the FYSE to their contexts. One of the crucial elements of the university experience is the orientation and the welcome that newly arriving first year students receive at the university. This could productively form part of the FYSE initiative but could also be developed in addition to the FYSE. Institutions like the University of Johannesburg and a number of others have made interesting changes to their orientation programmes over the past decade. DUT is encouraged to re-think and expand its orientation activities.

It is also clear that a lot of progress has been made in providing equitable services on all campuses to all students. DUT is encouraged to continue this process until equity is reached. This would, for example, include the establishment of Writing centres on the remaining two campuses.

Central units like CELT offer a number of programmes and academic skills workshops and study skills sessions. All student development activities are underpinned by a philosophy of student-centredness. There is a sense, however, that these central units are heavily dependent on Faculty buy-in that is not always forthcoming. This has a diluting effect on the ability of some of these initiatives to reach the whole institution. It seems that the strong strategic plan and good work done in many areas would benefit from being pulled together by a number

of institutional initiatives that the whole institution is compelled to participate in (whilst still allowing enough space for contextual customisation).

4. FOCUS AREA 3: ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

(Including teaching and learning spaces, ICT infrastructure and access, technology-enabled tools and resources, library facilities)

THE INSTITUTION'S STRENGTHS

The University is committed to augmenting its physical teaching and learning infrastructure with e-learning. The e-learning strategy that the institution has adopted incorporates a variety of useful tools that promote student engagement and enable students to document and collate evidence of their learning in the online space. These include:

- Student Wi-Fi;
- Student email (DUT4LIFE);
- Student IT support;
- Online Office/365 access and
- Student IT support helpdesks in libraries (at the ML Sultan and Steve Biko campuses).

Since 2013, the university has embarked on an e-Learning Project in which several programmes and initiatives have been implemented. These include:

- The Vanguard Project in which all 30 modules from the National Diploma for Cost and Management Accounting were re-designed and implemented as online courses in 2014 using Blackboard.
- The *Blackboard* classroom, also called the THINK LEARN ZONE, which is available to all students registered for modules taught on TLZ. The Bachelor of Education programmes has over 1000 students using the platform.
- The Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment uses *Moodle* for e-learning.

THE APPROACH TAKEN TO IMPROVEMENT

The approach to improvement taken at DUT has involved setting up and implementing e-learning related projects, as well as improving the physical and network infrastructure. The central institutional approach is once again driven through the Strategic Plan, but in many respects it seems as if each Faculty has its own approach to improvement. This means that except for certain infrastructure projects (such as Wi-Fi provision) implementation of improvement is largely dependent on the various Faculties.

The University has also made critical investments into network infrastructure. Initiatives to install Wi-Fi at all campuses to facilitate access to e-learning platforms such as Blackboard have been completed with varying levels of success.

IMPROVEMENTS UNDERTAKEN AND PROGRESS MADE

The university is committed to augmenting its physical teaching and learning infrastructure with e-learning. As a result, there have been visible efforts aimed at strengthening and developing e-learning pedagogies and related infrastructure to support these pedagogies. The Educational Technology group in CELT offers e-learning adoption support and training. The DUT Strategic Plan stated that the target for academic programmes having an online component by 2015 was 50%. E-learning forms an important component of the Curriculum Renewal project as well.

Blackboard is widely used, but the IT system is unstable and there are crashes.

Library transformation. Libraries are located at six of the seven teaching sites. All libraries are equipped with dedicated electronic classrooms (e-zones). These are library spaces which have been reconfigured for possible e-learning support and use. They are IT enabled with facilities for charging laptops and other devices.

In addition DUT has done the following to reshape the library for digital learning:

- Approximately 300 computers have been installed across all library sites.
 - The Steve Biko library has computers dedicated for reading and printing
 - Students can pre-book a computer for a maximum of two hours in any of the five library e-zones using an Open Source booking system. The library has increased its e-resources since 2010, and has over 200 000 e-books and access to the latest e-journals and databases.
- The library uses Summon, a library search engine that includes all types of records and enables a single search across multiple databases. Students can use their smartphones to access the library catalogues and download articles as it is mobile compliant.
- The libraries collect usage analytics
- Libraries have facilities for lending laptops
- One library has an iPad lab for learning facilitation
- All libraries use 'EveryOne Print' which is a facility enabling students to route printing from any mobile device to a printer in the library.

Although there are 24-hour learning spaces available in the library, it can get too noisy, with the result that students sometimes study on the benches outside.

ICT infrastructure. 50 smart boards, projectors, document cameras, and sound systems have been installed across all campuses in dedicated smart classrooms.

In addition to this, DUT boasts a number of innovative learning spaces. Notably:

- A laboratory/workshop facility at Wentworth Hospital for the Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics programme in the Faculty of Health Sciences

- A new Health Clinic that provides health care services to the greater eThekweni community and a space for supervised clinical practical training.
- A Digifest digital site where students can showcase and exhibit their work.

In addition, several buildings have been built or refurbished to cater for the new modes of learning. For example:

- A Cyber-centre that will house specialist venues and computing facilities is being built at the Steve Biko campus.
- The construction of a new building to house Engineering at Riverside has begun.
- Open Access computer laboratories have been equipped with the latest software packages such as WhiteSmoke, which will assist students with English Communication.
- The Faculty of Management Sciences has introduced ‘smart classrooms’ with new technologies such as e-beams, smart-boards, Qomo-boards, data projectors and laptops to supplement teaching strategies.

A mobile app, DUT App, was launched at the beginning of 2015 and updated to include access to Blackboard and the student portal.

There has been some innovative use of outdoor spaces, with the provision of sun umbrellas and Samsung-supplied solar charging stations.

There are challenges with some of the physical infrastructure – maintenance backlogs on some of the campuses, adequate venues for interactive teaching, and a need for more venues where students can study together. In addition, it appears that there is quite a lot of devolution of room and building maintenance and computer facilities (sourcing, updating and usage control) to faculties, resulting in unevenness across the institution. There also seems to be a disjuncture between ICT services in general and ICT for e-learning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Although substantial progress has been made in terms of the institution providing technology-enabled spaces, it became evident that a shortage of IT student support is prevalent. Students also mentioned that the Libraries were sometimes very noisy when there was no supervision of students. DUT is encouraged to ensure that all obstacles are removed towards the optimal use of its facilities.

The university could consider collaborating or partnering with universities within the vicinity, such as Mangosuthu University of Technology or the University of KwaZulu Natal, to address the shortage of staff, particularly IT support staff. There could even be a sharing of expertise across and between these institutions.

The University's LMS has been used to enhance the student experience in a range of imaginative ways. However, in some instances the system fails. This constitutes a risk to

the institution's e-learning strategy and its students and DUT is encouraged to take strong action to prevent these outages from happening.

The university is encouraged to recruit and train student interns to support technology-enabled and enhanced learning. Such undertakings could easily form part of DUT Post Graduate projects in which staff and students collaborate with national and international universities to solve specific problems, while at the same time build capacity.

DUT has made substantial progress in terms of venues and other infrastructure, such as the creation of computer labs. These are, however, often "owned" by specific Faculties or Departments and as a result are not fully utilised. This leads to a situation where there is a "shortage" of venues but at the same time many labs and other venues are not optimally used. The university is encouraged to make all venues usable to all students by timetabling them when not in use by the home department. Broad ranging and inclusive institutional conversations might need to be undertaken by DUT to effect this change. Similarly, it is recommended that there be greater integration of facilities and services across the university to ensure that effective maintenance is undertaken across the campuses and in all the buildings. Greater integration of ICT services across the university is also recommended, together with harmonisation of general ICT provision and e-learning infrastructure and technical support.

The previous point links to the new timetabling and venue allocation system being used at DUT. It seems as if the implementation of the new system was a big step forward and the institution is encouraged to take this development to its logical conclusion and include all facilities in this planning.

Because of the socio-economic profile of DUT students, many students do not have mobile devices that can be used for academic purposes. DUT is encouraged to continue actively providing alternative access points to these students. This could include the use of server based computer labs using "dumb terminals" (thin client technology) that are cheaper and easier to maintain than rooms of individual personal computers.

5. FOCUS AREA 4: ENHANCING COURSE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT

(Including admissions, selection, placement, readmission refusal, pass rates in gateway courses³, throughput rates, management information systems)

THE INSTITUTION'S STRENGTHS

The institution created a Student Recruitment and Enrolment Management project to investigate and improve its enrolment management practices. DUT has established strong business processes and systems that create efficiency and reduce administrative overloads for academic staff. As a result, DUT has managed to streamline its student admissions and

registration processes, strengthen its management information services, and ensure that there are easily accessible and functional systems that allow for easy reporting on student performance. To this end, DUT reported the following strengths in its baseline submission (2014):

Improved student selection processes. Streamlining of DUT's admission and registration processes was initiated in order to align with the provincial Central Applications Office (CAO).

Student placement. Different mechanisms are used to place students into programmes. These include:

- Selecting candidates based on their grade 11 marks and confirming the placements on receipt of actual grade 12 marks;
- Placing students in the ECP programmes based on their NSC examinations as well as the Standardised Assessment Test for Access and Placement (SATAP);
- Using the National Benchmark Test (NBT) for diagnostic purposes;
- Employing discipline specific selection tests which include interviews, portfolios and presentations to augment other selection mechanisms.

Student support. First year student retention remains a focus for the university with a range of initiatives being put in place to improve retention and an overall positive experience for the majority of students. The University is making progress in developing and implementing an effective approach to supporting equality and diversity. There have been a number of positive initiatives designed to support student retention. This has been done in areas such as tutoring and tutor training, Health and counselling, and Information Literacy training for first year students, to name a few (referred to under focus area 2). The university seems to be mindful that these programmes have to be analysed and upgraded for each student cohort.

Monitoring of student performance. This is carried out at different levels in the institution. Annual Quality Monitoring reports are compiled and discussed in departmental and faculty meetings. The Management Information System (MIS) unit plays an important role in providing information on student success indicators to Executive Deans and Departmental Heads. The unit also conducts roadshows on how to access and use information on the different databases. The DVC: Academic chairs an annual assessment of student performance in which each faculty's annual performance report is analysed in terms of indicators such as graduation rates, throughput rates and success rates. Faculty improvement plans are drawn up from these analyses.

Re-admission /refusal of re-admission. The university has rules and processes for academic exclusion. Student results are carefully analysed and interventions are suggested to give opportunities for students to improve their performance. Each faculty has its own sets of procedures.

Although there is a central student tracking system, each faculty uses its own student performance monitoring mechanisms. Table 1 provides a summary of some of the mechanisms employed:

Faculty	Faculty-specific student performance monitoring mechanisms.
Faculty of Health Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions at faculty management, teaching and learning, research and higher degrees committees to improve support for students and monitor their progress. • Meetings between the Dean and students to address concerns
Faculty of Applied Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual workshop where departmental performance review reports are shared, common challenges discussed and possible solutions are brainstormed. • Provision of support and training for HoDs and departmental staff in understanding and using performance data to meet objectives.
Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment	Subject Committees (SCs) chaired by a senior academic analyse student performance data and the quality of teaching and learning and suggest and implement improvement strategies.
Faculty of Management Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments track ‘at-risk’ students through the OTRACK system which is linked to the ITS and generates reports on a monthly basis • Performance is also monitored through the exam board reports and presentations at faculty EXCO meetings. • Relevant interventions can be put into place to assist underprepared students.

THE APPROACH TAKEN TO IMPROVEMENT

The DUT Strategic Plan 2015-2019 acknowledges that DUT’s growth model depends on the institution’s ability to meet enrolment targets and to ensure that non-continuation rates for the full-time undergraduate student population decreases. DUT has created a very impressive Strategic Enrolment Management Framework and this guides institutional thinking and

action in regards to the enrolment management process. The framework contains three important elements:

- successful selection and placement of students at first time entry level;
- an enrolment planning strategy that includes the meeting of enrolment targets at subsequent levels of study;
- an integrated approach to planning and quality enhancement.

The institution is encouraged to share this framework with others in the sector as it is an impressively comprehensive and useful framework. Within this context, the institution has invested in establishing a Management Information System (MIS) unit responsible for extracting data relating to student recruitment, retention, progression and achievement. Simultaneously, the university has made sure that there are mechanisms devised to address student selection, student placement, student support, the monitoring of student performance and dealing with readmission and/or refusals of admissions.

IMPROVEMENTS UNDERTAKEN AND PROGRESS MADE

An integrated approach to enrolment management: The Strategic Enrolment Management Framework mentioned above was developed and provides strategic direction for the institution as a whole. This constitutes a significant step forward for DUT in this focus area.

Improved student selection processes. The DUT's admission and registration processes have been streamlined and the DUT systems are aligned with the provincial Central Applications Office (CAO), which provides an efficient applications service to institutions in KwaZulu-Natal. The following practices have helped with the streamlining process and could be adopted by other universities:

- Early selection of students allowing for careful scrutiny on the quality of applications
- Encouraging applicants to pay early deposits to 'book' spaces
- Integration of offers of a place with decisions on financial aid and student housing
- Improved communications with applicants

Because the University has been able to meet its enrolment targets for some time now, there is an increased focus at DUT on how to recruit the best possible students. This implies a more detailed scrutiny of applicants, and offers being made to more students earlier in the process. The Student Admissions Department is working more closely with Faculties in the selection of their students, which is leading to better selections. Students are encouraged to "commit" to the institution by making a R500 deposit to reserve a space that has been offered to them. This, in turn, gives the institution a better idea of expected entrants.

Registration of students. A web-based registration system has been tested at DUT and is in the process of being fully implemented. This has already reaped numerous benefits for the institution in terms of reduced time on the part of students and staff and greater accuracy. In

addition, the Management Information System at the institution is now being used to track enrolment targets and report to the various Executive Deans and Heads of Department.

DUT also performs cohort studies and uses them to try to determine reasons for dropouts and try to establish ways of addressing this issue.

DUT seems to have made substantial progress in this focus area during the past few years. It is clear that strong leadership and a strategic document leading implementation have played important roles in moving the institution forward.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS

DUT recognises the urgency of carrying out research into the root causes of low pass rates in gateway courses and low throughput rates generally. The university has identified the need to improve its management information system. Institution-wide, multi-year data collected from an integrated system on a regular basis should form a core element of such a process. The institution should investigate the implementation of an institution-wide system which permits integration between systems, allowing academic and support staff to interact with students, as well as evaluation and improving business and academic processes.

The idea of having students who leave the institution without completing their qualifications complete an exit survey, as proposed by the university, is a good one, but it might be very difficult to get the majority of exiting students to complete it. DUT is encouraged to investigate other ways in which it might investigate the root causes of student drop-out. This could include contacting students who have left after their exit.

Student evaluations of teaching was mentioned in this focus area and DUT is encouraged to ensure a more rigorous and institutional approach to this issue. The use and feedback (to all affected parties) of student evaluations needs to be re-looked at so that when students complete them, the information provided is used productively within the institution.

6. SUMMARY

DUT has an impressive array of activities and has made clear improvements over time. The strategic leadership and support provided by top management at the institution is clear and is a very important enabling factor in these improvements. The new Strategic Plan seems to have generated very good buy-in across DUT, and was mentioned again and again by the interview participants. It also provides a very clearly articulated vision and strategic goals to lead the institution forward. This aspect of the DUT approach is a real strength. There are also a number of other well-developed frameworks and strategic documents that position the institution very well for continued improvement.

Another important structural element at the institution is the strength of the various Faculties. It seems that although the institution has clear strategic plans and leadership, the Faculties are allowed to either opt in or out of many of the activities undertaken institutionally. As a

result, while innovative and effective practices are taking place in some areas, there are others where there is much less activity. In addition, good practices often do not get shared across the institution, with each Faculty coming up with its own approach, rather than learning from one another. It is suggested that opportunities for formal and non-formal sharing of solutions to problems and approaches to improvement be created for inter-faculty sharing.

It would serve the institution well to protect Faculty strength but also establish a stronger institutional ability to act in certain areas (across Faculties). This would imply that institutional actions can be taken and implemented by the institution as a whole. This would make activities such as the FYSE and the sharing of resources (such as computer laboratories) much more effective, and would allow good practice to spread across the institution as a whole.

The Curriculum Renewal Project and the progress made in this regard at DUT is very impressive, not least because of the curriculum development capacity that has taken place among academics across the University. The experiences and progress made at the University would be very valuable to share with the sector as a whole, as it is ahead of the curve in this regard. This is a pressing need in the higher education system because the pressure for curriculum renewal has gathered pace over the past two years.

It is suggested that the institution would benefit from a greater inclusion of the student voice in its activities. By using systems of student representation on university committees and working groups, and encouraging students to participate fully in enhancing their university experiences, some of the support provision challenges the institution experiences could be better addressed. Student-staff consultative committees can work well to gather information from students and provide feedback about decisions made to enhance teaching and learning.

Student views and inputs into decisions, including the development of new facilities and initiatives, can be useful in making sure that these are relevant and fit for purpose. The university is encouraged to consider ways of adapting models of communicating and consulting with different student bodies to improve teaching and learning practices.

Specific comments related to each of the focus areas are given below.

Focus area 1: Enhancing Academics as teachers

DUT has made impressive progress in growing the recognition amongst its academics that they are in fact teachers in higher education. This growing realisation translates into a situation where the professionalization of teaching in the University becomes much more possible. This would be institutionally supported by ensuring that the teaching activity is sufficiently recognised in the performance management process. It would also be of benefit to either create DUT's own Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (as is being done) or give academic staff access to an existing qualification with institutional support. It is also recommended that DUT considers creating a mentoring programme for new academics

where they are paired up with existing academics and intentionally mentored into the profession. In addition, the promotions policy ought to provide opportunities for promotion all the way up the career ladder to professor on the strength primarily of teaching and teaching-related research.

There does seem to be a rich variety of good practice in regards to teaching and learning related activities present at DUT. It would be very good if these developments could be researched and presented to the rest of the institution and to other institutions across the country.

Focus area 2: Enhancing student support and development

DUT's strategic documentation identifies "student centredness" as a key thread that runs through all of its activities. This focus on the student experience and supporting student learning and success is clearly evident in the submitted documentation and in a number of initiatives undertaken at the institution. There are many excellent examples of innovative and good practice in this focus area at DUT. These include the comprehensive and innovative HIV/AIDS work being done; the novel combination of senior students being tutor/mentors and advisors as well as the creation of the First Year Student Experience (FYSE) initiative, to name a few. It is clear that a caring atmosphere exists at the institution and a lot is being done to support student success.

The barrier of strong Faculty boundaries does, however, sometimes limit the breadth and depth of the reach of some of these good initiatives. DUT should consider a more coordinated approach in which institutional initiatives, such as the FYSE, get implemented effectively in all Faculties, taking account of relevant faculty-specific contextual factors.

Student involvement outside the classroom is encouraged at DUT. A number of students are working as mentors or tutors to support other students in advancing the academic project. Perhaps, in addition, students may be able to provide support in some areas in which the university does not have sufficient funding, such as advising, computer training and registration support. Volunteerism and the ability to develop one's employability profile are some of the ways students could be encouraged to engage in some of these activities without necessarily paying them. Nelson Mandela University has a co-curricular record system whereby students receive a co-curricular transcript together with their academic transcript on completion of their programme.

Although DUT is doing a lot with regards to student employment (through Work Integrated Learning and other initiatives) it is recommended that the institution also considers establishing a central work-study office through which on-campus employment could be coordinated and managed.

The FYSE initiative seems to hold a lot of promise. It has the potential of drawing the activities in the institution together across Faculty divides to create an intentional institutional experience aimed at facilitating student success. It is suggested that the FYSE

be institutionalised and supported in a variety of practical ways to ensure its impact. A very important part of this would be to re-think, expand and deepen the initial orientation of first year students. A DUT experience could be created which can then be customised, but not watered down, by Faculties. The University of Johannesburg provides a good example. In addition, it might be worth considering ways in which some aspects of the FYSE could be integrated into the General Education components of the curriculum.

An area the university might want to consider working on more proactively is in making the 'student voice' more visible in decision making and implementation of strategies to enhance the student experience.

Focus area 3: Enhancing the Learning Environment

In this focus area, DUT has again made some impressive advances over the past few years. The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), in collaboration with the e-Learning Project Coordinator, has laid out, through the e-learning unit, a very clear implementation strategy. This has included training courses in e-learning for staff, the expansion of the Smart Classroom project, much wider roll-out of Wi-Fi across the campuses and increased use of blended and online learning. All of these advances are assisting the institution to create a learning environment that is conducive to creating the student experience that is discussed in its strategic documentation. DUT is encouraged to continue this process into the future, and to look for opportunities to collaborate with other universities in Durban, especially as it experiences a shortage of skilled ICT staff. The Cape Higher Education Consortium, with its course on "Emerging Technologies to Improve Teaching and Learning in Higher Education", provides one example of how this could be approached.

In terms of ICT, the university might want to consider looking carefully at its current model of department-based systems. ICT should be a backbone for the university's operations, including its pedagogical approaches. In this regard, the institution should ensure that possible role-confusion between the e-learning coordinator and the ICT department is clarified so that these two units can work together more effectively.

It is also recommended that the required institutional conversations are started to facilitate the optimal use of teaching and learning spaces throughout the entire day, including computer laboratories. The introduction of centralised timetabling is a good start. However, it was clear that some spaces at DUT "belonged" to specific departments and Faculties, who rightly guarded these facilities to ensure their availability and upkeep. But the usefulness of the new timetable program and the full use of DUT facilities will have limited success if these facilities are not made available for timetabling across Faculties. More centralised facilities maintenance would also be helpful, together with a coordinated, integrated master plan for teaching and learning spaces for the institution.

Many students at DUT come from relatively poor homes and, as a result, they can often not afford their own ICT devices. The institution should continue to provide these facilities as it has been doing. It might also be profitable to investigate server based systems with terminals

working from the server in computer labs. This is a cheaper and lower maintenance option than numerous individual personal computers.

Focus area 4: Enhancing course and programme management

DUT is making very good progress in focus area 4. The Strategic Enrolment Management Framework it has developed is well thought out and very impressive, dealing, as it does, with issues affecting not only initial student enrolment but also retention, success efforts and throughput. This framework would be valuable to share with the higher education system as a whole.

The research being conducted about students' experiences and their reasons for not returning is also very valuable and will assist the University with understanding the issues that its students face. DUT is, however, encouraged to find ways of identifying and investigating the "silent leavers" who often do not know the institutional system well enough to complete any "required" exit forms. These students are often most at risk and need more intrusive interventions to be able to succeed.

Concluding comments

DUT is commended for its clear vision, and the approach to its operationalization through clearly articulated policies and strategies. DUT has committed itself to a "student-centred" approach, the practical implications of which are currently being worked out. There are many good practices across the various faculties and it would be very useful if these could be shared across the University and also with other institutions.

DUT is clearly committed to both ensuring that its academic standards are upheld and that the quality of the student experience it provides is excellent.

APPENDIX: Programme



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

CHE INSITUTIONAL VISIT

18 May 2016

Faculty of Health Sciences Boardroom - Mansfield

08:30	Welcome
08:30 – 09:30	Meeting with Senior Management
09:30 – 09:45	Tea
09:45 – 11:05	Meeting with Focus Area 1 Enhancing academics as teachers
11:05 – 12:25	Meeting with Focus Area 2 Enhancing student support and development
12:30 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:20	Meeting with Focus Area 3 Enhancing the learning environment
14:30 – 15:50	Meeting with Focus Area 4 Enhancing course and programme enrolment and management
16:00 – 16:30	Feedback to Senior Management

CHE INSTITUTIONAL VISIT

18 May 2016

08:30 – 09:30 Meeting with Senior Management

16:00 – 16:30 Feedback with Senior Management

Name	Designation
Dr. R Balkaran	ED: Faculty of Management Sciences
Dr. G Chetty	Senior Director: Policy, Planning & Projects
Prof. T Gwele	DVC: Academic
Mr. L Kaplan	Manager: Business Studies Unit
Mr. D Kumar	Chief Operations Officer
Prof. T Meyiwa	Registrar
Dr. G Mheta	Manager: Writing Centre
Ms. N Muller	Director: Planning
Prof. P Musonge	ED: Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment
Mr. R Naicker	Director: Management Information
Prof. T Ngwenya	Director: CELT
Prof. O Olugbara	ED: Faculty of Accounting & Informatics
Prof. T Puckree	ED: Faculty of Health Sciences
Prof. A Ross	Deputy Dean: Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. L Samuels	Director: International Education & Partnerships
Prof. S Singh	ED: Faculty of Applied Sciences
Prof. G Stewart	Co-ordinator – ELearning
Mr. J Vooght	Specialist: CQPA
Ms. L Webster	Director: Library

09:45 – 11:05 Meeting with Focus 1 – Enhancing academics as teachers

Name	Designation
Ms. W Allison	Snr Technical Assistant: Dental Services
Dr. R Balkaran	ED: Faculty of Management Sciences
Mrs. N Chitanand	Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator
Ms. Bwalya Lungu	Educational Technologist – CELT
Dr. L Makondo	Academic Development Practitioner
Prof. T Ngwenya	Director: CELT
Prof. B Pearce	Deputy Dean: Faculty of Arts and Design
Mr. J Vooght	Specialist: CQPA

11:05 – 12:25 Meeting with Focus Area 2 - Enhancing student support and development

Name	Designation
Ms. G Cruickshank	Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator (Health Sciences)
Mr. K Govender	Student Rep: Engineering
Mr. L Govender	HoD: Maritime Studies
Mrs. F E Haffajee	Director: Student Services
Ms. R Hansmann	HoD: Town and Regional Planning
Dr. G Mheta	Manager: Writing Centre
Prof. T Puckree	ED: Faculty of Health Sciences
Ms. S Rambharos	Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator
Ms. R Sayed	Student Rep – Health Sciences
Ms. I Schofield	Lecturer: Management
Mr. S Sibisi	Student Rep – Health Sciences
Mr. A Singh	Dean of Students
Ms. N P Xaba	Clinical Instructor (Health Sciences)

Mr. S G R Zulu	Staff Development Practitioner

13:00 – 14:20 Meeting with Focus Area 3 - Enhancing the learning environment

Name	Designation
Ms. W Allison	Snr Technical Assistant: Dental Services
Mr. S Aalto	Director: ITSS
Dr. G Chetty	Senior Director: Policy, Planning & Projects
Ms. L Cloete	Manager: Library – Steve Biko
Mr. B Dlamini	Lecturer: Applied Management
Mr. L Govender	HoD: Maritime Studies
Ms. L Gumede	Manager: Library – PMB
Ms. H Jackson	Lecturer: Industrial Engineering
Ms. N Majola	Manager: Library – City Campus
Mr. T McKune	Director: Facilities – PMB
Mrs. S Neerpath	Manager: Library – ML Sultan
Mr. Nene	Student Rep - Engineering
Mr. S Ngcobo	Student Rep – Health Sciences
Prof. O Olugbara	ED: Faculty of Accounting and Informatics
Prof. N Sibiyi	HoD: Nursing
Prof. S Singh	ED: Faculty of Applied Sciences
Prof. G Stewart	Co-ordinator : ELearning
Mr. S Sunder	Student Rep – Health Sciences
Ms. L Webster	Director: Library

14:30 – 15:50 Meeting with Focus Area 4 - Enhancing course and programme enrolment and management

Name	Designation
Ms. D Borg	HoD: Somatology
Mr. M Erasmus	Student Rep – Health Sciences
Ms. R Hansmann	HoD: Town and Regional Planning
Mr. M Khuluse	Student Rep – Health Sciences
Mr. M Manqele	Lecturer: Maritime Studies
Prof. P Musonge	ED: Engineering and the Built Environment
Ms. N Muller	Director: Planning
Mr. R Naicker	Director: Management Information
Mr. S Oyeyinka	Student Rep – Applied Sciences
Dr. T S Pillay	Deputy Registrar
Ms. I Schofield	Lecturer: Management