



Quality Enhancement Project

Institutional Submissions: Phase 1

Due Date: 1 September 2014

Name of Institution	University of the Western Cape
Contact Person	Prof Ramesh Bharuthram, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic
Date of submission	1 September 2014

Institutional submissions form the starting point for each phase of the QEP. They are intended to be for information rather than for evaluative purposes, although it is expected that institutions will recognise the value and importance of serious engagement in producing the submissions. Institutional submissions serve a purpose for both the institutions and the CHE. For institutions, the submissions provide an opportunity to reflect at an institutional level on what they are currently doing, or planning to do, and where there are unaddressed needs related to the focus areas. For the CHE, the institutional submissions enable the CHE to elicit information related to student success from all universities. This information is needed for two reasons:

1. It serves as a baseline, providing a snapshot of current thinking, practices and priorities in each institution related to the focus areas in particular, and student success in general.
2. It provides a starting point for identifying common approaches and problems, as well as unique approaches that are particularly effective and problems that are of particular concern to sub-sectors of the university community. This will allow more focussed discussions to take place later on in the QEP.

The institutional submissions should be concise and focused. If more detailed information is needed, the CHE will ask universities to provide it. Submissions should include an indication of where further information can be accessed from the university's website, if applicable.

Institutions are requested to be frank and clear in their responses. Otherwise it will be difficult for the higher education sector to engage meaningfully with enablers of, and obstacles to, student success. While there are indisputable differences in institutional contexts, most challenges are common to several, if not many, institutions. Clear and honest statements of the challenges will facilitate the development of strategies to address them. On the other hand, successful approaches developed in one institutional context may be able to be adapted to help students in another context.

1. INTRODUCTION (2-5 pages)

1.1 Briefly describe the features of your institutional context that are most salient to the success of your students.

This submission by the University of the Western Cape (UWC) captures a range of activities and interventions that form part of a broader process of strategic realignment and growth undertaken by the institution over the last thirteen years. Central to this process has been its intention, drawing from its proud history and the challenges it has experienced, to reimagine itself as having a distinctive academic role to play in South Africa, able to contribute through the highest levels of scholarship to the growth and development of the country within an increasingly complex and knowledge driven world. The progress UWC has made over this period is significant, reflecting important achievements in both research and teaching and learning. Much of the progress that UWC has made has come about through carefully developed five-year strategic plans – its Institutional Operating Plans, that have directed the institutional change process. UWC’s present IOP, for the period 2010-2014, provides the guiding framework for the process of reflection underpinning this submission.

One of the most important areas addressed in the IOP (2010-2014), captured in Goal 2, is the focus on improving opportunities for UWC students to successfully complete their studies. It commits UWC to strive towards improving “opportunities for all students to succeed in their studies through a responsive teaching and learning process that is able to address the learning needs of all students....especially when these needs arise from severe educational disadvantage and poverty” (IOP, 2010:14). In addition to recognising teaching and learning practice and its ongoing improvement as key to this objective, the IOP also emphasises the creation of an enabling academic environment where students are supported to grow and develop to their to their full potential, able to leave UWC with the kinds of attributes that are important to their future roles in society. Such an environment is created through the provision of appropriate student development and support services, what the university recognises as the co-curriculum, and through the creation of a vibrant and academically conducive campus environment.

These strategic intentions and how they have been taken forward across the institution have been strongly influenced by a number of factors that are critical to the nature of the teaching and learning challenges that UWC experiences as an institution. These factors relate directly to the pervasive impact of the apartheid legacy on higher education in South Africa and the complex, but very real ways that it continues to play itself out across the sector. Understanding these challenges forms an important part of any systemic process which is seeking to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the sector.

For UWC, one of the most important features of its institutional context for student success has to do with the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the majority of its students. The majority of UWC students come from extremely poor and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds thus bringing with them into their studies an associated set of teaching and learning challenges for the institution. This reality, in the context of the Western Cape in particular, was brought home through a recent study by the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC)¹. This study explored the pathways from university to work of the 2010 graduates from all four higher education institutions in the province. Recognising level of parental education as an important internationally recognised proxy for socio-economic

¹ Pathways from university to work (2013). A Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) Study. Cape Town: CHEC.

background, the study showed that 69% of the parents of the UWC graduates did not have any post school qualification, while 45% did not have a matric. Comparative figures for UCT showed 35% (no post school) and 15% (no matric) and for Stellenbosch, 40% (no post school) and 19% (no matric). In addition to the depth of the socio-economic challenges that these figures point to, including, for example, meeting the costs of tuition, they also suggest that approximately two thirds of UWC students are entering the university with parents who have no experience of higher education study. This is an important factor contributing to students' preparedness for higher education and contributes significantly to the social capital that students bring to their university experience and future employment prospects. Previous parental experience of higher education also points to the nature and extent of the support that may be available to students at home while they are studying.

The above findings align strongly with the study's findings on educational preparedness for higher education. The study showed that at least 78% of the 2010 cohort of graduates from UWC had entered the university with a Science matric mark below 60% - this was only the case for 19% of UCT students and 30% of Stellenbosch students. In fact, 50% of the UWC students had a Science mark below 50%. The Mathematics results were similar with 66% of UWC students having less than 60% for Mathematics, compared to 20% of the UCT graduates and 25% of the Stellenbosch graduates.

These realities have important implications for teaching and learning at UWC. They create a complex array of teaching and learning challenges that academic staff are required to grapple with on a daily basis. Addressing these challenges require skills and knowledge that include the application of practices to enhance the student's inherent strengths and abilities, often deeply damaged by the deprivation they have experienced, and extend to the provision of various forms of psycho-social support, often critical to the student's confidence and orientation to academic study. In addition to the high levels of commitment that addressing these challenges require of staff, they place a huge financial burden on UWC. This needs to be understood in a context where UWC, together with the other historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) and sites, face the greatest resource challenges across the sector. Despite the fact that the majority of historically disadvantaged students across the sector are concentrated here, these institutions have the lowest reserves and limited third-stream income, rendering them heavily dependent on state subsidies. They are also the institutions that charge the lowest student fees. For example, in 2012 UCT's fees for a BCom were 121% higher than UWC's and Stellenbosch's 37% higher². While UWC remains committed to keeping its fees as low as possible to ensure that poorer students have access to higher education, its low fee base generates limited funding that can be directed towards the teaching and learning challenges described earlier. Taken the reduction in real terms of the state subsidy to higher education institutions over the last few years and thus the increasing reliance of universities on user fees, these resource challenges for UWC are unlikely to change in the near future.

Equally important to UWC's institutional context is the legacy of its geographical location and spatial positioning within the apartheid higher education landscape. As already noted, UWC firmly believes that the physical university environment plays a critical role in the quality of the students' academic experience and that the broader campus environment, as the 'hidden curriculum', is an important supporting element contributing to student success. However, despite the fact that UWC is considered an urban university, the reality is that it is located in an urban wasteland surrounded by underdeveloped industrial land as well as very poor, densely populated communities. As is the case in other poor areas of the country, this means

² In 2012 UCT's fee for a BCom was R42 000, SU's R26 100 and UWC's R19 000.

that UWC's surrounding communities are not able to provide the socio-economic activity that supports universities. There is, for example, little or no provision for cultural, sports or other related infrastructure. These communities are also challenged by poorly developed services such as safe and affordable public transport. This means that UWC students, especially those in the residences, do not have easy, safe and accessible access to recreational facilities like movie houses, restaurants and theatres. This means that, in addition to providing academic infrastructure for its growing student body, it places a further burden on UWC to provide such amenities as the lack thereof impacts negatively on the student experience. Students not living on campus are also challenged by UWC's location, often having to travel long distances to and from the campus, allowing little time for participation in co-curricular activities. While these socio-economic challenges create particular challenges for UWC, the university also recognises that its surrounding communities provide a rich source of indigenous knowledge systems as student placement sites of learning and drawing on such knowledge is important to the success of its students.

The impact of this legacy is also evident in the way in which UWC has been developed as a campus and the extent to which its infrastructure is academically coherent and provides conducive spaces for academic learning. These challenges have deepened with the growth of the institution. With a much larger student body, the campus now requires serious expansion and the reorganisation of the physical location of its academic departments and student services. The quality and functionality of old infrastructure is rapidly deteriorating and also requires urgent attention. This is a disruptive and expensive process that will continue for many years. However, it also provides the opportunity to reimagine the campus environment and to provide infrastructure that better supports new demands and practices associated with teaching and learning activities. With the large student population that commutes daily and the new opportunities and demands associated with technology, attention must also be given to the establishment of new kinds of learning spaces for students who spend many hours on campus between classes. UWC is serious in its attempts to expand, adapt and modernise its infrastructure to better support the academic experience and outcomes.

These factors that define UWC's context come together in complex ways to influence successful academic study. While the challenges that these factors generate for UWC are significant, they also, as suggested above, create opportunities for new ways of thinking and innovative practice. UWC is deeply committed to harnessing such thinking and innovation.

1.2. Indicate how the submission was prepared, including the names and designations of the people involved with producing various sections of the submission.

This submission reflects the outcome of an institutional process, driven through the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) that brought together senior university staff to reflect on and engage around UWC's teaching and learning mandate and associated efforts to improve students' success. It had two main purposes. Firstly, it was intended to facilitate the development of UWC's submission to the Council on Higher Education's Quality Enhancement Project. Secondly, it was envisaged that these deliberations would feed into institutional thinking and engagement around the development of UWC's next five year Institutional Operating Plan (2015-2019). In this way the process provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on what we have been doing, noting both areas of success and challenges to be pursued. Equally importantly, it would ensure that there is strong alignment between the baseline set out in this submission and the priorities and strategic concerns taken forward in the new IOP.

The process brought together the Deputy Deans of Teaching and Learning and Senior Faculty Teaching and Learning Specialists to deliberate on these issues. Each of the experts formed part of a team, with each member responsible for collecting relevant documentation in the designated focus areas and engaging where necessary with relevant stakeholders. This process was co-ordinated through the Directorate for Teaching and Learning, which was also responsible once the information had been captured, with collating the different sections. The Directorate was supported in the finalisation of the submission by the Institutional Planning Division. The following individuals were responsible for working on the different sections, providing necessary information and finalising the report:

FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS:

Prof Wendy McMillan (Teaching and Learning Specialist Faculty of Dentistry) assisted by Prof Delia Marshall (Professor of Physics), Prof Vivienne Bozalek (Director: Teaching and Learning), and Amanda Hambrook-Glaeser (Head of Human Resources)

FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT:

Dr Birgit Schreiber (Director: Centre for Student Support Services, UWC) assisted by Prof M.E. Parker (Deputy-Dean: Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Dentistry), Prof David Fisher (Acting Deputy-Vice-Chancellor: Student Development and Support), and Mr Winston Middleton (Manager: Student Development)

FOCUS AREA 3: ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

Prof Gavin Maneveldt (Deputy-Dean: Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Natural Sciences) assisted by Dr Birgit Schreiber (Director: Centre for Student Support Services), Ms Allison Fullard (Deputy-Director: Library), Mr Errol van Staden and Mr Mervyn Christoffels (Information and Communication Services [ICS]), Dr Juliet Stoltenkamp and Ms Caroline Kies (Centre for Innovative Educational and Communication Technologies [CIECT]), Mr Ncedikaya Magopeni (Student Development and Support), Dr Sherran Clarence (Teaching and Learning Specialist, Directorate of Teaching and Learning) and Prof Shirley Walters (Director: Division for Lifelong Learning)

FOCUS AREA 4: ENHANCING COURSE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT

Prof Rina Swart (Deputy-Dean: Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences), Prof Judith Cornelissen (Acting Registrar), Prof Tahir Wood (Director: Academic Planning), Ms Cheryl Pearce (Director: Student Enrolment Management Unit), Dr Colleen Howell (Director: Institutional Research, Institutional Planning Office), Mr Vincent Morta (Director: Quality Assurance), Mr Ashmind Daniels (Office of the Deputy Registrar), Prof Juliana Smith (Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Education)

INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING:

Mr Larry Pokpas (Institutional Planner and Executive Assistant to the Rector), Mr Vincent Mortat (Director: Quality Assurance, Ms Lois Dippenaar (Director: Planning) and Dr Colleen Howell (Director: Institutional Research).

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC):

Prof Ramesh Bharuthram (DVC: Academic); Dr Vanessa Brown (Executive Assistant to the DVC).

2. FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS (3-6 pages)
(Including professional development, reward and recognition, workload, conditions of service and performance appraisal)

2.1 Which aspects of your institution's Strategic Plan relate to this focus area? (Please be specific by quoting from the Strategic Plan).

This area of focus is given greatest prominence in Goal 2 of UWC's IOP (2010-2014). This goal, as already described, is focused on improving teaching and learning and outlines a number of strategies that are aimed at the achievement of this goal. These strategies have been central to the programme of action pursued by the Directorate for Teaching and Learning over the last five years. Strategy 1 of Goal 2 speaks directly to the enhancement of academics as teachers by enhancing the status of teaching and learning and prioritising its professionalization across the institution. The IOP states:

Attention will be focused on enhancing the status of teaching and learning at the institution and improving the quality of teaching and learning...Improving practice and professionalising the teaching function in higher education will be prioritised through the provision of formal and informal training opportunities for academic staff and through rigorous research to enhance the scholarship of teaching and learning at UWC.

These overarching imperatives are given greater attention in UWC's *Strategic Plan for Teaching and Learning*. The Plan outlines the following objectives; enhance and promote the status of teaching and learning at UWC; develop and promote the scholarship of teaching and learning at UWC; professionalise teaching through formal and informal education for academics; infuse technology into teaching and learning and promote the use of e-pedagogy; develop an infrastructure for teaching and learning; and embed graduate attributes into academic programmes and curricula. Its implementation is supported by an *Implementation Plan for Teaching and Learning* where each of the objectives is linked to specific actions, expected outcomes, and a particular performance measure to monitor and evaluate progress. The Implementation Plan is updated every year and provides the framework for annual reporting by the Directorate for Teaching and Learning to Senate. A central focus of activity over the last five years has been the cascading of the Strategic Plan into each of the university's seven faculties. This has involved building awareness about the objectives of the Plan and its connection to UWC's broader strategic goals and supporting the faculties to make meaning of the Plan and its objectives in relation to their own disciplinary area and teaching and learning challenges.

Enhancing the position of academic staff as teachers is also given attention in Goal 4 of the IOP. This goal focuses on the institution's human capital and the kind of talent and knowledge that is needed among its staff to deliver its core functions and achieve its strategic objectives. It emphasises that for this to happen, including for academic staff to function as effective teachers, the nature of the workplace and the conditions under which staff work must continue to feature prominently on its strategic agenda. To this end the IOP indicates that:

UWC is committed to deploying staff wisely, developing their capacity, creating conditions in which they are able to work optimally, and reflecting on performance to address difficulties and acknowledge achievement .

Like Goal 2, Goal 4 also foregrounds the notion of professionalism and what must be in place to "establish a more professional workforce". It notes that to achieve this; staff must have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to undertake the tasks assigned to them. Equally importantly, they should feel confident to carry out their work and demonstrate the commitment and values that they bring to their job.

Improving professionalism therefore relates to training and development, and to the introduction and reinforcement of professional behaviour, further supported by an appropriate system of recognition.

2.2 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.)

Cascading the Strategic Plan for Teaching and Learning into the faculties

- The provision of targeted support to strengthen the development of the newly established Directorate for Teaching and Learning (established in 2009). Important here was the start-up funding provided through the 2nd phase of the South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development Program (SANTED) Programme at UWC (2008-2010).
- The establishment of Senate and Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees. These structures are responsible for the implementation of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Implementation Plans and for driving improvement efforts across the faculties. Progress on effective implementation is evaluated through quarterly faculty progress reports to the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee and an annual progress report to Senate.
- The appointment of Deputy Deans: Teaching and Learning supported by Teaching and Learning specialists. To date 6 out of the 7 faculties have Deputy Deans: Teaching and Learning in place and 4 have Teaching and Learning Specialists. The Deputy Deans are responsible for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and for the overall improvement of teaching and learning across their faculty. The Deputy Deans sit on the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee and report regularly to their Faculty Boards and Teaching and Learning Committees. As will become clearer from the information captured in the other Focus areas, the work of other specific units complement the teaching and learning practice of faculties, with their Directors also sitting on the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee.

Enhancing and promoting the status of teaching and learning at UWC

- A key element towards realising this objective has focused on recognising teaching and learning practice as a required competency for academic advancement and appointment as well as a criterion for overall academic excellence. Policy frameworks that outline core teaching and learning competencies required for academic staff have been developed and integrated into processes of decision making regarding academic staff selection, appointment, probation and promotion.
- The Deputy Deans: Teaching and Learning are now included in most of the faculties in committees and associated processes responsible for probation, promotion and appointment decisions.
- Teaching and learning is now integrated into the university's Performance Development System (PDS) as a key performance area.
- The Deputy-Deans of Teaching and Learning and the Teaching and Learning Specialists in the faculties are now included in all academic reviews of departments and programmes.
- The launching in 2012 of the Directorate for Teaching and Learning website. (<http://www.uwc.ac.za/TandL>). Although still requiring further development, this internal resource is increasingly used to publicise university initiatives and successes, to advertise teaching and learning related events and to share information to support academics in their work. This media presence is further enhanced through a new blog

created in 2013 using Wordpress. The aim of the blog is to grow over time a community of scholars (local and wider) to share ideas, literature, research and other relevant teaching and learning resources (<http://unteachingblog.wordpress.com>). Articles around teaching and learning developments and successes now also feature more regularly in the university newspaper, *On Campus*.

Developing and promoting the scholarship of teaching and learning at UWC

- The allocation of institutional ring-fenced funding for research and innovation into teaching and learning. To date 38 grants have been allocated. In 2013 the annual UWC Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Colloquium was entitled “An overview of research findings from UWC grant holders”, providing researchers with the opportunity to showcase their research findings and initiate important discussions about teaching and learning practice across the institution. Funding has also been specifically allocated to facilitate the participation of teachers from the extended curriculum programmes to attend the annual Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) conference.
- The participation by a number of UWC staff in collaborative research projects into teaching and learning in higher education. Especially important here was the National Research Foundation (NRF) project on Emerging Technologies to Improve Higher Education Teaching and Learning, with the Director of Teaching and Learning as the principal investigator.
- Spearheaded by UWC, the launching at the end of 2013 of a new international journal of teaching and learning, *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*. The first issue was launched to coincide with the annual HELTASA conference. The journal platform is open-source, using Open Journal Systems, and is available exclusively online, with the UWC library providing technical support. The editorial board comprises academics from UWC, CPUT, UJ, UCT, SU, UFS and the University of South Australia. Prof Vivienne Bozalek, the Director of Teaching and Learning is the editor-in-chief and Dr Sherran Clarence from the Directorate is the Managing Editor. The journal will be eligible for accreditation in 2016, once it has published at least 5 consecutive issues (<http://cristal.epubs.ac.za/index.php/cristal>).
- The ongoing publication by UWC academic staff of scholarly research outputs on teaching and learning. In line with UWC’s overall trajectory of improvement with regard to research outputs, teaching and learning research outputs have also continued to improve. In 2013 32 accredited journal articles on teaching and learning were published by UWC staff.
- The organisation by UWC, in some instances in collaboration with other HEIs, of various seminars/colloquia and conferences around teaching and learning concerns. Some examples of intra-institutional initiatives include: an annual UWC Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Colloquium; a monthly lunch-time seminar series on innovative practices in teaching and learning; and an Authentic Learning Colloquium. The annual Regional Extended Curriculum Programme Colloquium is an important example of regional initiatives in this regard.

Professionalise teaching through formal and informal education for academics

- An Induction to Teaching and Learning short course has been developed and is required for probationary review leading to permanent employment. Attendance at the induction workshops is monitored and between 2010 and 2013 105 new staff members across all faculties had participated in this initiative.
- Considerable attention has also been given to supporting the attainment of PHDs by academic staff. This has happened through a targeted intervention called the PHD

Upgrade Programme. Key to the programme has been the ring fencing of funding to enable staff to buy-back teaching time to expedite completion of their doctorate, and to support their participation in overseas conferences. The Programme has also provided for various research capacity development initiatives. The number of UWC full time academic staff with doctoral qualifications has increased from 42% in 2009 to 55% at the present time.

- Teaching and learning retreats and workshops have been developed and provided to staff. Particular attention was focused between 2010 and 2012 on Heads of Departments (HODs). Using a model developed by the Director of Teaching and Learning in 2009 that could be cascaded down, 3-5 day workshops were held twice yearly with HODs over this period. By the end of 2012, 99 HODs had attended an intensive retreat. The primary focus was on curriculum alignment – in particular, helping academics to align their curricula with UWC’s Charter of Graduate Attributes. These HODs then returned to their faculties and rolled out similar programmes.
- The Community Engagement Unit also provides ongoing support to departments to enhance student learning through community engagement. Especially important here is supporting the development of service-learning as a desirable mode of teaching and learning. An important example here is the service-learning in pharmacy (SLIP) programme that was recognised nationally as the best service-learning programme in the country (Professional Board Programme Review, August 2014).
- Building the capacity of academic staff to embed graduate attributes into their academic programmes and curricula has extended beyond the HOD workshops and programmes and modules across the university are in the process of being aligned. To support this process an online Module Outline Template is in place to guide academics.
- This year a Postgraduate Diploma on Teaching and Learning was initiated by UWC, Stellenbosch University and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). This exciting development marked the final outcome of a collaborative process begun some time ago to develop and offer such a course.
- UWC, through the Director of Teaching and Learning, has also been centrally involved in the development and delivery of various courses on teaching and learning offered through the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC). Participation has proved very popular with UWC staff, with 48 attending these courses in 2013 and 37 receiving certificates.
- An important indicator of UWC’s growing excellence in teaching and learning has been through external recognition of individual academic staff. For three years in a row (2010-2012) a UWC staff member was awarded the Council on Higher Education (CHE)/HELTASA National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award, and in 2013 another UWC academic received an HELTASA commendation for their work. Internal recognition is also given through the Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching and Learning Award, an award now enjoying the same status as similar institutional awards for research excellence.
- Another important initiative, linked directly to building UWC’s human capital, is the Talent Stewardship Project lead by the Executive Director: Human Resources. This initiative is aimed at targeted capacity building to consciously retain, diversify and develop staff with the required competencies to meet UWC’s present and future needs. As part of the process, faculties developed overviews of desired roles, skills and competencies for all levels of academic staff. These were then synergised to provide a guide for the development of young academic staff. Following a successful pilot in the Law Faculty, the process is now being rolled-out to other faculties. An important element of the initiative involves identifying through UWC’s tutorial programmes (see Focus Area 2) promising tutors who are then supported to pursue academic careers and

aspire to become future academics.

2.3 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?

- Despite the important strategic framework in place to take forward and guide UWC's vision for teaching and learning across the institution, implementation across all faculties has in some areas been uneven. An important factor here in influencing successful implementation is the seniority and experience of the staff sitting on Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees. Similarly, the Performance Development System (PDS) and its attention to teaching and learning competencies needs to be more fully utilized across the institution.
- While the process towards the development of a Charter of Graduate Attributes for UWC and building the capacity of academic staff to embed these attributes into their curricula reflects some important achievements, important milestones still need to be reached in this process. One of these concerns some unevenness across the faculties towards the full implementation of the curriculum alignment process. Another relates to understanding more fully the relationship between these attributes and the employability of our graduates. Both areas require greater attention and will be taken up in the next five year strategic plan. Also needed is an institutional system to assess the extent of curriculum alignment.

2.4 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?

- Many of the activities discussed above are aimed at long term change and improvement and as such will continue to be implemented over the next 12-18 months and will therefore form part of the new Institutional Operating Plan (2015 -2019) and the associated teaching and learning implementation frameworks aligned to the IOP.
- Another initiative that will continue into the next 12-18 months is the regional Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education with associated efforts to encourage UWC academic staff to register.
- The short induction course for new lectures reported on above has recently been revised and formalised and will now be presented in an extended format.
- A key concern for the University, that is being given dedicated attention and is likely to achieve some finalisation over the next six months, relates directly to the sustainability of its extended curriculum programme (ECP). The University's resource constraints and the overall underfunding of such provision across the sector has meant it has been strongly reliant on one year renewable contracts for most of its teaching staff in these programmes. This has implications for the attraction and retention of experienced ECP staff. A process towards the creation of permanent positions for ECP staff is presently underway and is seen as a priority over the next six months. However, as discussed in Section 6, challenges still remain for the University in the provision of sustainable and effective ECPs.
- Two new National Research Foundation (NRF) projects on Teaching and Learning across multiple national and international HEIs have been initiated and will be implemented over this period.
- A flexible provision action research project is currently underway. The aim of the project is to engage UWC staff members in mapping current teaching and learning

practices against the principles and key concepts of flexible provision, and secondly, to explore the feasibility of implementing a revised B.Admin degree according to these principles.

2.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

- Taken the depth and breadth of the teaching and learning challenges described in the introduction to this submission, for UWC, the greatest challenge in this focus area remains the limited nature of the resources that it has available to fully institutionalise the initiatives listed above and expand the breadth of its interventions. These resource constraints relate both to its funding base and its human resources (UWCs Directorate of Teaching and Learning is significantly smaller than comparable structures in other South African higher education institutions). Important with regard to the latter is that many of the new initiatives discussed above now require dedicated personal to drive them across the institution and ensure that they are fully institutionalised. UWC is therefore consistently challenged to find innovative ways to leverage deeply systemic change processes with limited capacity
- Despite the rigour of the policy frameworks and interventions now in place, reward and promotions processes still need to place teaching and learning competence at the same level as research output. While, as already noted, the former is receiving focused attention and showing important signs of improvement, ensuring this balance across the institution will remain an important area of focus.
- Unpacking and giving real meaning in practical and sustainable ways to the provision of flexible teaching and learning provision remains a challenge for the university and will require on-going attention and engagement.

3. FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (3-6 pages) *(Including career and curriculum advising, life and academic skills development, counselling, student performance monitoring and referral)*

3.1 Which aspects of your institution's Strategic Plan relate to this focus area? (Please quote from the strategic plan)

The support and development of students at UWC forms part of Goal 1 of the Institutional Operating Plan (2010-2014). This Goal speaks both to the complexities of managing student enrolment growth so that all students “have the opportunity to obtain the highest levels of knowledge and skill to equip themselves to participate with confidence in our emerging democracy, and global knowledge economy”, and to the nature of the support and development that the university must provide for this to happen. The IOP states that ensuring such “meaningful access” brings with it huge challenges and inherent tensions that emerge directly through the complex interplay of the factors described in some detail in the introduction to this submission. The Plan therefore asserts that:

Placing the student at the centre of the academic project gives focus to our endeavours and provides us with the best way of managing these tensions to provide students with an environment in which they have a rich range of opportunities and are supported to participate in their studies and as active university role players to develop their full potential.

The IOP emphasises that for this to happen it will “pursue a holistic, strength-based approach to the development and support of students”. The IOP states that such an approach “is aimed at

student ownership of their learning and at achieving attributes in terms of which graduates hold beliefs and values consistent with democratic citizenship and are responsive to both their work and living environments”. It therefore commits the University to strive towards the provision of programmes and interventions that are “based explicitly on relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and sophisticated ways of achieving them” and must be able to “provide evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes” (IOP, 2010:10). As a research university UWC also believes that to achieve these objectives building and contributing to scholarship around these concerns must be supported and used to inform the implementation of its student development and support endeavours.

3.2 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.)

The SDS programmes are evaluated in various ways, including self-reporting, impact studies and formal research or survey evaluations. Benchmark exercises are performed as well. The Students Representative Council (SRC) elections are monitored by an external agency and evaluations are submitted to the UWC Council. Annual quality assurance is performed to review performances and to ensure alignment with national standards. The Centre for Student Support Services (CSSS) completes an annual report which is submitted to the Support and Development Services Senate Committee (SDSSC).

Programmes and interventions focused on the provision of direct support to students

- The offering of well-developed and comprehensive Orientation Programme for all first year students. This is a campus wide two-week programme aimed at orientating first year students to UWC’s context.
- A Peer Mentoring Programme spanning all faculties is in place. Senior students are trained and supported to provide effective support to first year students while they themselves develop skills. In 2013 192 mentors were trained and 7252 mentoring sessions undertaken.
- The provision of a range of psychological counselling services to students in line with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HSPCA) requirements. Data on attending students is consistently monitored, including the nature of the problems presented as well as demographic information. It is interesting to note, for example, that in 2013 attendance was higher among first and second year students, among non-residence students, among women students and among students in the 21 to 30 age bracket (rather than the younger students of 17 to 20).
- A vibrant service to students with disabilities. This service provides academic accommodations and support for over 300 students registered with disabilities at UWC. Services focus on accommodations, academic support, as well as test and exam facilitation. The 'social model of disability, that recognises disability as a human rights and development concern and draws from a systemic rather than medicalised perspective, informs the approach of these services and what is strived for.
- Code specific athlete support programmes are provided that aim to support the special needs of student athletes, such as rugby players and high performance athletes.
- SDS also enables and promotes access to bursaries (NSFAS and donors) and students have opportunities to work part-time on campus in “Workstudy” programmes for which they are paid a stipend.
- Through the Directorate for Teaching and Learning tutor development programmes have been developed, supported by appropriate policies and training opportunities for

tutors. Workshops are evaluated through qualitative written feedback.

- A number of initiatives accommodate and support, mainly through the Division for Life Long Learning, adult learners, ‘part-time’ students, students entering the university through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and those undertaking Continuing Education (CE) courses. Recent initiatives have focused on the development of flexible teaching and learning provision principles and practices and how to infuse these into programme design and delivery so as to ensure that all students, especially those who work, are able to learn and participate to their full potential. These and other initiatives have contributed to institutional policy and practice such as the development of a ‘framework for after-hours provision’ and the creation of an “After Hours Study Zone” (AHSZ).
- More than half of UWC students come from homes where English is not their first language. UWC therefore has a number of interventions and services in place to enhance English language proficiency among students and to further develop their academic writing skills. At the curriculum level all first year students are required to complete the module English for Educational Development (EED). Further support is provided through the Writing Centre where peer writing tutors guide, advise and support student writers, with the aim of developing their skills and confidence. The Centre also provides support to academic staff as they work with their own student writers.

Programmes and interventions focused on the holistic development of students

- Graduate Development Programmes are offered by the university. In particular, the extended curriculum programmes (ECP) in the Faculties of Natural Science, Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) and a similar programme in the Faculty of Dentistry.
- A number of services are offered that provide for career development of students. These aim to prepare students for migrating from graduation to employment, presenting themselves successfully to employers, and improving job search efficiencies. Important here are the Career Expos where students are able to engage with prospective employers and envisage themselves in the world of work. There has been a steady increase in the last five years in the levels of participation by both companies and students, with the number of companies exhibiting increasing from 31 in 2009 to 62 in 2013. Student participation has increased from 914 in 2009 to 3192 in 2013.
- UWC has a Leadership Academy which develops leadership competencies as well as civic participation and responsibility. Student societies are developed and supported and office bearers are afforded skills-development opportunities.
- To support an effective and dynamic SRC the UWC provides leadership training support to SRC members. Training is focused on building competencies in governance, civic responsibility and democratic participation.
- Volunteering and Social Responsibility are also promoted through the support of students’ engagement in socially responsible projects and volunteering in campus-community and off-campus-community projects. Such activities are supervised and skills development is closely related to UWC’s Charter of Graduate Attributes.
- Entrepreneurship skills for social and economic entrepreneurship are developed with a focus on financial literacy, planning and creative thinking.
- Debates and conversation programmes are facilitated on campus and in the residences. These take the form of discussions, presentations, talks, competitions, workshops with the overall focus being on the development of critical thinking and speaking abilities.
- In 2013 UWC completed the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) to establish a baseline of student engagement practices. The results are currently being

analysed and UWC has committed to conducting the engagement survey on an annual basis and on using the insights gained from the SASSE survey to improve the student experience at UWC.

- Discussed in more detail in Focus Area 4 is the Student Enrolment Management System (SEMS). An electronic information system which, among many other functions, is in the process of finalising its capacity to flag at-risk students.
- A number of initiatives are in place in the residences to enhance the academic and life skills of students. One of these is the setting up of “Development Officers”. These are postgraduate students who work with undergraduate students on addressing challenges and enhancing academic performance.
- SDS has begun to migrate services, programmes and interventions onto electronic platforms. The intention is to use e-technologies and digital media to improve pathways for engagement and attachment. (www.uwc.ac.za/Students/SD/Pages/default.aspx).

Enhancing the scholarship of student development and support

- Scholarship around the knowledge domain of student development and support is pursued through formal and informal opportunities.
- Colloquia and seminars are organised and hosted which focus on developing national disciplinary thinking, especially around topics relevant to the South African context, and the alignment of South Africa practice with international standards.
- An online *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* with an editorial board of international scholars was initiated and is hosted on UWC’s open access platform. The first volume was published in 2013 (jsaa.ac.za/index.php/jsaa).
- Participation by staff involved in various scholarly activities in the area of student development and support is supported through funding and supervision. A list of research outputs is reported in the CSSS annual reports. An exciting development this year was the publication of a ground breaking book on student affairs in South Africa. Three of UWC’s senior staff in this area contributed chapters to this book.

Enhancing student development and support integration into the institution

- Faculty Student Affairs Committees have been established in each faculty with representation from CSSS.
- Senior SDS staff are represented on the Support and Development Services Senate Committee (SDSSC), on Council, on Senate, and in other relevant Senate committees, such as the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee.

The alignment of student development and support programmes with UWC’s Charter of Graduate Attributes and the acquisition of such attributes through the co-curriculum.

- Ongoing work is undertaken to ensure that student development and support programmes are aligned with UWC’s Charter of Graduate Attributes. The skills which are focused on include: autonomous and collaborative work; ethical, environmental and social awareness and activities; communication skills; and interpersonal flexibility and confidence to engage across difference.

3.3 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?

- The integration of SDS within faculties has been uneven. For example, while some faculties have successfully integrated SDS initiatives into their ECP programmes this will need to be expanded on.

- Embedding graduate attributes in student development and support initiatives and the assessment thereof has also been unevenly accepted and acted upon. Assessment of impact as well as programme evaluations needs to be more evenly applied across SDS initiatives. An SDS system to assess the extent of ‘embeddedness’ of graduate attributes in SDS programmes and interventions has not yet been developed.
- SDS has attempted to create closer internal alliance between leadership training and positional student leadership, such as the SRC, student faculty councils, and house committees in residences. Challenges have arisen around lack of time and capacity to focus on this area.
- An online chat support programme was piloted but faced difficulties due to instabilities of the online platform. These challenges need to be addressed for an initiative of this nature to work effectively.
- The tutor development workshops were not as well attended as we would have linked. It would seem that although many tutors come to the initial training, participation is not sustained at the same levels. Feedback suggests that timing is an issue with students under pressure towards exam times. However, departments also need to be more proactive in ensuring that their tutors participate in the workshops.

3.4 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?

- Work will continue to take place around the analysis of the data collected through the SASSE survey.
- The Graduate Development Programme will be integrated into more faculties, namely the Faculties of Community and Health Sciences, Law, and Education.
- More on innovative student development and support practices using ICTs needs to be undertaken and this will remain an area for ongoing attention.
- The university has become a member of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services organisation, and UWC is a member of the board responsible for the Africa Region. Such membership by UWC of national and international associations will continue to be pursued.
- Focused attention will be given to formalising a Co-Curricular Record. This is a record of all co-curricular involvement by students, which would be formally captured as part of their experiential learning.
- UWC plans to continue strengthening and developing the tutor education and support workshops both at the start of and during the academic year.

3.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

- Once again the university’s limited resources impact on the depth and breadth of its student development and support provision, particularly in a context where our students often require high levels of support. These constraints mean that SDS struggles with less capacity than the national standard indicates and is constantly challenged to find innovative ways to provide quality services to all our students.
- Despite some important developments in the area, SDS as a recognised area of scholarship in South Africa is underdeveloped. The continued professional development of SDS staff, particularly through contributing to academic activities, remains a challenge.
- Although evidence-based interventions and programmes are recognised as key to the

responsiveness of services to students' needs and to informing improvements in practice, greater attention must be given to promoting such practice across the institution and in all areas of SDS. Particular attention needs to be paid to strengthening student evaluation mechanisms, especially towards closing the 'feedback loop' between student feedback and the integration of this feedback into teaching and learning planning and practice.

- Despite important progress that has been made to integrate SDS into core areas of the institution's functioning, the consolidation of SDS-type initiatives across campus, especially at the faculty level, requires more attention. This includes continuing to raise greater awareness about the importance of student development and support to the student experience and to ensuring that student development and support competencies are more fully recognised and integrated into human resource processes.
- Attention also needs to be given to improving the integration of international students into support and development programmes.

4. FOCUS AREA 3: ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (3-6 pages) *(Including teaching and learning spaces, ICT infrastructure and access, technology-enabled tools and resources, library facilities)*

4.1 Which aspects of your institution's Strategic Plan relate to this focus area? (Please quote from the Strategic Plan).

The importance of the campus environment, as a key element in support of the academic project, forms part of a number of the strategic goals of the University. However, Goal 7 of the Institutional Operating Plan 2010-2014 (IOP) specifically focuses on the development of the campus's physical and ICT infrastructure. This Goal articulates a number of strategies aimed at strategically influencing the development of the campus and its surrounding areas as well as expanding and maintaining a modern and coherent physical and ICT infrastructure. Goal 7 is specific in its focus, but aspects of this focus are also addressed in a number of other IOP Goals. Other goals might not articulate the areas that are of concern in this focus area explicitly, but the quality and nature of teaching spaces and the importance of academic resources in support of academic success, are implicit in many of the IOP strategies.

In the Introduction to this submission the challenges associated with the University's physical location and the role that the surrounding area can play in improving the broader living and learning environment is emphasised. Goal 7 recognises the role that the infrastructure expansion and renewal of the campus can play in terms of the broader sub-region:

The improvement of the campus and its environment should enable the Bellville region to attract and retain significantly more talent and accommodate advances in information technology, to the advantage of the educational institutions and the City.

Goal 7 calls for the development of a Campus Development Plan (Master Plan) that will assist with the reorganising of the campus into distinct precincts to support and improve academic coherence through the physical location of academic and support departments. Goal 2 on Teaching and Learning, also states that:

The prioritised focus on the teaching and learning environment will also include the continued development of the campus, paying particular attention to the physical and ICT infrastructure. New developments will continue to be orientated towards providing physical and virtual spaces where individual and group learning can take place and where flexible teaching and learning approaches can be practised effectively.

The IOP further recognises the changing nature of the space that is required on campus and as such identifies the need for actively replacing old prefabricated buildings and renewing and repurposing existing infrastructure.

Our plans will be informed by a need to have appropriate, technology-enabled spaces of the highest quality for teaching and learning and to have laboratories that comply with best practice and health and safety regulations....where possible, buildings will also have space to promote a culture of reading, discussion and debate, as well as staff and student interaction.

Whilst Goal 2 calls for “greater infusion of technology into the curriculum” Goal 7 obligates the University to provide a stable and modern information and communications technology infrastructure. In this regard the IOP confirms that the University:

is committed to a major programme of technology-enabled management and learning (and that) we will systematically improve infrastructure and systems and our capacity to use them to maximal advantage ...we will upgrade and expand the campus network and use ICT as a strategic instrument ... to enhance our business functions, greatly improve access to learning, research material and facilities, and deliver lower-cost information resources.

4.2 What activities or facilities 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.).

Infrastructure Planning & Development

Infrastructure Planning at UWC is concerned with the development of new infrastructure as well as the maintenance and modernisation and/or re-purposing of existing infrastructure. This is done within a medium to long-term holistic campus development framework that considers various (and often competing) needs in terms of the campus’ future infrastructure development, towards the creation of a sustainable campus environment that supports the academic aspirations of the University.

- A Campus Development Plan has been developed which articulates a high-level infrastructure development strategy as well as some immediate priorities.
- As part of an infrastructure audit the University has recently completed a conditions assessment of all University buildings.
- A number of new academic buildings have been completed, adding more than 30 000 assignable square meters (ASMs). These include a new Life Sciences building, Chemical Sciences building and School of Public health building.
- Through a public private partnership (PPP), 1 100 new beds were added to the on-campus student accommodation offering. A new ResLife Centre was also developed that includes a dining facility, recreational space, a coffee shop as well as office space and facilities for small or medium group gatherings for some of the student development and support activities in residences.
- Attention has also been given to equipping all the main lecture facilities with computers, internet access and audio-visual equipment.
- UWC also actively participates in initiatives of the Greater Tygerberg Partnership, a body established through a partnership between the City of Cape Town, business and universities in the sub-region, to focus on the future development of the area and the urban renewal of the Bellville CBD. UWC has also acquired a building in the Bellville CBD. A number of departments in the Community and Health Sciences faculty will be relocated to this building once it has been modernised and re-purposed for their needs.

Library Support

The Library is an active partner in the learning enterprise, primarily through student support in managed facilities, but increasingly also through teaching and coaching, as librarians are becoming an educational resource for lecturers and students. New developments include:

- Faculty librarians form part of Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees and are increasingly requested to devise suitable training interventions aimed at assisting students to pursue research and inquiry processes independently or collaboratively.
- The ongoing provision of one-on-one support to students by librarians.
- 22 online guides have been developed to provide students with advice that is frequently sought and includes, for example, some generic information on referencing styles, literature reviews, and information literacy tutorials. There are also subject specific guides. By June 2014 we had already recorded almost 10 000 visits to referencing guides and more than 7000 to information literacy tutorials.
- The Library has steadily diversified the types of learning spaces to meet different needs. These include: silent study areas; discussion rooms; meeting rooms; Knowledge Commons; Reading Room; Reference Desks; Self Learning Zone; Disabled Student Centre; Print & Go kiosks; and Training Rooms.
- Due to the insufficient provision of learning/study spaces on campus, especially study space with PC's, the Library has become a popular space for students to utilise for this purpose. It provides amongst others: a cross-Faculty service division; access to more than 100 PC's in the Knowledge Commons; PC workstations and laptop-friendly spaces throughout the library; and 20 Print & Go kiosks allowing students 15 minutes to read email, download documents to email, or print assignments.
- Over the last 4 years the Library extended its hours until midnight during the week and until 5pm on Saturdays.
- The Library created a "Past Exam Papers website" in 2011 to provide electronic access to previous exam papers (restricted to the University community).
- Full-text repositories of research publications and Masters and Doctoral theses produced at UWC are also available. These resources are integrated with Library resources, ensuring a good circulation of accessible locally produced knowledge and data. In addition, the Research Repository is viewed by staff as an opportunity to improve their citation indices and exposure to the broader research community.
- Other relevant activities and facilities are; screening of DVDs of prescribed novels for groups; individual multimedia playback stations; and plasma screens to broadcast campus and library announcements and events.
- Feedback from students is important and the Library website offers a feedback form for comments. Access of various areas and facilities is monitored through a range of technology solutions such as Google analytics, student card access data, login frequency data, etc.

ICT Infrastructure and Support

The Information and Communication Systems (ICS) department manages and supports the infrastructure required to access all applications across UWC including: the main Student Administration and Systems Integration (SASI) system, from the local and wide area access networks; the Storage Area Network (SAN) where daily, weekly and monthly backups are stored; and the Databases and Virtual Server clusters processing data and running reports. The ICS Operations and Service Desk teams also monitor key performance and health status metrics of the infrastructure and levels of service. ICS has delivered a number of projects which support and serve as enablers for this focus area. These include:

- The migration of all student email accounts from Groupwise to Gmail, delivering a

lifetime email account, with increased storage from 50MB to 30GB per account.

- The migration and replication of e-Learning's "Sakai" Learning Management System (LMS) to the in-house, on-premise Ikamva LMS platform.
- The upgrade of the Data Centre Server Compute facilities to support current and future Application processing requirements.
- The upgrade of the UWC Core Network comprising the re-architecture of core networking infrastructure to support requirements for high-speed WAN access (of 10Gbps links), high-speed internet access for research; future strategic ICT projects, e.g., digital lecture capture and streaming, Video Streaming, more pervasive unified communications (convergence of data, voice and video), and collaboration tools such as desktop video conferencing services.
- Implementation of High Performance Computing (HPC) capabilities to support e-Research initiatives.
- Upon completion of all projects, project closure reviews are facilitated by the Project Manager and sign-off is obtained from the Business Owner / Project Sponsor to confirm acceptance and successful delivery of the project.

Technology Enabled Tools and Resources

The Centre for Innovative Educational and Communication Technologies (CIECT) provides eTools training and support to staff and students across faculties. These training interventions enable academics to create online environments, making use of various communications, content creation and assessment eTools. eTools are available within the institutional Learning Management System (LMS) (iKamva/Sakai platform) and other Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) such as Google Applications. Initiatives include:

- eTools training interventions have been implemented across faculties and are measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- Online environments are created for 'joint' teaching purposes; both internal (interdisciplinary) and collaborative national / international courses (e.g. UWC and Stellenbosch; UWC and Oklahoma State University; UWC and Missouri; Community Health Sciences, Arts and Law);
- Through regular blogs posts, awareness is raised and practices on the application of eTools for teaching, learning and assessment, are shared (<http://ciect.wordpress.com/>).
- Skills training and support packages are provided to academic and non-academic staff members (since 2005). Measured through attendance statistics and participant evaluation forms.
- Training and support for UG and PG students across all faculties. The support is enhanced via one-on-one office consultations, telephone and email support.
- A Digital Academic Literacy (DAL) Programme is offered which is a computer literacy programme for students, integrated into accredited modules across faculties which cater for the varying needs and demands of novice users of technology.

4.3 What activities or facilities related to this focus area have you undertaken or put in place 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?

Infrastructure Planning and Influencing Sub-regional Development

- The renewal and re-purposing of vacated space on campus has taken much longer than anticipated. There have been various factors impacting on progress. Important here have been the increased scope of the project with associated increases in cost and changes in bylaws impacting on design and cost of projects. Similar challenges are

experienced in terms of the building acquired in the Bellville CBD. Maintenance, especially addressing backlog maintenance, also continue to pose huge challenges, especially in terms of the associated cost. Providing additional and flexible teaching and learning spaces was not achieved in the last two infrastructure development funding cycles as the bulk of the funding went towards the construction of science facilities with specialised UG and PG laboratories.

Library and Academic Literacy Support

- Feedback on the Self Learning Zone (SLZ) with its online directory of tutorials (including videos) related to information search, discovery, evaluation, use and referencing indicate that this service is not yet achieving the intended results. The Library's iPad facility was established to create opportunities for students and staff to acquaint themselves with the possibilities of educational applications for networked learning using mobile devices. In the current model devices are fixed to desktops. This limits opportunities for mobility and personalised features that are intrinsic to such devices. A different service model (loan of tablets to staff and students) is to be initiated. The Library has also pursued alternative ways of communicating with students (Facebook and Twitter) but these are only reaching a small proportion of the intended audience.

ICT Infrastructure and Support

- Increasingly University activities depend on technology and a system that provides uninterrupted and stable access to staff and students. UWC occasionally experiences system downtime, which disrupts all access to and from the university. Ageing infrastructure, outdated software, limited bandwidth in some university environs and various policy amendments affect our capacity to be as effective as we should be. The varying skills levels of users also impact on how effectively the available technology is used.

Technology Enabled Tools and Resources

- Certain eTools and ICT skills packages do not attract the expected staff interest and feedback indicates that time-constraints do impact on their ability to participate in training. The Sakai platform has been integrated with the institutional SASI system (Student Administration System) but there are still integration challenges. On-going downtime and network problems also have a very negative impact on the effectiveness of e-teaching and e-learning.

4.4 What activities or facilities have you recently implemented or acquired or are you planning to implement or acquire in the next 12 to 18 months related to this focus area? Why have you chosen these particular activities or facilities? What is the need or problem they are intended to address?

Infrastructure Planning and Influencing Sub-regional Development

- The renewal and re-purposing of two academic buildings.
- The roll-out of a process to address backlog maintenance across campus to improve the overall quality of the campus environment; and universal access concerns raised in the Infrastructure Audit.
- The preparation and submission of plans for infrastructure development and renewal in the new infrastructure funding cycle of the DHET.
- Continue to work with and strengthen partnerships with regional role-players in terms of the development of the sub-region.

Library and Academic Literacy Support

- Increase space in the library by cutting back on printed journal stacks to increase floor space available to students and weed some book collections of less-used materials.
- Explore the possibility of expanding the level of assistance available to students on each level of the library by working with expanded “Faculty Teams”.
- A loan system for e-book readers/devices for use within the library will be introduced. Where print copies on short loan are in high demand, e-books can spread the load. The availability of 25 e-book readers will provide additional access to texts.

ICT Infrastructure and Support

- An audit of ICT equipment in lecture venues with the objective of replacing/ upgrading aging and/or faulty equipment is currently being conducted.
- The Student Administration System Integration (SASI) is being migrated to a Microsoft.NET platform over the next 10-12 months to mitigate various risks.
- Implement a WiFi densification project over the next 12 months with the aim of improving WiFi coverage and performance across the main campus as well as key satellite campuses in Bellville and Mitchell’s Plain.
- A pilot of an interactive digital lecture capture, streaming and archiving solution will be launched in the next year to extend our reach and improve accessibility whilst also creating new virtual learning spaces and complementing CIECT’s work.

Technology Enabled Tools and Resources

- Ongoing focus areas include: exploring and benchmarking new software and hardware applications to support teaching-and-learning;
- The LMS will be further developed to improve the user experience.
- A virtual interface for the Sakai/iKamva platform will be developed.
- Interactive, ‘just-in-time’ learning material to enable users to become self-directed learners will be developed.
- Mobile applications, specifically for Android devices to cater for faculty teaching and learning needs will be designed and developed.
- Electronic board games according to Faculty needs, specifically for community projects and partnerships, will continue to be designed and developed.

4.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

- For new projects in the Library a practice should be established of conducting a needs analysis / feasibility study prior to implementation to better meet user needs and add maximum value. Continuous improvement of various user statistics and more qualitative engagement with users will enable Library management to better understand trends and needs for future improvement and / or new library services.
- While the Business Requirements Specification has been completed for a fully functional SASI-integrated Student Interventions system, further work around securing approval to start up this project has been deferred to 2015.
- The Student Interventions Project has been identified as a strategic project but requires further attention to finalise an agreed set of criteria as well as agreement on the form of intervention to be applied.
- Improvement and enhancement of UWC’s IT infrastructure and greater alignment of its IT systems is needed.
- UWC’s growth requires serious expansion and reorganisation of its campus. The quality

and functionality of old infrastructure, especially lecture venues and equipment, is rapidly deteriorating and also requires urgent attention. While its ability to respond adequately and creatively to this reality is challenged by resource constraints, greater attention must be paid to the more efficient and effective use of its existing spaces.

5. FOCUS AREA 4: ENHANCING COURSE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT (3-6 pages)

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

Course and Programme enrolment forms an essential sub-component of the University's strategic plan. Although UWC's Enrolment Plan permeates all strands of the Institutional Operating Plan (2010-2014), this focus area is given specific prominence in Goal 1 of the IOP. Goal 1 states that UWC seeks; "to strategically attract, retain and enable the development of students in line with our vision and mission". Strategy 2 of Goal 1 is focused on mission-centred approaches to enrolment and is carefully fused into the academic project to advance a purposefully transformative agenda. The strategy intends:

"to change the shape, size and mix of the student body as a means of increasing access and contributing to meeting national human resources ... This would require each faculty to carefully reconsider its internal mix of students and to strategically identify and plan its areas of concentration, and its own undergraduate and postgraduate growth path, in relation to its academic and research goals in alignment with the university's strategic goals."

This strategic approach to enrolment management has guided enrolments at the university over the last five years and is recognised as essential to the achievement of common goals across a complex, multifaceted institution where the knowledge project must be free to develop and grow. The targets and strategies expressed in the Enrolment Plan for the next two trienniums (2014-2019) gives focus to UWC's mission, foregrounds priority concerns and gives careful consideration to the university's long-term aspirations; its financial viability; and the impact of appropriate planning on the quality of the student and staff experience. While UWC's Enrolment Plan defines the funded mandate with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to optimise the size, programme mix, revenue generation, student experience, profile and success, it also remains aspirational: a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Also important to this focus area is the attention that Strategy 4 of Goal 2 (teaching and learning) gives to the need to focus on students at risk, the importance of the first-year experience for student success and the relevance of foundation and extended curriculum programmes.

5.2 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.)

Changing the shape, size and mix of the student profile and academic programmes

- Over the last few years UWC has increased and widened access and consistently exceeded its enrolment targets. This has been in accordance with the approved PQM and national enrolment mandates.
- UWC has maintained an UG:PG ratio of approximately 80:20 over the past five years.

It has increased undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments without increasing the number of first-time entering students. The annual number of FUs remained constant at approximately 3900 during this period.

- Student growth has been embedded in the academic context by promoting and managing enrolment by field of study, a conscious strategy to grow and sustain enrolment in these areas of study. The projected and achieved ratios for 2013 have respectively been 37:10:10: and 43 in Science, Engineering and Technology; Business; Education; and the Humanities.
- A culture of retention has been promoted through a set of coherent strategies aligned to strategic goals. Overall UWC retained an average year-on-year retention rate of 81% in 2012 and 2013 respectively across all faculties and an average undergraduate retention rate of 89%. Degree credit rates have been monitored continuously and appropriate interventions implemented to maintain an average degree credit rate of 80%. Enrolment data is disaggregated by course, programme and target group levels to focus on more intentional approaches and manage institutional growth. UWC continues to monitor trends through cohort studies and implemented development strategies to address barriers to successful graduation.

Dynamic applications, selection and admission processes

- In recent years the ratio of available FU places to applicants has remained at 1:10 which means that the annual number of first-time entering applicants (approximately 40 000) by far exceed the number of (4000) available places. About 50% of this applicant pool has been declined upfront because they do not meet the prescribed entry requirements at the time of application, although their final school leaving results may reflect eligibility for university entry.
- UWC recently shifted its handling of admission decisions away from ‘fairness on a first-come-first-serve basis’, underpinned by administrative efficiency towards quantitative targets, towards an emphasis on student success and academic excellence but without compromising equity considerations. It has also improved and aligned its recruitment and marketing strategies with the academic profile, sustained learner interventions in Science and Mathematics (funded by CHIETA) in targeted cluster schools, introduced merit awards and fee waivers as incentives to top achievers.
- UWC has adjusted the point score upwards with minimum entry points in a number of programmes moving from 27 to 33, to attract a better quality of academic achievers. Between 2012 and 2014 the university experienced a marked improvement in the number of registered students with point scores above 40. While only 55% of the number of registered FUs in 2012 had a point score above 33, in 2014 over 85% of registered mainstream FUs had a point score of 33 and above. Final placement offers are made in the respective faculties to ensure that programme-specific requirements and fairness of chance to gain access are considered.
- Stronger emphasis has been placed on high impact and gateway courses - courses with high enrolment modules and low throughput rates, mainly linked to majors and requiring students to pass specific prerequisites before they are permitted to progress to the next level of study. A series of academic interventions have been introduced to address this challenge.

Improving Management and administrative support services

- A very important improvement for UWC has been the development of the Student Enrolment Management System (SEMS) to support strategic enrolment efforts. SEMS effectively replaced a fragmented and unsupportive legacy IT systems to work from a

single, integrated database to optimise online transactions and yield unduplicated data. The Student Administration System Integrator (SASI), a subset of SEMS, helps to integrate administrative efforts and all functional areas responsible for achieving UWC's strategic enrolment goals. Some important developments through SEMS are:

- Close to 100% of the student population has used online registration. This has significantly reduced the number of errors and turnaround time in administrative business processes
- A Student Tracking System (STS) was developed to help track applicant, student and programme-related information. The generation of enrolment system reports assists to promote a culture of evidence for student success and strategic interventions. This system has also helped to track students' continuous assessment performance to ensure that promotion rules are integrated within the electronic system and that appropriate interventions are put in place
- Since the implementation of Marks Administration System (MAS), also part of SEMS, there has also been a marked decrease in the number of mark adjustments (corrections to marks) and improvements in the timely capturing of marks and the uploading of assessment schedules. Similarly, with more granular data more students are able to be identified to participate in and complete remedial work in targeted academic support interventions. These include at-risk students in a range of modules which either inhibit progress or impact their timely programme completion and time-to-degree rates.

5.3 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?

- Inherent structural factors such as course availability and the management of repeat modules, particularly prerequisites to majors, has proved challenging and slowed down student progress. For example, despite successful completion of repeat modules, students' time-to-degree are still extended by at least one or two semesters; or students with repeat modules in gateway courses may be disadvantaged by NSFAS rules. Alternative approaches are being piloted to obviate delays in graduation. For example, students who fail Economics 113 may repeat the module as Eco 123 and may be permitted to deregister from the prerequisite in order to progress and still graduate on time.
- Despite improvements in the administrative and management of support services, financial clearance and the impact of protracted credit management processes on students' commencement of high impact and gateway courses continues to affect student success negatively.
- All the functionalities of the Student Administration System Integration (SASI) are not yet fully operational and require further attention. Incomplete components that require additional customisation include: changes to the module to manage tutorials; revision of the university's venue booking system to include hard coded timeslots which are out of bounds for teaching purposes; and the Postgraduate Thesis Management System to track the progress of postgraduate students.

5.4 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?

- Annual reports from each faculty, which allow for an annual review of pass rates in modules and the identification of gateway modules, will continuously be used to critically reflect on current practices. Periodic departmental and programme reviews have also started to pay specific attention to student success at programme and course levels.
- Over the past year two leadership vacancies arose from the untimely passing of the erstwhile Registrar and the retirement of the DVC Student Development and Support. None of these vacancies have been filled to date. The current DVC Academic has done sterling work in this area but he too will retire at the end of 2014. This imminent void poses significant strategic risks to the university's success in this focus area, requiring urgent resolution. The university is also in a process of preparing its Institutional Operating Plan (2015-2019) for the next five years and has to ensure that student success issues retain prominence.
- The Student Tracking System (STS) has been developed but is still in a piloting phase and needs further refinement to reflect: (i) final selections of applications who fail to register; (ii) module changes to ensure that students who add and delete modules do not fail by default; (iii) the academic impact of late registration on student performance; (iv) the module and programme choices of top achieving applicants' school-leaving results; (v) the names of students who have terminated their studies but are in good academic standing; and (vi) information in the promotions module to be used to offer remedial interventions to students, where necessary.
- During the coming months different directorates will continue to make a case for predictive data analytics for student success as a powerful tool to foster synergies around the right people, with the right data in pursuit of the right strategies. To this end a collaborative project between Institutional Research and the ICT architecture is proposed to allow for the logical combination of information to support business analysis activities and decision-making.

5.5 What are the challenges or problems related to this focus area that still need to be addressed in your institution?

- Student success at programme and course level cannot be viewed in isolation from institutional success and the long-term aspirations of UWC as an engaged and research-intensive institution seeking to reshape its profile through enrolment strategies. Despite competing pressures the institution will have to continue to balance the perennial tension between equitable access and the need for distinctiveness in defined niche areas with a view to maintain the coherence and intellectual integrity of programme offerings.
- There is also the challenge of so-called 'ghost students' where qualifying applicants who are unable to secure places in their first choice programmes settle for places in 'wrong choice' programmes and only to focus on modules that might enhance their future chance to transfer to their preferred areas of study. Academic inactivity and non-attendance of 'ghost students' in non-preferential modules then impacts on programme success rates and increases the likelihood of attrition or readmission refusals. This also adds to students' stress levels if they are unable to see the career pathways of their choices and merely amass unbearable credit loads.
- Research conducted at UWC indicates that the National Senior Certificate (NSC) is gradually becoming a less reliable indicator of success, potentially because of grade creep, and that the predictive value thereof becomes particularly weak for students with

lower NSC scores. The university will continuously reconsider its point score to ensure that student success and quality is not compromised. Furthermore programme specific admission criteria are also constantly shifting especially in the area of Mathematics and Maths literacy, in an attempt to find a solution to the disparity between the NSC scores and students ability to cope at entry levels.

6. OTHER AREAS THAT AFFECT STUDENT SUCCESS (2-5 pages) *(Areas that do not fall within the four focus areas)*

In the introduction to this submission, we drew attention to the complex and deep-seated contextual factors that impact on student success at UWC. Many of the change processes and initiatives captured in the four focus areas of this submission, reflect attempts by the University to leverage the kinds of institutional changes that are needed to respond adequately and appropriately to the needs of our students and to push the parameters towards new and innovative ways of equipping them for their role as future citizens in South Africa and the broader 'knowledge economy'. Such systemic change is by its very nature challenging and requires the development of sometimes new and at other times refined, institutional systems and processes – robust enough to sustain improvement across the institution and permeate all levels of the institution's functioning. UWC recognises that ensuring that these systemic changes are fully integrated across the institution and become part of its day to day functioning remains key to improved student success.

An important issue that impacts directly on the ability of students to sustain successful academic study relates to the present functioning of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Because so many of our students are deeply reliant on financial aid, UWC is regularly confronted with the very real ways in which NSFAS's existing selection, allocation and disbursement processes serve to hinder student's progress. Especially concerning is the late confirmation by NSFAS on final funding allocations to the universities. This means that in annual planning processes it is never possible for universities to know exactly how much funding is available and therefore the number of students that can be provided for. Overall the needs of UWC students always outweigh the funding that is available, with the result that many eligible students are unable to access the funding that they will require to successfully complete their studies. These challenges are exacerbated by inconsistent payment patterns and restrictive selection criteria.

As already emphasised, UWC has many students who come from academically disadvantaged backgrounds and this has important implications for the university's ECP Programme which it recognises as especially important. In a recent letter from the DHET it was confirmed that, in 2013, UWC had the highest number of ECP students in the sector, namely 27.1% of first-time entering students. In terms of the number of students in ECP programmes the university has to balance a number of complex issues. On the one hand, there is the recognition that for a substantial portion of UWC students, the extended curriculum route is probably the best option in support of their academic success. On the other hand, the current model of ECP funding doesn't adequately recognise the financial implications of the extended curriculum model on an institution. Furthermore, the system doesn't recognise or allow for the implications of large numbers of students in these programmes in terms of institutional performance against the system-wide benchmarks of success (e.g. FTE: headcount ratios; graduation rates; UG: PG ratios; time-to-degree). A last concern is that these programmes also continue a legacy of disadvantage by adding the financial burden of an additional academic year on students who are often already struggling financially. UWC has therefore accepted in its 2014-2019

enrolment projections that we won't substantially reduce the number of students currently in such programmes, but that proportionately the number will be reduced over the next number of years. Continuous attention to admission to ECP programmes is required to ensure that this option is available to students who will benefit most from it.

In this document we refer to the need for flexible teaching space and the Campus Development Plan (Master Plan) recognises that the current condition, capacity and inflexibility of campus teaching spaces do not support modern, dynamic and flexible learning initiatives. A key priority is to address the shortage of teaching spaces on campus and to improve student success through the construction of new, flat floor classroom facilities to accommodate capacity projections, enhance technology and enable increased flexibility and interaction. In addition, the need for additional learning space is also articulated. Approximately 80% of UWC's student population are oppidan students who spend a significant amount of time on campus but have inadequate physical space to study, work, network and access information quietly or collaboratively. Large, dedicated learning commons with breakaway rooms for group interaction will address these needs and promote active engaged learning. Because such facilities will be technology-enabled, it should also contain the proliferation of multiple computer labs on campus and yield better land use and economies of scale. The university recognises the university-wide potential and cross-disciplinary benefits of both flexible teaching spaces and learning commons and will prioritise such projects for future funding to enhance learning and promote student success.