



Audit Report on the University of Pretoria

Report of the HEQC to the University of Pretoria

Executive Summary

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Acronyms

AP	Audit Portfolio
BCM	Business, Commerce and Management
CE at UP	Continuing Education at University of Pretoria
CESM	Category of Educational Subject Matter
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CSC	Client Services Centre
DEI	Department for Education Innovation
EDU	Education
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurer
GIBS	Gordon Institute of Business Science
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HRD	Human Resources Department
HSS	Humanities and Social Sciences
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IF	Institutional Forum
IP	Institutional Profile
IT	Information Technology
ITS	Information Technology Services
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NRF	National Research Foundation
QA	Quality Assurance
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
SRC	Students' Representative Council
THRIP	Technology and Human Resources for Industry
UP	University of Pretoria
UPFY	University of Pretoria Foundation Year

Executive Summary

Brief Overview of the University of Pretoria

1. The University of Pretoria (UP) is a large contact residential university situated in the metropolitan area of Tshwane. The University operates across six campuses. Its administrative seat is located in Hatfield in the city of Pretoria, which houses six of its nine Faculties. The other five campuses are in Groenkloof, Prinshof, Onderstepoort, Sandton and Mamelodi, the last of which was incorporated into UP as a result of the restructuring of the higher education landscape.
2. UP has its origins in the Transvaal University College, which was founded in 1908 as a public higher education institution offering arts and science courses. By 1923 five Faculties had been established. In 1930, the institution was renamed the University of Pretoria. A further four Faculties were created in the following 25 years. Under the apartheid regime UP was a whites-only Afrikaans-medium institution. In the mid-1990s under the new democratic dispensation, there was a rapid change in the demographic profile of the students enrolled at the University. This change was accompanied by the introduction of a new language policy which recognised English as well as Afrikaans as languages of instruction at the institution. This facilitated the enrolment of non-Afrikaans mother tongue students so that by 2005 African students constituted 59.68 percent of its headcount enrolments.
3. UP offers 2 034 programmes in both contact and distance mode in Afrikaans and English, with some programmes and modules being offered only in English. Almost 68 percent of qualifications are offered at the postgraduate level. In 2006, UP had 49 226 registered students, of whom 38 389 were contact students and 10 837 distance education students. In terms of research outputs UP has been one of the leading South African universities since 1996.

Institutional Mission

4. The concept of the 'innovation generation' is the theme that links the institution's mission with its present and previous strategic plans. In the Panel's view the concept of the 'innovation generation' is forward looking and speaks of the institution's will to be a leading contributor to skills development and knowledge production both locally and internationally. While the Panel understood that most staff and students were aware of the notion of 'innovation', it was concerned that it did not find evidence of a consistent understanding of the concept across the University.
5. The mission of the University stresses UP's aim to be locally relevant and internationally competitive, two goals which the Panel agreed need not

necessarily be in contradiction with each other. However the Panel is of the view that a better balance still needs to be established between local relevance and international competitiveness as they find expression in the core functions of the institution. The Panel suggests that UP explore more clearly the meanings of local relevance and global competitiveness, their relationship to the notion of the 'innovation generation' and the implications of these ideas for educational practices and institutional culture. In order to do this, the institution might have to engage more concretely with those aspects of current educational practice and institutional culture that need to change and the appropriate strategies to give effect to these changes.

Recommendation 1

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria consider conducting an institution-wide debate on the meaning of the terms 'innovation' and 'innovation generation' as they relate to both educational processes and institutional culture. This could assist the University as it develops indicators against which to monitor the institution's success in contributing to the creation of the 'innovation generation' in its three core functions.

Equity and Transformation

6. In the space of 15 years UP changed from being an Afrikaans-medium historically white institution to a dual-medium university with a majority of African students. While this change took place in the context of systemic expansion of the South African higher education system, UP aided the transition through a number of policy decisions which opened the University to black students. However, the transformation of the demographic profile of student enrolments at UP hides a more complex reality, the analysis of which indicates both huge achievements and enormous challenges. In terms of the relationship between improved access and student success, 2005 data suggests that success rates among African students across all CESM categories are considerably lower than that of white students. These data speak not only to the degree of preparedness of students for study at university level but also of the institution's ability to provide an educational experience that facilitates and supports student success in both curricular and extra-curricular aspects.
7. The Panel heard that in terms of admissions UP focuses on ensuring that excellent black students apply to the institution (AP: 92). While the Panel understands this as a possible approach to improving equity and access at the institution, it does not address the access issue in relation to the admission of students who do not have top academic records but who might succeed with extra support from the institution. Notwithstanding the progress the Health Sciences has made in this regard, the Panel would like to urge UP to take bolder steps in its recruitment strategy. This would show that the institution is

committed to combining in an innovative manner its admission policy, its successful approach to residence placements, financial aid and its sophisticated tracking systems to facilitate access to higher education of students who come from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds. This could be a clear manifestation of UP's contribution to the needs of the new democratic dispensation as well as of its local relevance.

8. While there has been a fairly successful change of student demographics, the staff profile at UP has not changed at a comparable rate. The Panel heard during interviews with members of the Employment Equity Forum of the strategies to attract more black South African academics, particularly those who are currently working overseas. The University acknowledges the need to do much more towards achieving staff equity. The Panel is well aware of the difficulties faced by most higher education institutions in achieving staff equity and creating a diverse staff profile especially at senior academic levels. However, the Panel has seen no indication at UP of the existence of an institution-wide strategy focused on the nurturing and development of a new generation of black and women academics and senior managers at the institution which would support existing individual, departmental or Faculty initiatives in this regard. The Panel suggests that the University give concerted attention to the development of such an institution-wide strategy.

Recommendation 2

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria give greater consideration to the internal and external obstacles to the achievement of greater staff equity at the institution and then develop and implement a bolder and more innovative strategy to accelerate change in its staff profile across all Faculties.

9. There is no doubt that the change in the language policy at UP is largely responsible for the institution's ability to expand access and increase the diversity of its student and, to some extent, staff profiles. Despite these changes, the issue of language remains highly problematic and presents an acknowledged risk to the University. Some lecturers cannot teach in both languages and this typically leads to an overburdening of staff members who can do so. At the same time, while there is a need to appoint academics who can teach in both languages, there is an employment equity plan which may in effect mean there are not enough people in the designated groups that can teach in Afrikaans. This presents a further challenge to the institution both in terms of human and financial resources. In addition the Panel heard during interviews with a range of staff and students that the implementation of the language policy is not evenly and consistently applied across Faculties and programmes, with some of the academic staff who were interviewed indicating that this impacts negatively on student success rates. The Panel

urges the institution to initiate an assessment of the language policy and its impact on academic results as well as the concrete experience of students inside and outside the classroom and their general experience of the university's institutional culture.

Recommendation 3

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria engage in a systematic assessment of the impact of the implementation of the language policy, paying particular attention to staff loads, student success rates, the consistency with which the policy has been implemented across faculties, and the unforeseen consequences of implementation on institutional culture.

10. In terms of the efforts made by the institution in the area of transformation of its institutional culture, the Panel was impressed by the success that the system of residence placements has had in the creation of multiracial residences at the University.

Commendation 1

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria on the decisive manner with which it approached racial integration in the residences and on the commitment of the senior staff involved in the management of the residences to make this system a successful one.

11. The Panel was concerned at not finding any systematic analyses of UP's institutional culture, that is, of the values, practices and behaviours that define the manner in which the curricular and non curricular activities of the institution are conducted and the kind of interactions which take place in the different social, educational and physical spaces between and among staff, students, and management. Such analyses might be of use in enabling the University, first, to identify the current features of its institutional culture, its values and behaviours and how these are perceived by different constituencies; second, to engage with those values in an open and critical manner, and finally, to develop a strategy to introduce agreed upon necessary changes.
12. The Panel concurs with Executive Management that the slow pace of transformation constitutes a serious problem for the institution as it could compromise UP's ability to fulfil important aspects of its mission and vision. In the Panel's view, the institution might want to explore more fully the three main implications if the transformation process that the institution embarked upon was not be completed. First, at the strategic level, the willingness of the institution to review its relationship with society and the State would not be given concrete expression in cultural and organisational changes which support the new student profile. Second, at the academic level, the non-fulfilment of the transformation commitment would imply that UP would not be able to give effect to the conceptual link it has made between the excellence

of its academic offerings and student and staff diversity. Lack of diversity amongst staff and students necessarily diminishes the range of experiences and perspectives that the University could draw on to attain its goal of innovation. Finally, the institution's position within the higher education system and its capacity to fulfil its responsibility towards the broader South African society might be jeopardised.

Recommendation 4

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria consider conducting an institutional climate survey as a further step towards the continuing development and implementation of a transformation strategy for the institution which reflects its willingness to contribute to an emerging and inclusive democracy in the country.

Governance, Management, Planning and Resource Allocation

13. The Panel was pleased to learn during interviews with Council members that Council is planning to review its committee structure. In the view of the Panel, this opportunity could be used to consider the creation of a committee to advise Council on student services. This would not only comply with this requirement in the Higher Education Act and the UP statute but also would mean that a committee has a specific mandate to look at student services as a way of ensuring these services are sufficiently harnessed to support teaching and learning.
14. The Panel views Council's intention to review its own, and its members' performance, and the beginning of evaluations of the appropriateness and effectiveness of its committee system as important signals of the governance structure's determination to monitor its own work. The Panel congratulates Council for taking this initiative as this review is likely to assist Council in carrying out its mandate.
15. With regard to the Student Representative Council (SRC), the new Constitution for Student Governance was approved by Council in November 2006. A new SRC was elected in the few weeks prior to the audit visit. The Panel was pleased to learn in a range of interviews with staff and students that there is confidence that the new SRC model will lead to its active involvement in the core functions of the University. The Panel noted with appreciation that an evaluation of the new SRC will be undertaken once all the changes have been fully implemented, so that its impact can be analysed.
16. The Panel learned during interviews with Executive Management that the University has adopted, and is implementing, a new management model in which Deans are to be given executive functions and substantial responsibility for planning and budgeting. This constitutes an important sign of Executive

Management's attempt at developing relationships based on trust among senior managers at the institution. While the model is too new for its effectiveness to be assessed, the Panel would like to stress the potential that this new model has in helping the institution to change management practices, to develop consistency in the implementation of policies, and to drive change deeper into the institution. The Panel congratulates the institution in a decision which might have long terms beneficial effects for the overall functioning of the three core functions. However, the Panel would like to alert the institution to the need to monitor the functioning of the new management model in order to avoid the risk of devolution perpetuating the silo effect that the institution is trying to avoid. In this regard, UP might like to consider the possibility of creating organisational spaces where the integration of the Faculty- and the institutional-level strategies in relation to the core functions can take place.

17. The Panel noted with appreciation UP's planning process and the university's management information system (MIS) that enables the planning process to take place. A clear area of strength of UP is its ability to plan and monitor the achievement of objectives through performance indicators, which are based on the availability of appropriate and accurate institutional data. The Panel would like to congratulate the institution on the utilisation of institutional data to support the implementation of institution-level goals.

Commendation 2

The HEQC commends University of Pretoria for its well-developed management information system and the use of data to identify, develop and implement institutional strategy.

18. In 2004 as part of the restructuring of the public higher education landscape, UP incorporated the Mamelodi campus of Vista University. However, UP is still grappling with the different ways of making Mamelodi campus an integral part of the University. The Panel heard of a number of different views about what the role and focus of the campus could be. The Panel suggests that the University approaches the future role of the campus in a participative manner that (i) takes into account Mamelodi's potential as an entry point for more disadvantaged black students at UP, and so contribute to broadening access to higher education and serving a wider community, and (ii) the need to integrate Mamelodi and its activities into UP.

Quality Management

19. Quality is one of the strategic drivers underpinning the strategic plan of 2002-2005. The Panel identified at least two meanings of 'quality' being used at the University. One meaning of 'quality' found especially in the discourse of senior management, associates quality and excellence with diversity. This diversity is understood on the one hand as local diversity in terms of race,

language and culture, and, on the other, international diversity, in the sense of the institution's ability to attract foreign staff and students to the University and to gain international recognition. The second notion of 'quality' of which the Panel heard during a range of interviews with staff, is associated with the idea of competitiveness, measured either in terms of international rankings or user satisfaction surveys. The Panel is of the view that in the South African context, in which higher education institutions are receiving increasing numbers of first generation university students, greater emphasis needs to be placed on the nature of the educational process itself. The Panel would like to encourage the institution to pay attention to this particular understanding of quality more closely by developing a more explicit focus on the development of appropriate support for students who come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

20. Through the work of UP's Quality Unit, the institution has made important progress in the development of an internal system of quality assurance that is shared across Faculties and departments. In a range of interviews with staff the Panel heard positive remarks about the work of the Unit and the support that it provides to the academic enterprise. The Panel congratulates the Quality Unit for its success in involving academics across all Faculties.

Commendation 3

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for the extent and effectiveness of the work of the Quality Unit.

Benchmarking and Surveys

21. The Panel acknowledges the variety of benchmarking activities that UP undertakes. The institution also conducts a number of user surveys and impact studies as a means to measure its performance in the core functions. The Panel found evidence that the outcomes of surveys generally are acted upon so that the quality of service provided to students and staff is improved. The Panel encourages the institution to ensure that all survey instruments are used to make improvements and that there is a monitoring process in place with the allocation of responsibility so that the quality of the core functions as well as support services are enhanced.

Teaching and Learning

22. UP has several documents underpinning teaching and learning at the institution. The first point noted by the Panel was the extensive use of the terms 'principles' and 'guidelines' in the major documents guiding the management of quality in teaching and learning. Although points of policy are sometimes embedded in these documents, the Panel is of the view that the lack of the use of the word 'policy' in areas such as teaching and assessment where they pertain directly to the professional practice of academic staff as

educators, point to the ‘light touch’ in managing the quality of teaching and learning. Second, perusal by the Panel of the 10 education principles outlined in documentation revealed a lack of coherence between managing teaching and learning and the achievement of strategic goals. The 10 education principles are generic and, as indicated during interviews with academics open to a highly variable understanding and use among staff. The appropriateness of these principles to support the goals of the institution in particular in terms of how they could contribute to the development of the ‘innovation generation’, or are locally relevant, was an area of concern for the Panel. Of particular concern is the weak connection between the mission and vision of the institution and its practice and understanding of teaching and learning. The Panel is of the view that the failure to look at (i) the coherence of the principles and (ii) their appropriateness to institutional goals is a missed opportunity in terms of assuring the quality of teaching and learning at UP. The University might like to consider re-examining the 10 principles of education in the context of the institutional vision and mission. This would allow consideration of the views of teaching and learning which go beyond the individual and the psychological and encompass what might be termed ‘social’ views of learning.

Recommendation 5

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria consider re-examining its 10 principles of education in terms of their usefulness and specificity to support the realisation of the University’s vision and mission. Of particular importance in this regard would be the examination of the view of teaching and learning informing the 10 principles of education and the extent and effectiveness of their application across the Faculties.

23. The Panel heard in a range of interviews with Deans, heads of departments and academics that while the committees of Senate are fully operational there is a lack of monitoring of the activities of the committees. This raised two issues. First, the Panel heard during interviews with staff of the uneven, incomplete and inconsistent implementation of policies, and of which it found numerous examples in each core function. The second issue concerns the lack of consistent mechanisms to ensure that the measurement of performance indicators serve effectively to enhance quality. The Panel is of the view that the institution’s well-developed capacity to measure its performance is not always exploited to expose problems, and to inform the development of interventions designed to improve the quality of provision, particularly in the core functions of teaching and learning, and research.

Recommendation 6

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria develop appropriate systems to monitor and improve the performance of its committees and other units which impact on the core functions.

24. The recent appointment of the Vice Principal: Undergraduate Programmes has the potential to break the current isolation and inconsistencies found in teaching and learning practices across Faculties. The Panel congratulates the institution of this appointment and encourages it to regard this as an ideal juncture to launch an encompassing review of teaching and learning at the University, which needs to take into account a strategic view of where the institution wants to be in a decade in terms of its differentiated role within the higher education system and its position in society. This will also require a review of planning and budgeting in this area.
25. While there were clear gaps in terms of the strategic management of quality at programme-level, programme administration appears to be sound. The Panel concurs with the institution that Senate and its various committees need to reconcile the policies and practices of the different Faculties and bring them in line with institutional guidelines and principles as part of a quality improvement plan (AP: 138). A Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning would be a good way to achieve this coherence and would serve as a means of driving best practice.

Recommendation 7

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria investigate the need and possible impact of the creation of an integrative structure or mechanism, tasked with responsibility for the monitoring and review of teaching and learning activities across all Faculties.

26. In a range of interviews with academics the Panel heard of the perceived lesser status accorded to teaching compared to research and of the effect that, according to staff, this has on the morale of committed academics at the institution. While there are some incentives to achieve excellence in teaching, this is not consistent across all Faculties. In this regard, the Panel notes with appreciation the annual Chancellor's awards and the Education Innovation awards to academics in recognition of their contribution to teaching and learning. Nonetheless, the Panel is of the view that more systemic measures need to be taken to improve the status of teaching at the University.
27. UP has made significant financial investment in electronic learning platforms and support in terms of laboratories, computers and software. However, the Panel found during interviews with staff that little is done to promote, monitor and assure teaching and learning in the use of these media. While the use of an electronic learning platform, such as clickUP, has the potential to contribute to

the development of an 'Innovation Generation', in interviews with members of the Department for Education Innovation (DEI) the Panel heard that this was not taking place. The Panel suggests that the institution (i) conceptualises how this provision could be used to produce an innovation generation; (ii) develops strategies to ensure the optimal use of this electronic learning device and ensure that upon implementation these are monitored and evaluated; and (iii) ensures that it capitalise on its considerable resources in this regard.

Recommendation 8

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria assess the use being made of its electronic learning platform with a view to transform the current teaching and learning model. Such assessment should be led by the Department of Education Innovation.

28. **Academic Support Services.** Within the Department of Education Innovation (DEI) there is considerable teaching and learning expertise which could be used to support this core function. However, the Panel learned during interviews with DEI staff that its potential role in improving the quality of teaching and learning at the institution is constrained by the voluntaristic and *ad hoc* nature of its interventions as well as by the fact that the department's intervention has to be requested by staff in order for them to be able to use expert knowledge to help improve teaching and learning. The Panel is of the view that the location of the DEI as a voluntary resource within the institution does not point to the strategic use of expertise in managing teaching and learning so that goals are achieved at Faculty level. Furthermore, drawing the DEI into the management of teaching and learning would allow its members' intellectual and experiential resources to be harnessed more strategically to guide the institution along the path it has chosen for itself.

Recommendation 9

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria reconsider the role and location of the Department for Education Innovation in the context of the need to review the conceptualisation, organisation and operationalisation of teaching and learning at the institution.

29. As a result of interviews with staff and members of the DEI, the Panel is of the view that the department works very well, and is highly resourceful, but needs to be strategically positioned to heighten support to academic staff. The Panel would like to congratulate the Department of Education Innovation for the interesting work it does in terms of research on teaching and learning and the nature of the services it provides.

Commendation 4

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria on the work done by the Department of Education Innovation.

30. The Client Services Centre (CSC) was established in 2002 to provide consolidated administrative services for students, parents, alumni, staff, external bursary donors and employers in one location (AP: 83). The Panel noted with appreciation the CSC cycle of surveys of users and its use of the survey results to maintain and improve quality. The Panel found CSC to be a clear example of a 'student-centred' innovation and an example of good practice. The University has succeeded in bringing together the services that in many institutions are disparate and dispersed.

Commendation 5

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for its innovative approach in establishing and successfully implementing a centralised student services centre.

31. **Library.** The Panel found from interviews with library staff and a review of documentation that governance structures are in place and operate effectively. During interviews with library staff members the Panel received confirmation that Heads of Faculty Libraries work closely with the Deans and Faculty Boards. The Panel was pleased to note that there is ample space for study purposes, which is open 24 hours per day during the examination period. This is supportive of the student-centred approach upon which the University is focusing, as well as the endeavour to improve upon throughput rates. The Library has systematically reviewed its services and acted on these reviews. It also engages in benchmarking of its services. The Panel heard during interviews with postgraduate students and academics that support for their research needs is excellent. The Panel was impressed by the library facilities and collections and congratulates the University on its facilities and support provided to staff and students.

Commendation 6

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for its efficiently managed and well-resourced Library Services.

32. **Information and Communication Technology.** The Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) is responsible for information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure at the University (AP: 85). The Panel concurs with the views expressed in interviews by members of ITS that providing quality services as it rolls out the IT renewal programme while maintaining the legacy systems until they are replaced is challenging and that further university support may be required. The Panel found the centralised laboratories on the Hatfield campus to be an impressive and important resource, which are open six days a week, from 06:30 to 22:00. With regard to research, the Panel concurs with the goals in the IT Strategic Plan that support for UP's research activities need to be aligned to the University's research vision.

33. **Certification.** The Panel confirmed during interviews with the Registrar and his staff that the security features are in use and well-regulated. UP has a rigorous security system in place to protect the integrity of the certification process.

Commendation 7

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for its management of a robust system of administrative security that ensures the integrity of the certification process.

34. **Short Courses.** Continuing Education at University of Pretoria offers a range of short courses, which are determined by industry and business needs. The Panel heard during interviews with members of CE at UP that these courses have the potential to provide valuable skills to the community and the region while also enriching teaching and research activities within the University.

Commendation 8

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for the initiative taken to establish CE at UP which has improved the administrative effectiveness, management information systems, marketing efficiency and income generation of short courses at the same time that allows the institution to respond to the broad skills needs of society.

35. **Programme Development.** The Panel found that the eight guidelines upon which programme design is based are general in nature and do not take into account the African location of the institution and its strategic goals, such as the development of an innovation generation. During interviews with academics the Panel found that there is no awareness of a clear strategy to ensure that arrangements for programme development are guided by institutional strategy. The Panel suggests that the institution consider revisiting its approach to programme development to ensure alignment with institutional strategy.

36. The Panel noted with appreciation the number of support structures that exist to assist departments in the development and design of new programmes. The Panel found that there are strong organisational arrangements for the introduction of new programmes (AP: 112-114). There are a number of structures through which proposals for the approval of new programmes must serve.

Commendation 9

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for the many support structures that provide assistance to departments for the development of new programmes and for its robust programme approval system.

37. **Programme Review.** The University has clear systems in place to evaluate programmes on a regular basis. The Panel did not find, however, an

understanding of review as a process of reflecting upon what the institution does, the relevance and responsiveness of programmes, referring to data in order to identify areas of weakness so that changes can be made where necessary. The Panel heard during interviews with academics that information regarding the student feedback survey instrument pertains to module content and lecturer evaluation. However, the Panel did not find evidence that student perceptions are triangulated with other forms of feedback such as peer review and external examiners' reports. The Panel suggests that mechanisms be developed and implemented to allow those delivering the programme to respond to findings of reviews of their teaching.

38. The Panel found during interviews with academics that there is a tendency to blur the distinction between the evaluation of teaching at an individual level and the evaluation of programmes. The evaluation of teaching should be aimed at ongoing personal development and should create a 'safe space' for individuals to experiment and learn from that experimentation. The theories that underpin teaching need to be tested. The Panel is of the view that the use of a standardised questionnaire, the results of which go 'upwards' in terms of management, is not conducive to the construction of this safe space. The questions asked in each kind of review should be different. The Panel was concerned that UP does not seem to differentiate between the types of review. The Panel suggests that the institution develop mechanisms that will ensure the two types of evaluation are used appropriately and consider whether staff development workshops may be useful in this regard.

Recommendation 10

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria reconsider the mechanism that it uses in programme review to ensure that good practice takes place within the core programmes.

39. **Staffing.** Whilst robust selection and employment processes are essential in dealing with South Africa's complex Labour and Equity Laws, the Panel heard during interviews with management and academics that processes are cumbersome and long delays are the norm. The Panel concurs with objective 2.1 of the institution's Strategic Plan 2007-2011 (p.9) that there is a need to simplify human resource procedures. The Panel suggests that the finalisation of a simplified set of policies should be concluded and implemented as soon as possible.

Recommendation 11

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria implement the necessary revisions and appropriate mechanisms to simplify its procedures for recruitment and appraisal of its human resources as soon as possible.

40. **Staff Development.** The Panel heard during interviews with staff members that there are strategies to encourage staff to undergo training in assessment. For long serving staff completion of the assessment course constitutes a component of performance appraisal. Another incentive is that most of the courses offered by the DEI articulate with the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education, a formal qualification, offered by the UP's Faculty of Education (AP: 65). The Panel heard positive comments from staff who have undertaken this training. The Panel was of the view that the provision of such developmental opportunities to increase assessment skills, together with the introduction of incentives to encourage the uptake of these opportunities, demonstrates an appropriate institutional commitment to enhancing competency in assessment.

41. **Assessment.** UP has a clearly articulated assessment framework, expressed as 12 principles of assessment (AP: 142-143). The Panel found the 12 assessment principles to be generally sound. Collectively, the principles embrace an outcomes based approach to learning. These principles form the core of an electronic resource produced by the Department for Education Innovation in September 2006. The Panel was impressed with the electronic resource, which expands upon the principles of assessment, so that each yields policies and associated suggestions for practice. This resource also directly links these principles and suggested practices to source literature.

Commendation 10

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for the electronic resource developed by the Department for Education Innovation to support implementation of the assessment framework, which communicates pedagogical assessment principles and associated assessment policies, while also identifying their implications for assessment practices.

42. The University has a well-conceptualised assessment framework, and has introduced procedures to assist staff in developing high levels of competency in assessment. The Panel saw many examples of good assessment practices within departments and Faculties. However, the principles embodied within the assessment framework have not yet had consistent impact on assessment system-wide. The Panel is of the view that the institution needs to develop mechanisms which will increase the consistency in which its assessment principles find expression in teaching practices within and across departments and Faculties.

Recommendation 12

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria take steps to ensure that its assessment framework is adopted consistently across all departments, Faculties and across income generating units.

43. The University has introduced a number of modules that make use of e-testing, and operates a highly regulated e-testing facility (AP: 146). The development of e-testing is handled with care, and the e-tests afford opportunities for student feedback on individual questions. The Panel was told during interviews with academics that this feedback is used to enhance the quality of tests across successive years, as is consistent with good practice. The Panel also heard that e-testing provides students with feedback designed to contribute to learning. The Panel was impressed by the rigour of the administration and security around this type of assessment.
44. The Panel found that there is uneven use of external moderation across departments. The Panel was informed that the tight timeline of the examination process in some cases can make it difficult to obtain external moderator input in time for this to be taken into account during student assessment. The Panel suggests that the University ensure that the temporal constraints imposed upon the assessment process accommodate sufficient time to secure external moderator input early enough for this to contribute to the assessment process.

Research

45. UP strives to be an internationally recognised teaching and research university (AP: 10). It also ‘aims to be a research partner of choice for companies in the Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programmes (THRIP) (A: 83). The Panel heard during interviews with management of a number of mechanisms that UP is putting in place to realise such aspirations. These include: (i) the appointment of a dedicated research portfolio at Vice Principal level; (ii) a system of rewards and incentives for research performance; (iii) structures for research reporting linked to performance appraisal; (iv) structures for research support and incentives within postgraduate education. Notwithstanding the challenges it identified, the Panel is of the view that UP is to be congratulated on the general direction of their initiatives, which are undoubtedly addressing some of the structural features behind the erosion or absence of a strong and widespread research culture at UP.
46. The Panel received confirmation during interviews with researchers that the Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity is operational and that procedures are in place in order to undertake research with ethical clearance. However, the Panel found that the processes are not followed consistently across all departments and Faculties. The Panel is of the view that the institution needs to ensure that the different committees dealing with research ethics are functioning consistently across the University.

Recommendation 13

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria develop a mechanism to ensure that procedures regarding ethical clearance are implemented consistently across the institution.

47. UP has a Department for Research Support, which consists of two sections: the Research Support Office and the Contracting Office. The Panel heard from a range of interviewees that the Research Support Office is operating under capacity and although not all problems in the functioning of this Office are related to lack of staff, increasing the Research Office capacity would go a long way in improving the services offered to senior and junior researchers. Given the size and intensity of the research enterprise at the institution, the Panel urges the institution to reconsider the resourcing of this Office so that it can better support the research enterprise at the University. The Contracting Office appears to be functional in terms of its mandate. However, the Panel heard during interviews with staff that the finalisation and management of research contracts is often done on an *ad hoc* basis without due consideration being given to institutional procedures. The Panel urges the University to ensure that governance and procedures for the management of contract research are clearly articulated and that there is a monitoring and review system in place.

Recommendation 14

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria give concerted attention to the adequate resourcing and effective functioning of the Research Support and Contracting Office of its Department for Research Support so that these structures can respond to the needs of UP's researchers in a manner that is consistent with the importance of the research function at the University.

48. The Panel was pleased to note that the number of research outputs has risen significantly in the past decade, and total output is strong. The institution produces the largest number of accredited journal publications in the country since 1997. In 2006, UP had 183 NRF rated scientists, 4 of whom were 'A' rated and 53 'B' rated (AP: 203). With regard to patents the University registered 34 new disclosures in 2005. Eleven technologies to industry were also licensed (AP: 205).

Commendation 11

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for the consistent growth in its research outputs.

Postgraduate Education

49. The Panel was pleased to learn that UP produces both the largest number of PhD graduates and the largest number of black PhD graduates in South Africa.

In 2005, 192 students received doctoral degrees, 60 of whom were black (AP: 205).

Commendation 12

The HEQC commends the University of Pretoria for its achievements in producing significant numbers of PhD graduates, and in particular black PhD graduates.

50. The Panel recognises the wide range of postgraduate programmes that UP offers and the support structures in place to support the students and their supervisors. From interviews with postgraduate students, the Panel found two issues that might need the institution's consideration. First, postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows indicated their dissatisfaction with the lack of clarity in their relationship with supervisors and the lack of specification of the institutional expectations from doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows in terms of work-load and publications. Second, the Panel was told that the University seems to lack both an organisational space in which postgraduate students can interact and share their work and a structured set of courses to provide such students with the necessary tools of research management required to develop a career as a researcher. The Panel suggests that the institution give concerted attention to the definition of the expectation of research outputs for doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows and considers the ways in which the training of young researchers could include knowledge of research management.

51. The Panel was concerned about two further areas in postgraduate education. The first is the practice whereby university supervisors also perform the function of one of the examiners. The Panel urges the institution to discontinue this practice in order to ensure that the quality of assessment of postgraduate theses and dissertations exclude the possibility of bias due to vested interest. Apart from going against best practice the blurring of the role of supervisor and examiner has the potential to lessen the integrity of the examination process.

Recommendation 15

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria discontinue the practice of supervisors having an examining role in the assessment of theses.

52. Second, the Panel found that the standards and practices of supervision vary greatly between and among Faculties. The Panel heard of instances of very high student: supervisor ratios, which undermine the quality of the postgraduate experience and the overall quality of the theses and dissertations produced by students. The Panel suggests that the University ensures that its

minimum requirements for supervision are applied consistently across Faculties.

Recommendation 16

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria reconsider its guidelines for postgraduate supervision and develop mechanisms to ensure that these are implemented consistently across Faculties and Departments.

Community Engagement

53. While UP has no clear conceptualisation of community engagement, the Panel notes that the institution has made some attempts at defining this core function. The Panel is of the view, that the institution may need to consider, first, who are its communities and the type of relationships it wishes to have with them and then establish relationships, which are not only informed by what the institution can give to communities but also that these activities are incorporating knowledge produced by the communities. These relationships should serve to sustain the two-way flow of knowledge and expertise between the communities and the institution.

Recommendation 17

The HEQC recommends that the University of Pretoria conduct an institution-wide debate to determine its understanding of community engagement and develop a plan with allocated budget, targets and allocation of responsibilities.

54. UP has conducted two surveys to determine the scope of its community engagement activities. The 2006 survey found that approximately 45% of academic staff members are involved in some form of community engagement activity (AP: 223). The Panel heard during interviews with staff that many projects taking place currently are not co-ordinated in a manner that is closely overseen by the institution. The Panel encourages the University to ensure that these are co-ordinated and aligned at the institutional level. This would ensure maximum and targeted impact in the community. During interviews with academics and external partners the Panel was pleased to hear positive comments about the initiatives of UP with regard to community engagement.
55. Some of the community engagement projects fall under the umbrella of service learning and are credit-bearing. The Panel found during interviews with staff that evaluation of service learning varies across Faculties and is often not in line with the guidelines concerning the assessment of this type of learning. The Panel noted with some concern that the institutional review of community service and service learning at UP, carried out in 2004 merely determined the range and scope of activities and did not address assessment

issues. The Panel urges the University to give attention to the development of appropriate guidelines for service learning.

56. UP aims to use the Mamelodi campus as the base for community engagement. The Panel heard during interviews with staff that there are 15 secondary schools in Mamelodi and the intention is to use the science, computer laboratories, and the library at the Mamelodi campus to benefit the learners at the schools. The Panel heard that no partnership has yet been initiated with the schools. The Panel encourages the institution to continue with its plans to develop partnerships with schools in Mamelodi irrespective of the decision taken with regard to the future of the Mamelodi campus.

Conclusion

57. The University of Pretoria is a well-managed, well-functioning and well-resourced institution. More than ten years into the new democracy the University is still wrestling with the important challenge of locating its strong academic identity within a range of new social identities developing in contemporary South Africa. The University has many areas of strength and is justifiably proud of the quality of its graduates and the recognition elicited by its research.
58. The introduction of a language policy that includes teaching in English as well as Afrikaans has helped the institution not only to expand its enrolments but also to change dramatically its student profile. In this sense the University of Pretoria has made remarkable progress. For this progress to be sustained the institution needs to pursue vigorously the process of transformation of its institutional culture, its conceptualisation of, and practices in, the three core functions, and its management style.
59. The University of Pretoria has the academic strength, the resources and the planning capacity to continue developing a new conception of itself which encompasses its local and international responsibilities and aspirations. The main challenge for the institution now is for its leadership to put these capacities to work in the development and operationalisation of bolder and decisive strategies to deepen the process of transformation.