

# **“The Way Forward with the Student Climate Survey”**

## **Report<sup>1</sup> to the Transformation Management Advisory Group**

30 May 2005 (Final Version)

### **1. Introduction**

Studies of the institutional culture of UCT have formed part of the ongoing task of documenting transformation at UCT. Invariably they have tried to address themselves to ways by which diversity is perceived at UCT by its constituent staff and students. The latest study of this kind is commonly known as the Student Climate Survey (SCS) of 2004.

This report to the UCT Transformation Management Advisory Group (TMAG) summarises and discusses the findings of the SCS in relation to previous institutional culture studies of UCT and quantitative data available from the Institutional Planning Office. The report interrogates the validity of student claims and perceptions of UCT’s institutional climate, raises in the discussion of these claims critical questions that require policy decisions, and eventually presents a limited number of proposals for immediate and medium-term interventions.

In studies of the University, institutional culture and institutional climate have been conceptualised in close relation to each other. Steyn and van Zyl (2001: 9) defined institutional culture as “the prevailing ethos – the deep-rooted sets of norms, assumptions and values that predominate and pervade most of the environment on a day to day basis”. For the purpose of the Student Climate Survey, Smith *et al* (2004: 12) defined the

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institutional climate within the context of institutional culture. Following Armstrong (2003), they defined it as the “enacted environment”; as those aspects of the institution “which are conspicuously perceived by its members”. Important in the study of institutional culture and institutional climate are notions of difference and notions of integration (Soudien, 2004).

It is widely acknowledged that studies of institutional climate (and culture) must be able to capture the multi-dimensional nature of these concepts. Moreover, institutions like a university are not homogenous institutions. While UCT represents a common educational and social space, it is at the same time a very large, complex, and heterogeneous environment (Steyn and van Zyl, 2001: 9). Studies of institutional culture must attempt to uncover “the complex and multiple forms of identification and identity” that operate in such spaces (Soudien, 2004: 93). The SCS has tried to do this by capturing the perceptions and experiences of UCT’s institutional climate from diverse student-related perspectives.

The following section provides high-level summaries of ten years of institutional culture studies that focused on student perceptions and experiences of UCT. It attempts to show that the findings of the SCS are not a random sample of students “bitching” and “moaning” about the University but that they represent serious and persistent grievances that undermine students’ human rights. The third section goes into the details of the SCS findings and discusses them in the light of other qualitative and quantitative data. One of its fundamental findings is that a number of equitable policies correctly applied have not yielded equitable results because of the persistence of self-perpetuating legacies within and beyond the University. In the fourth section, crosscutting themes in the SCS are briefly positioned in relation to theoretical notions of diversity and integration. Lastly, the paper identifies a limited number of immediate and medium-term interventions that seek to redress some of the problems highlighted by students and to firmly entrench a human rights-based culture at the University.

## ***2. A Decade of Student Perceptions and Experiences of Institutional Culture of UCT***

Since 1994, a number of studies of students’ perceptions and experiences of institutional culture of UCT have been performed. These include a study involving first and second-year undergraduate students in the Medical Faculty initiated by the Students’ Representative Council in 1994 (Rose, 1995), the far-reaching institutional culture study of 1999 by the UCT Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies (Steyn and van Zyl, 2001) and the present Student Climate Survey.<sup>2</sup> These three studies are briefly reviewed here.

### **1994/95**

#### **“Review of Experiences of the Institutional Culture of the Medical Faculty, University of Cape Town” by Penny Rose (UCT Students’ Representative Council)**

This project was initiated and carried out by Ms Penny Rose, an activist member of the Students’ Representative Council and medical student. The study focused on the

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<sup>2</sup> The discussion in section 3 of this report also makes reference to a study of student experiences and perceptions of ‘race’ and racism commissioned by the UCT Health Sciences Faculty and conducted by UCT sociologists Drs Zimitri Erasmus and Jacques de Wet in 2002/3. Erasmus and de Wet (2003) show with great insight how issues of ‘race’ and racism manifest in medical students’ lives and what strategies Black students in particular have adopted in order to cope at the UCT Medical School. Given the specific focus of their study, however, it is not included in this brief review of institutional culture/climate studies.

experiences of first and second year MBChB students at the UCT Medical School in 1994/95.

As the first part of her study, Rose analysed sensitively and compassionately the contents of prescribed textbooks and course handouts in anatomy and physiology, looking for misrepresenting and/or offensive content, and recorded over a period of a year degrading and offensive comments made by lectures in the courses MBI100W, ANT205W, PGY200W.

Rose found that the course materials were underrepresenting and misrepresenting women and black people, representations of male and female persons were stereotypical, and pictures depicted almost exclusively whites only. As in the course material, the teachers in the classroom took the male form as standard and the female as a deviation thereof. Lectures reinforced the stereotypes found in course material. Off the mark comments and jokes by teachers were mostly uncompassionate, offensive to disabled people, mostly heterosexist and at times misogynist, racist, and homophobic. For example, she found the following stereotypes and prejudices being reinforced: "women's inferior mental capacity", "women's emotional instability", "women's voices and supposedly talking too much". She found offensive comments on "rape and how to deal with a survivor of rape", "women and their looks", "stereotypes of men – intended to be complimentary", "homophobic comments", hidden "racist" comments, offensive comments about people with disabilities, and working class people. (The report and its addendums provide a minute record of such comments).

Rose concluded in this part of her study that first and second year MBChB students were taught in an atmosphere of underlying values and attitudes that were transferred with the course material, terminologies, teaching etc. which were unacceptable in a diverse classroom and incompatible with the profession they aspired to.

In an effort to compare her experiences with those of classmates, Rose conducted (with two fellow students) a limited survey amongst her peers in seven first and second year courses, namely, DOM100W, MBI100W, ANT104S, PHY108F/S/H, CEM111F, ANT205W, and PGY200W. She and two helpers used a questionnaire with a single question: *"How many instances of racism, sexism or other prejudice do you encounter in your courses (e.g. lectures, hand-outs, tuts, pracs, prescribed texts) per week?"* Students were asked to tick on the questionnaire for each course an appropriate block to indicate whether they found prejudice *"never"*, *"rarely"*, *"now and again"*, *"regularly"*, or *"all the time"*. Depending on the course she received on average 91 responses per course, with a high of 131 and a low of 34.

The findings of the survey were puzzling: Rose found that the great majority (70 – 90 %) of her peers were oblivious to the instances of prejudice that she had minuted so carefully. The only course which differed significantly was "Health and Society" (DOM100W), a course she described as having the purpose to sensitise medical students to the socio-economic realities of health, gender issues, Third World/first world issues, past and present hierarchies dominating the medical profession. 20 % of students rating this course (of a total of 131 respondents) felt they encountered prejudice regularly or all the time, 23 % now and again, and only 57 % said rarely or never.

Rose concluded her study on the gloomy note that "the attitudes of [first and second year] medical students is that when sexist, racist, homophobic or other discriminatory or prejudiced comments are made in lectures, they are not identified as such. Most students do not appear to be at all sensitised to this kind of issue – and even resist being sensitised – to the extent that when issues of race, gender or class *are* raised in lectures, they are perceived to be reverse discrimination."

**1999**

**“Like that Statue at Jammie Stairs’ – Some Student Perceptions and Experiences of Institutional Culture at the University of Cape Town in 1999” by Melissa Steyn and Mikki van Zyl (Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa)**

The research for this project was initiated and concerted by Ms Melissa Steyn, first as Director of the Professional Communication Unit at UCT, later as Director of the Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa with Ms Mikki van Zyl of Simply Said and Done. The project was endorsed by the DVC in charge of the transformation portfolio and benefited of the support from Ms Thandi Lewin, then Transformation Officer. The impetus for the project was enquiries by academic staff on how to handle the changing diversity of UCT, in particular changes in student demographics (and perhaps student culture) that had taken place since the early 1990s.

Steyn and van Zyl aimed to investigate and document how diverse students perceived and experienced the institutional culture of UCT. They situated their approach to the topic under the “critical multiculturalism” paradigm, which entails a commitment to the view that the “incorporation of once marginalised requires not assimilation, but a transformation of the cultural milieu to bring about new meanings and representations”. Critical multiculturalism also rejects essentialist notions of identity. They defined institutional culture as “the prevailing ethos – the deep-rooted sets of norms, assumptions and values that predominate and pervade most of the environment on a day to day basis” (p. 9).

Steyn and her team conducted a review of academic literature on related topics, an analysis of UCT policies, and, most importantly, a series of workshops (focus groups) with a representative, purposive sample of approximately 92 students. Nineteen (19) workshops composed of students from different student groups were held including students from all faculties; black students; students from black residences; white students, women students; disabled students; foreign African students; lesbian and gay students. A number of mixed focus groups were also conducted. Rigorous attention was paid to the methodologies of focus group research.

They found that the levels of awareness of the dominant institutional norms differ between ‘dominant’ and ‘vulnerable’ groups. Biases in institutional culture were rarely perceived by those in powerful and privileged positions (or from such background). Students experienced UCT culture as one of centres and margins. The dominant groups at the centres were comfortable and largely unaware of the institutional norms. Conversely, more vulnerable students were constantly aware of an institutional culture which left them at the margins. A conceptualisation of diversity as advantage and disadvantage, however, was rejected by Steyn and van Zyl. Labelling Black students ‘disadvantaged’ produced precisely the devalorisation of Black history and culture, African languages and Africanness that characterised UCT’s institutional culture.

UCT’s institutional culture, Steyn and van Zyl, argued could be summed up as “Whiteness”. This “Whiteness” has its origins in the colonial roots of the institution, its physical and symbolic manifestation, in the way UCT represents its own history, and by its anglocentric culture. Most of all, “Whiteness” continues to be legitimised in discourses of “internationalism” and “educational standards” and being “world-class”. In this discursive universe, the Africanness of the institution was poorly understood and neglected, resulting in the official absence of African languages, cultures, and histories, on campus.

While the major faultline in constructing difference remains ‘race’, Steyn and van Zyl also found that divisions between ‘racial’ groups at UCT were becoming more salient. Particularly the difference between Black students from previously White, model C schools and those who come from township or rural schools were becoming a source of tension. Amongst White students, a division seemed to emerge more along ideological

lines. Students found that UCT still reflected *de facto* segregationist tendencies in the absence of an explicitly integrative culture.

## 2004

### **“Same River, Different Boats – Report on 13 Focus Groups with UCT Students – December 2004” by Matthew J. Smith, Nobu Dube, Sihaam Gasnola and Musa Myeza (Strategy and Tactics)**

The Student Climate Survey (SCS) was initiated as part of UCT’s self-evaluation exercise to measure the university’s progress towards achieving its mission. The study was conducted by a team of researchers of consulting company Strategy and Tactics. The aim of the study was “to capture the perceptions and perspectives of students with regards to the institutional climate”. The institutional climate was defined within the context of institutional culture as the “enacted environment”; as the aspects of the institution “which are conspicuously perceived by its members”.

The study focused on a number of issues:

- Reasons for choosing to study at UCT;
- Perceptions of whether UCT was fulfilling its mission
- Relations to teachers (outstanding teaching, learning, and research);
- Relations to fellow students in the classroom
- Relevance (curriculum; responsiveness to the needs of society);
- Views of the residences, administration, etc.;
- Relations with fellow students / peer relations outside the classroom; and,
- Views on UCT and transformation.

The researchers conducted a brief review of academic literature to clarify their key concepts and explain their approach. Through an interactive process with the SCS Advisory Group, the researchers developed guidelines for focus group research (semi-structured questionnaires) and then conducted 13 focus groups comprising together approximately 130 undergraduate UCT students. All focus groups were constituted of a single group e.g. Black female students; Black male students.

The researchers found that there were significant variations in the perceptions of Black students and White students of the institutional climate, particularly in terms of peer relations in and outside classrooms, relations to teachers and the UCT administration, and with regard to the state of transformation at UCT. Most disconcerting from a transformation perspective is perhaps the finding that the ‘racial’ division of the student body was accepted by students as *‘natural’*. It points to a fundamental failure of the University to teach undergraduate students to think critically about themselves and about the society they live in. Highlights of the findings of the SCS (with reference to UCT’s mission statement) were that the undergraduate students in the focus group felt that:

- Teaching at UCT was not always outstanding;
- UCT was educating students for life (students in professional qualifications);
- UCT was not educating students for life and their studies lacked relevance (students in Humanities, Sciences and Commerce);
  - Academic support services were available but students were ambiguous towards them and felt that ADP courses were ‘racially’ allocated;
  - There was a lack of community engagement in general and practical exposure of students in their fields of study in particular; moreover, students wanted more internships;
- The institution was not really addressing the challenges facing South African society;
  - The University’s internationalism had to be balanced with Africanness;

- Undergraduate students felt that with regard to pressing problems like poverty, disease, etc. UCT did not do enough; but SHAWCO did a good job;
- The transformation of UCT was proceeding well (White, Coloured and Indian students);
- The transformation of UCT was lagging behind (African students);
- Moreover, the undergraduate learning environment was characterised by:
  - A student body that was divided by 'race' (and that was 'natural');
  - Residences which were too separate and too unequal;
  - Ineffective governance and a lack of channels to air grievances;

The findings of the 2004 Student Climate Survey are discussed in detail in the following section.

### ***3. The Findings of the Student Climate Survey: A Discussion***

In order to put the findings of the Student Climate Survey into a framework for discussion, they have been re-categorized in relation to a systemic conception of the educational process (Table 1). The SCS findings are briefly outlined as claims that different student groups make about the institutional climate of UCT. The claims and grievances are then evaluated in relation to other qualitative and quantitative data. In particular, attention is drawn to identifiable continuities and discontinuities with previous student institutional culture studies, similarities and differences with the UCT Staff Climate Survey, and evidence emanating from other databases available to the Institutional Planning Department. These databases include the IPD's student database, the HEQC Review portfolio, academic review reports and curriculum review reports.

**Table 1: Issues Raised in Relation to the Educational Process**

INPUT	THROUGHPUT			OUTPUT
	TEACHING & LEARNING	STUDENT LIFE & SUPPORT	FEEDBACK & VOICE	
Selection	Teachers, Tutors, Profile	Administration	Course evaluation	Graduate destination
Recruitment	Classroom & Teaching methods	Residences	Grievance procedures	
	Textbooks	Crime	Governance	
	Language of instruction	Social spaces on campus		
	Foundation and other courses	Symbols, names, Anthem		
	Student body / Peers	Student body / Peers		

## **STUDENT INPUT**

### **Students' Selection of UCT**

The majority of students in the focus groups had selected UCT originally for its reputation for having the “highest standard of learning” and “international recognition”. Coloured students made reference to “the great financial sacrifices” their parents made for them to come here. White students referred to having selected UCT because siblings or parents had studied here before. Some African students noted that UCT had a reputation for offering “generous financial support”. Disabled students noted that the University had a “better disability unit than anywhere else”. For some the location, Cape Town, was a factor.

### **UCT Recruitment Practices**

There was a perception among black students that UCT only visits “privileged schools”.

#### **Discussion**

- In terms of UCT's recruitment practices, the students' perception is seemingly contradicted by evidence. UCT recruits more than 90% of its undergraduates directly from high school. About 50% of these students come from the Western Cape. The 2004 UCT recruitment calendar clearly shows that at least in the Western Cape there was a remarkably wide and equitable spread of schools visited by UCT (Appendix 1).
- However, there is a huge discrepancy between the spread of recruitment activities and the actual enrolment figures by high schools. UCT undergraduates come mostly from a small set of schools that have long been traditional feeder schools for the University. From the following feeder schools UCT has drawn more than 150 students between 2002 and 2004: Westerford High, Abbots College, Diocesan College (Bishops), South African College High, Herzlia High, Rustenburg High, Rondebosch Boys High, Wynberg Girls High, Herschel. Among the top 50 feeder high schools (supplying more than 20 students in the two year period) only one is located in a black township (Fezeka High – Gugulethu). The top three feeder schools for African students were Abbots College (103) and Rosebank College (100) (in both cases mostly non-South African) and Fezeka High (29). Most Coloured students were drawn from Livingston Senior Secondary (82), Westerford High (60), and Settlers High (57); most Indian students from Islamia College (57), Rylands Secondary (30), and Livingstone Senior Secondary (34). White students came mostly from Westerford High (216), Herzlia High (202), and Diocesan College (Bishops) (183) (Appendix 2). Ideally, these enrolment figures would be discussed in relation to the eligibility pool in each school.<sup>3</sup>
- It is evident that students' perceptions can be understood with reference to enrolment patterns rather than recruitment activity.

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<sup>3</sup> In the process of data analysis the Department of Institutional Planning identified the example of a school that illustrates the complexity of the problem. It was found that only 4 students from Thandokulu High School had registered at UCT in 2004. Thandokulu High is a school of mostly working-class African learners located close to campus (Main Road, Mowbray). The WC Education Department's school database shows that in the last three years less than ten learners from Thandokulu matriculated with endorsement. The small number of student enrolments from this school is therefore not a question of recruitment, or of information on and access to the University, but a question of eligibility (and maybe affordability). Thus, the problem is primarily related to the quality of schooling at Thandokulu. On a different note, it should be of concern to the University that the proximity to UCT seemingly has no positive effect on the quality of education at its closest working-class African high school. Thus, Thandokulu really is a story of poor community engagement.

- The Engeo, Occupational Therapy (OT), Fine Art, Physio and Economics Review reports all noted that more pro-active and creative recruitment was needed in order to broaden the diversity profile of the applicants, to widen students' social references, and to enhance the comfort of Black students was referred to in the final. Thus, for UCT's recruitment drive to produce more equitable results there is need for a measure of redress to rectify self-perpetuating legacies.

## **TEACHING & LEARNING**

### **Quality of Teaching at UCT**

Students were largely of the opinion that quality of teaching was not always outstanding at UCT. Some students also felt that too much was demanded from them to the extent that the volume of work was at times overwhelming.

#### **Discussion**

- There is a high degree of disjuncture between student perception of the quality of teaching and the self-assessment of staff. According to the Staff Climate Survey, most staff "strongly feel that UCT provides a high quality of education to students".
- In 1999, students' own reasoning was that the "highly competitive and individualistic climate" at UCT and the emphasis on research devalues teaching and leaves lecturers with neither time nor interest to devote to students.
- Similarly in 2004, undergraduate students still found that lecturers were "inaccessible", "poorly prepared", "simply going through the motions", and "not interested in individual students". Only a minority of students found their lecturers "accessible", "caring" and "supportive". In contrast, tutors were preferred for being more "in tune with students' needs", committed, and more "caring and accessible". Moreover, black students in particular felt that there were problems with relating to White lecturers. Students recommend that "teachers be taught how to teach".
- It has been argued in the HEQC Review Portfolio that deficiencies in teaching and learning can be tracked to two clusters of issues. The first of these relate to the increase use of "adjunct teaching staff" i.e. tutors, casual teaching assistants and temporary and short contract teaching staff. Unfortunately, currently there is no data readily available on the number and profile of adjunct teaching staff across the institution. This trend may undermine the traditional foundations of quality assurance in teaching – academic staff selection by peer-dominated selection committees and probationary appointments during which competence in teaching can be monitored. A second cluster of issues relates to requirements of the Teaching and Learning Charter. The review of the implementation of the Charter has shown that, in almost all faculties, accountability for meeting the requirements of the Teaching and Learning Charter have been devolved to Heads of Department or to Course Convenors and individual lecturers. It would be preferable for formal accountability in this area to remain with Deans.

### **Teaching Staff Attitudes and Staff Demographic Profile**

Black students argued that UCT cannot retain Black staff members, especially at Senior Management level, and that this was in sharp contrast to White staff members who stayed for many years. They also felt that because Black and women staff were in the minority they were "scared", "under pressure to perform" and tried hard to be "White". Most other groups were accepting of UCT's staff profile, as long as the lecturers were "outstanding". Some students remarked that the old age of some lecturers presented difficulties for first year students to relate to them.



Many Black students also told of experiences where lecturers had been “rude” or “racist”, or made them “feel bad” and “inferior”.

An international student made the observation that students in general were noisier and less attentive in classes given by Black lecturers than in classes of White lecturers.

In two different groups, female students reported that they had been sexually harassed by tutors. It was also noted that tutors frequently dated their own students. Some female students also found that some male lecturers tended to respond to questions from female students in a condescending way.

## Discussion

- The problems highlighted by students in the SCS point towards serious cases of violations of students’ human rights, e.g. sexual harassment and racism. Specific instances of racist, misogynist, and homophobic attitudes and remarks in UCT Medical School classes have already been minutely documented by Penny Rose in the 1995 institutional culture study. Such issues require drastic intervention.
- A more general (but nonetheless serious) problem pointed out is that of White staff teaching Black students. The complex workings of this has been described with reference to black universities in South Africa by Mokubung Nkomo (1983) more than twenty years ago. The study of Steyn and van Zyl (2001: 70) of UCT also found that “students ascribe some of their problems to the composition of the academic staff”.
- In terms of the actual staff and student profiles, the following can be observed: The faculty and departmental permanent and third tier academic staff demographic profiles for 2001 to 2003 show that across the units, the overwhelming majority of staff are white and male<sup>4</sup>. Some notable exceptions are the larger proportions (approx. 40 %) female staff in Health Sciences and Law (Appendix 3: Percentage Changes in Equity Profiles). In 2004, undergraduate student enrolments by race and gender were: 30% African, 8.5% Indian, 15% Coloured, 46.5% White, and 51% female and 49% male. UCT enrolled a total of 14223 undergraduate students in 2004 (Appendix 4).
- The skewed demographic profile of UCT (both, in terms of staff and students) as well as deep-seated patterns of attitudes and behaviours were bequeathed upon the University by decades of apartheid education. One aspect of the present process of transformation is to challenge and correct this legacy. Making the University demographically more representative is only part of the solution. The problems highlighted by students rather require a multi-pronged approach at multiple levels which may include:

Firstly, academic departments are challenged to be more pro-active in the recruitment of Black staff so as to have a more equitable staff profile – one that approximates the departmental student profile more closely. Reference needs to be made to the Employment Equity Policy and Employment Equity Plan 2004-2007.

Secondly, teaching should become more collaborative, ‘diversity-friendly’, and ensure inclusivity and participation in learning environments (Steyn and van Zyl, 2001: 73). There are a limited number of recommendations by Steyn and van Zyl

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<sup>4</sup> Presently no data is available on tutors.

(2001: 73 ) and by Erasmus and de Wet (2003: 48-49) that may provide points for reflection. As a point of departure, it is important to recognise that “all members of the community ...need to take responsibility for changing the ‘race’ dynamics” (Erasmus and de Wet, 2003: 49). Each academic department could conduct its own “institutional culture audit”. Thereby it is critical to distinguish between the culture implicit in the discipline and the way in which the subject matter is taught.

Thirdly, awareness of the noted problems must be raised, stereotypes challenged, racism shamed, and staff needs to be trained to operate comfortably in a multi-cultural university. Erasmus and de Wet highlighted in their 2003 report on ‘race’ and racism at the UCT Health Sciences Faculty that students generally reported discomfort in working with other students/staff of a different ‘race’. Black students in particular carry “the burden of ‘race’” in so far as “they constantly have to prove themselves worthy” and thus “to disprove white staff and students’ stereotypical perceptions of black students”; “they are expected to lose parts of their identities in order to fit into a white world”; and “they are expected to be extraordinary in order to be recognised” (Erasmus and de Wet, 2003: 38). In this context, when black staff/students suffer a racist experience, they either have to live with it or face the additional burden of having to name ‘race’ and point out racism to a privileged white staff that is free of the burden of ‘race’ and unaware of these dynamics (and quick to cry foul and allege “reverse discrimination”) (Erasmus and de Wet, 2003: 48).

Amongst Erasmus and de Wet’s recommendations was that the “discourse of deficit” and “discourse of reverse discrimination” should be actively challenged and “white staff members [should be made] aware of the impact of their authority and practices” (Erasmus and de Wet, 2003: 49). Similar recommendations have been made earlier by Steyn and van Zyl who recommended staff training in diversity management and campaigns that challenge stereotypes, xenophobia, and homophobia in order to create a climate that is intolerant denigrating attitudes and behaviours of any kind, while opening up new vistas of the self and “the other”.

There is need to review and integrate more effectively the human rights policies into the daily practices of the University across the board. Part of this process must be the implementation of more effective, centralised grievance and appeal procedures available to staff and students (such as the establishment of an Ombudsperson), which is a key issue highlighted in the Staff Climate Survey.

### **English as Language of Instruction**

English was generally endorsed as UCT’s language of instruction. There was consensus amongst the students that English was a useful academic lingua franca for UCT. This endorsement, however, was subject certain qualifications.

English second language (ESL) students felt that English presented “a significant barrier to learning”. ESL students felt lecturers needed to be aware that their classes were multilingual and make provision for that so that ESL speakers were not disadvantaged. Tutors proficient in several languages (notably indigenous languages) should be preferred.

ESL students noted that the ability to speak English as a second language was not appreciated; conversely, language skills other than English were devalued. Particularly Black ESL students felt that strong accents or “poor English” was ridiculed in the classroom (notably mostly by other Black students who had gone to former Model C schools).

Some students mentioned that “foreign accents of lecturers” presented difficulties for students to understand.

## Discussion

- Steyn and van Zyl's study showed that UCT was overly anglophone and anglocentric, to an extent that it "alienated speakers of English as a foreign language", "perpetuated divisions...with jargon", was "not valuing people who can speak many languages", "not understanding and appreciating the cultural diversity on campus", "depriving English speakers of access to cultural diversity", and eventually "producing graduates that are less able to contribute to South Africa's reconstruction and healing" (Steyn and van Zyl, 2001: 70-71; also see: Erasmus and de Wet, 2003: 31-32).
- The IPD database suggests that over the past ten years (1994-2004) UCT has become more English. The proportion of English home language students (undergraduates only) has increased from 63% to 70% of the total student body. All other language groups have decreased or remained static. The number of Afrikaans or English/Afrikaans speakers has remained at 5%; Xhosa-speakers decreased quite drastically from 11% in 1994 to 7% in 2004; speakers of other South African languages decreased from 17% to 14%; and foreign language speakers remained constant at 4%.
- The increase in the proportion of English home language students is partly due to the increase of international students at UCT who report English as their home language. The share of undergraduate international students (of whom most originate from the SADC region) has increased in the ten-year period from 10% to 16% (Appendix 4). Many of these students report English as their home language (others: Portuguese and French).
- Given that most South African ESL speakers are African students, the ruling attitude towards language adds to an experience of cultural marginalisation. The institution and each of its constituents will need to find ways of moving away from the alleged "anglocentric monolingualism" to a multilingualism where English is the academic *lingua franca*; not only for the sake of ESL undergraduate students but as a step into a new future where cultural diversity is valued and practiced. In this sense it must be reiterated that language rights are human rights, more so in the context of education.
- Numerous scholars note that it is of critical importance that some form of multilingualism is practiced in the South African educational context (e.g. Mda, 2004). What specific practices may be appropriate at institutional-wide level as well as in different disciplinary contexts will require further engagement with ESL students and language scholars.

## Foundation Courses (Academic Development Programmes/ADP)

A sharp divide in the different focus groups emerged at the discussion of the usefulness of foundation courses. Most Black students in the focus groups expressed feelings of resentment towards foundation courses. They said that ADP made students feel "inferior", "different", and "stupid". Black students as well as some White students argued that there was "a lack of clarity as to what the selection criteria were". Many White students were oblivious to the existence of foundation courses or thought it was for "less intelligent students". There was a strong perception among all students that ADP was primarily for Black students.

There were also positive voices for foundation courses. Some Black students gave the programmes good marks. They were grateful for the additional individual attention and time to settle into higher education. Some even felt that without ADP they would have dropped out of UCT.

## Discussion

- A review of practices in the faculties showed a number of models of academic development in use:
  - A foundation programme model for academic development is used for some degrees in the faculties of Engineering and the Built Environment (EBE), Humanities, and Science. This model provides a one-year grounding in key knowledge and skills areas, enabling successful students to register for a degree programme.
  - Commerce and EBE use extended curriculum programme model for academic development which extends or adapts the usual first-year curriculum appropriate to the end qualification over two years (or the first two years over three years). They also facilitate a focus on generic skills building for academic study.
  - The intervention programme approach to academic development is used in Health Sciences and Law. Students register as a single cohort, while those who do not meet certain benchmarks of first-semester evaluation are 'diverted' for one year in order to build their knowledge and skills before rejoining the mainstream programme curriculum.
  - Some academic development efforts in the faculties extend beyond formally-defined programmes; within faculties, the preferred models have also been adapted over time.
- According to the curriculum reviews, the three key challenges associated with ADP are:
  1. Determining how curriculum and dedicated academic support should best be configured to meet academic development objectives;
  2. How the long-term sustainability of programmes and initiatives which are highly resource-intensive, but successful, can be secured; and
  3. How to integrate and resource academic support beyond the parameters of any defined academic development programme.
- Data emanating from the Equity and Efficiency Project Report shows that students in ADP programmes are not only academically challenged but also face problems that are somewhat beyond the current scope of ADP. In particular the data shows that the performance of students in ADP programmes is generally inferior to the performance of those in mainstream (and thus that these students are rightly afforded additional academic support). The data also shows, however, that proportionally more ADP students than mainstream students are excluded or drop out even when in Good Academic Standing (Appendix 5a).
- The demographic profile of students enrolled in extended curriculum ADP programmes (1993 students) are predominantly African (65%) with few Coloured (23%), Indian (10%) and 1 percent of students identified as Other. Less than 1% of students enrolled in ADP programmes are White (16) (Appendix 5b). The gender profile in GEPS and ASPECT is predominantly male whereas in the Commerce faculty programmes the gender profiles are approximately equal. Thus, the student perception that ADP is for Black students is certainly understandable.
- There is need of a comprehensive review of ADP. Such review should include a comparison between mainstream and ADP students as well as inquire into the perceptions noted by students. It should point out best practice across the various practices while and also propose novel options of how to support students at risk to achieve their qualifications.

- The 'stigma' attached to being an ADP student must also be addressed. This could be achieved by means of a PR exercise which corrects the 'bad' image of ADP and markets ADP programmes, their purpose and value to students.

### **Course Textbooks and Africa-focus (Relevance)**

A number of students (both Black and White) argued that course content and textbooks focused too much on the American experience, even when the African experience was actually central to the course (e.g. in HR, Marketing). They were asking why UCT as "a leading African institution" used American textbooks, figures and facts. Some Black students also made the observation that all their textbooks were written by White males. They asked: "Why can't we read books that are written by Black academics"?

There were other students who felt that the South African and African experience was well represented in their courses (e.g. economics).

Some White students also felt that UCT offered "international degrees" and that "there was no real like African way around it".

### **Discussion**

- The current observations by students are similar to those made by Rose in her 1994/95 study. Yet, whilst Rose was concerned with sex and race, the SCS discussion focused primarily on race and relevance.
- Steyn and van Zyl had noted that when UCT was saying "international" it actually meant "White" (and Eurocentric). Moreover, students argued that any discussion of the institution's Africanness was suppressed. Steyn and van Zyl also reported that students' felt that indigenous knowledge systems and solutions should be mobilised creatively to address uniquely African issues (2001: 68, 72).

### **Internships and Community Engagement**

Most students urged that they want to have more practical exposure, particularly students in the Humanities. More opportunities such as internships were requested. Some students also felt that UCT was "not addressing broader societal challenges" facing South Africa.

### **Discussion**

- It would be difficult to assess the validity of students' blanket claims about the engagement. The specific issue of internships for undergraduate students, however, was highlighted in various review reports which found the following:
  - The OT Panel commended the way in which service learning is integrated in to the curriculum in a way that is responsive to local community needs. The panel recognised that this approach is central to the transformed view of the discipline being promoted by the Division.
  - The IT Panel noted that the third and fourth year projects were fulfilling a useful need.
  - Some Fine Arts students expressed concerns that there was very little practical application of the conceptual tools they acquired and no focused guidance on how to be part of the industry or how to practice as a professional artist in the fine arts industry.

## **STUDENT LIFE AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Student Profile and Student Life**

'Race' and class, and nationality and sexual orientation were noted as key factors in determining how students socialised at UCT.

All students attributed socialising in 'racial' groups to "differences in culture, language, tastes, and the ease of relating with people from the same background". There was a consensus in the focus groups that this 'racial' division was "natural". White students strongly expressed the view that socialising within one's racial group should not be seen as racism, and interracial mixing should occur naturally, not be forced.

Whereas most students agreed that there was "little interaction across racial groups" some noted that said that crossing the invisible line was not too difficult either. For example studying with students from different 'race' groups, sharing books etc. did occur. However, it was noted that Blacks socialising with Whites were labelled "coconuts" (a derogatory term) by other Black students.

A number of students felt that preferences of socialising together was more a thing of class than of 'race'. For example, among Black student groups, divisions are subtly constructed in terms of class and prior schooling. Apparently there were "clear class divisions between Black students from private and ex-Model C schools on the one side, and Black students from township or rural schools on the other". Accordingly, a White student noted that it was easy to relate to middle class Black students.

There was no consensus amongst Black students whether there were any tensions between different Black ethnic groups.

International students felt that it was easier to get along with other foreigners than with South Africans. Some Indian students noted that when they visited UWC they felt more at home than at UCT.

Apparently there was also little interaction between hetero- and homosexual groups.

Students also felt that there were 'race-coded' spaces on campus. Reference was made to residence allocations and sitting in 'racial' groups in classes, in the dining halls, on Jammie steps. Some Black students argued that there were spots on campus which were definitively "White dominated".

Many Black students also felt that there was a strong pressure to act and speak in a particular way. They summed it up as "acting White". "There is a suggestion that if you are White, you are somewhat better. You will try to be White like so that you can be better... you are trying to adopt someone's lifestyle forgetting your own... Problem is when you go home...". Black students felt inhibited to act their way: "If you are from Limpopo, you should be able to bring out your Limpopean culture... Ya, even if you staying in Smuts".

### **Discussion**

- The experiences and perceptions of students in 2004 are congruent with those that were observed in the institutional culture study five years ago. Steyn and van Zyl argued then that the major faultline in constructing difference at UCT was 'race' (and to some extent class and prior schooling). Black students felt that UCT was White dominated and that UCT's culture was one of 'Whiteness'. Steyn and van Zyl also reported that students argued that UCT still reflected *de facto* segregationist tendencies in the absence of an explicitly integrative culture.
- In order to explore student perceptions with regard to the changing demographic profile at UCT, data in this discussion looks at trends over the last ten years. The

attached tables examine trends in enrolments (by faculty and by level of study) by population group, gender, home language, and nationality (Appendix 4). The following trends are apparent in the enrolment profiles by 'race':

- Between 1994 and 2004, the overall proportion of white students at UCT dropped from 60% to 49%. At the same time, the overall proportion on African students increased from 21% to 29%. There were smaller proportional increases in Coloured and Indian enrolments over the same period. By 2004 only the Humanities faculty had more than 50% White students.
- The proportion of African undergraduates increased from 24% in 1994 to 30% in 2004, and the proportion of Indian students increased by 2% to 8% during the same period. Whilst the proportions of White undergraduates in most faculties dropped markedly between 1994 and 2004, these changes were to some extent diminished by the concomitant increase in the proportion of White undergraduates in Humanities (the second largest undergraduate Faculty) over this period.
- The overall proportion of Black postgraduates increased by 18% to 46% between 1994 and 2004. There were particularly marked increases in the proportions of black postgraduates in EBE (up by 39%), the GSB (up by 25%), and Law (up by 24%). Once again, these marked changes were to some extent diluted by the relatively small increase in the proportion of black postgraduates in Humanities (up by only 2%), which is the largest postgraduate faculty. By the end of 2004, only the Faculties of Law and EBE had less than 50% white postgraduates (46% and 46% respectively).
- The data on trends in **gender** profiles show that:
  - Female students made up 50% of the student body for the first time in 2004. The overall proportion of female students increased by 8% between 1994 and 2004. Female enrolments dominated the Faculties of Health Sciences and Humanities by the end of 2004. Conversely, the Faculties of EBE, Science and Commerce remained predominantly male (73%, 58% and 56% male respectively), although there were marked increases in the proportions of female students in each of these faculties between 1994 and 2004.
  - With regard to undergraduates, only the GSB and the EBE Faculty had less than 40% female undergraduate students in 2004.
  - Although the proportion of male postgraduates dropped by 7% between 1994 and 2004, male students continued to dominate at the postgraduate level. In 1994, the postgraduate student body was 54% male and 5 faculties and the GSB had more than 55% male postgraduates. The GSB, the Faculty of Commerce and the Faculty of EBE all had more than 60% male postgraduates in 1994. Conversely, female students made up more than 50% of the overall postgraduate enrolments in Humanities and in Health Sciences in 2004.
- The analysis by **nationality** shows that:
  - The overall proportion of international students increased from 10% in 1994 to 19% in 2004. At the same time the proportion of white South African students dropped by 11% to 43%, and the proportion of South African African students dropped to 18%, having peaked at 23% in 1996.
  - At the undergraduate level, the international proportion increased by 7% to 16% in 2004. This was balanced by a marked decrease in the proportion of white South Africans (down 8%) and a smaller decrease in the proportion of African South Africans (down 2%).
  - The proportion of international postgraduates more than doubled between 1994 and 2004. In 2004 international students made up a quarter of all postgraduate enrolments. During the 1994 – 2004 period, the proportion of white South African enrolments dropped by 18% to 45%. There were however only small increases in the proportions of African and coloured postgraduates (1 percentage point and 2% respectively).

- The decade of quantitative data on the student body tells a story that can explain to some extent the feeling of Black South African students, particularly African students, of being marginalised at UCT. The proportion of SA African undergraduates of the undergraduate student body has actually dropped between 1994 and 2004.
- The most significant change in student body of UCT over the last decade is that international students have replaced a portion of SA White students. The problem is that admitting students from SADC does not redress past inequalities created in South Africa by colonialism and apartheid.
- In 2004, SA White undergraduates (42%) outnumbered SA African undergraduate enrolments (20%) by 3,157 students. The perception of SA African students in particular and Black students in general of being outnumbered, marginalised, and having to adapt to White culture at UCT, can therefore not be dismissed lightly. If the University can redress the gender imbalances in the student body so successfully and create an environment that is increasingly acknowledged by disabled students as exemplary, it should also be possible to find ways of addressing the 'race' issue in a concerted and purposeful manner. How this could be done holistically, is one of the questions raised in the last section.

### **Residence Life**

Students raised two key issues with regard to life in UCT residences. The first is the manner students are assigned to residences; the second that resources are allocated inequitably to different residences. Black students were largely of the view that poor Black South African and Black international students were being sent "to the worst residence" (i.e. Liesbeek). "White residences" had everything, "even internet connections in their rooms" (e.g. Kopano), while "Black residences" had nothing. Only if you were White or "Black and wealthy" you would get a decent residence. Some students also recalled that a Black residence was upgraded, only to see that now White students were allocated to it (i.e. Clarinus). Thus, student allocation to residences was constructed primarily in terms of 'race' and class and conversely, resource allocation to residences was also 'race' related.

Most White students argued that they did not want to stay in residence because of "security concerns", "noise" and "costs". They did feel, however, that residence life was much more free at UCT compared with high schools. Less victimisation occurred at UCT residences.

### **Discussion**

The following information has been received from Student Housing and Residence Life (SHRL):

- In accordance with the current SH allocation policy, students from outside of Cape Town receive priority for accommodation. As for students from Cape Town, Student Housing tries to make residence offers first to those who live in residential areas deemed to be historically/educationally disadvantaged. Moreover, applicants are invited to express a residence preference (up to three in rank order) and are allocated accordingly if they attain the required matric points (i.e. on 'merit'). SH also tries to ensure a degree of representivity (in terms of 'race', academic programme and, where appropriate, sex) in each residence.
- The UCT residence system is divided into three tiers. First Tier residences are catered residences for first to second year students (junior undergraduates). Second Tier is for third year undergraduates (senior undergraduates) to postgraduate students and is loosely self-catering. The Third Tier is for senior undergraduates and postgraduates and is run on a landlord-tenant basis.



- Within the First Tier, places in Smuts and Fuller Halls are given to students who perform above merit, or achieve outstanding matric results. The Second and Third Tiers have no merit allocation applied to them.
  - For historical, lifestyle and economic reasons, most White students enter UCT and stay in First Tier residences but leave the system after one, two or three years. This means that the Second and Third Tiers house over 95% Black students.
  - Within the First Tier especially, SHRL seeks to ensure that each residence reflects the overall student profile and thus tries to balance the number of Black and White students in the ratio 65:35 wherever feasible. This is not possible in the Second and Third Tiers.
  - The Second Tier Residences population group profile in 2004 shows that overall 87% of students in this Tier were African and only 5% were White.
  - Third Tier Residences are only for postgraduate students and did not form part of the discussion in the focus groups. All these residences are very small (5 – 47 students) and overwhelmingly African (83%-100% of students).
- According to the 2004 Residences Profile (Appendix 6), the population group profile in 2004 in First Tier residences shows that 55% of the students were African, 30% White, 8% Indian, and 6% were Coloured. However, in individual residences this profile shows a great deal of variation. In the First Tier, there are four residences where White students outnumber African students. Incidentally, amongst them are the most desired: Smuts, Fuller and Kopano (all located on upper/middle campus), and Tugwell.
  - In the Second Tier, the overall profile for Second Tier residences is 87% African, 5% White, 4% Coloured, 3% Indian, (1% other). Again there are a number of residences which do not fit this profile. Despite the fact that the proportion of White students in the Second Tier is only 5% residence-wide, they are clustered in Woolsack (36% of all White students in Second Tier), Forest Hills B Block (19%) and Medical Residence (16%). Particularly in the two residences located close to their respective campuses, Woolsack and MedRes, African students comprise less than 75% of the residents and Coloured, Indian and White students are accordingly overrepresented. This is contrast to Liesbeeck, which is comparably remote, and has an overrepresentation of African students (95% - in real numbers: 403 African students, and eight Coloureds, eight Whites, two Indians and three unknown).
  - The related issue of what constitutes “best” versus “worst” amongst residences requires further investigation. According to the Director of SHRL: “The alleged differential resourcing of Liesbeeck versus Woolsack and MedRes ... is simply not accurate. They are very different kinds of buildings and located far apart but in terms of internal resources there is very little difference.”
  - What can be said with great certainty is that the present residence allocation policy gives rise to individual choices which aggregate to sustain a perception of racially biased allocation of student residences. The patterns noted above reinforce a perception among Black students that White students are preferred and privileged at UCT. Clearly, either the perception or the residence allocation policy has to be addressed.

## **Administration**

Students generally felt that administrative services provided were poor and frustrating. They were sent from office to office and secretaries were rude and not trained to handle students from different backgrounds. Local and international African students felt they were looked down upon by the administrative employees of the institution.

### **Discussion**

- The same problem was pointed out in the 1999 study by Steyn and van Zyl in terms of a lack of service orientation of staff as well as racist attitudes. To remedy the problem, they recommended that awareness is raised within the university as a whole into the need to change attitudes which do not respect difference and diversity. Training programmes for the university community, both staff and students e.g. on anti-racism and anti-sexism policies should be introduced. Active publicity campaigns should challenge the stereotypes, including xenophobia and homophobia.
- As students have pointed out, the problem of bad service is aggravated by the perceived lack of effective grievance procedures at the University.

## **Crime and Security Services**

The SCS points out that there are problems with security and security staff on campus. A number of Black students felt that the security personnel were racially biased. Only Black students were stopped and asked for student cards. Moreover, individual students reported incidents of crime where security staff had been uncaring or seemingly not responded. A female student also reported an experience where security personnel approached her and her friend in a way that was “dodgy” and “made us feel insecure”.

### **Discussion**

- Detailed statistics of crime at UCT are available, as well as a calendar of prevention measures, interventions and outcomes. Crime at UCT fluctuates extremely, with May and November showing the highest crime rates and December/January and June/July the lowest (Appendix 7).
- The security services (Student Housing, Campus Protection Services, and Gray/Securicor) need to be informed of the students’ experiences and asked to address these concerns.

## **FEEDBACK & VOICE**

### **Governance and Course Evaluations**

Most students said that they didn’t take course evaluations serious. This was because of the timing of the distribution of the forms and because they didn’t think that their evaluations actually had any consequences for the lecturer or course. Only few students thought that course evaluations played an important role in empowering students to shape the classroom experience.

Most students across all focus groups felt detached from governance and alienated from the University’s administrative system. They were unaware of grievance procedures. Some students felt “if you complained you were seen as a troublemaker”; when there was a problem students were left to deal with it on their own.

### **Discussion**

- The SRC is represented on all major committees, and student representation is mandatory on all Faculty Boards, in Senate, and on Council. Most faculties have functioning Student Councils and these are represented in the Student Assembly.

- Yet, the HEQC Review portfolio notes that there is apparently a lack of structured ways of gathering student opinion, of aggregating student opinion at an institutional scale, and of incorporating student feedback on teaching and learning as a “virtuous circle” of comment, response, improvement, and subsequent comment. Although it is a standing requirement that course evaluations are conducted for all courses, and course evaluations form part of the evidence used to assess applications for academic staff promotion, most faculties leave it to lecturers and course convenors to decide what to do with the outcomes of these evaluations.
- Concerns have also been raised from within the faculties and departments about the inadequacy of student feedback pertaining to the course evaluations.
- In the HEQC Review portfolio it is therefore recommended that the responsiveness of the system should be strengthened and it that students must receive appropriate feedback on their evaluations.
- Moreover, ways must also be found for student grievances to be expressed centrally and without the fear of being victimised, of which strengthening communication between student representatives (e.g. SRC) and the student body may be one aspect.

## ***STUDENT SUCCESS AND OUTPUT***

### **Throughput, Success, and Graduate Destination**

Insufficient academic preparedness had led some students to consider leaving the institution. Substantially more African and Coloured students had thought about leaving, especially in earlier years than White students.

And yet there was a general sense that UCT provides its students with opportunities in the job market. Students doing professional degrees (especially Health Sciences) most felt that they received “education for life”. Students in Natural Sciences, Business Sciences and Humanities least felt so. They felt that “in terms of life skills our degree is completely theoretically based”.

### **Discussion**

- Detailed cohort analyses for students registering at UCT between 1995 and 1999 show that UCT has yet to achieve the national benchmark for throughput and graduation, although there is steady progress in this regard. These indicators also show significant differences by race. There are persistent throughput problems in undergraduate success and retention amongst African students. There are particularly marked negative differences in the graduate versus enrolment proportions of African students in the Faculties of Science (13 percentage point difference in 2004), EBE (13 percentage point difference in 2004) and Commerce (5 percentage point difference in 2004). The significantly lower proportion of African graduates in comparison with enrolments in Health Sciences will most likely improve as the increased proportion of enrolled students progresses through the system. Thus, continuing attention must be given to the effects of prior educational disadvantage and affective factors – such as the institutional climate – that limit students in achieving their potential.

#### **4. Summary of Crosscutting Issues and Recommendations**

The message of the Student Climate Survey may seem overly bleak; it is certainly probing many of the vulnerabilities of the University and its constituents. Yet it implies that everyone concerned can make difference at the individual and corporate level and that such personal effort is absolutely crucial.

The foregoing analysis has shown that it is not a lack of implementation of policies, but in many instances institutional policies themselves which have failed to redemptively address the self-perpetuating apartheid legacies that pollute the institutional climate. Students have perceptively and forthrightly noted that because, in some cases, they have suffered its negative effects. The SCS reports that students' experiences of the institutional climate at UCT - as dynamic interaction with staff and students - are significantly structured in terms of class and race (and nationality)<sup>5</sup>. Amongst these, students most readily and uncritically acknowledge 'race' as the key structuring factor. Yet, White students concur with Black students that Black middle class students with the appropriate school background fit in quite snugly with the 'White' crowd. In this institutional context, Black working-class students are not only financially and academically the most challenged, their cultural resources (which includes language in many cases) are devalued in the dominant institutional context. To succeed at UCT they have to resolve a dilemma: "The choice for black students is between alienation from Self and alienation from Self and environment" (Erasmus and de Wet, 2003: 32).

The UCT Mission states: "It is central to our mission that we strive to transcend the legacy of apartheid in South Africa and to overcome all forms of gender and other oppressive discrimination; be flexible on access, active in redress, and rigorous on success; and promote equal opportunity and the full development of human potential." These aspects of the Mission Statement are integral components to the achievement of the Vision of the University. However, given the identified problem, what choices of 'racial' integration offer themselves to UCT? In 2001 Steyn and van Zyl argued: "The changes in the demographic composition of the university's student body is already a fact, and increasing diversification is inevitable, and essential. The challenge for UCT in transforming its institutional culture, therefore, is largely a choice of which form of multiculturalism to adopt in the coming years" (Steyn and van Zyl, 2001: 4).

#### **APPROACHES TO INTEGRATION**

Integration can be defined as "the process of bringing about or achieving equal membership of a population or social group; the removal or absence of discrimination against groups or people on racial or cultural grounds" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). It entails "fundamental changes in ...personal attitudes and behaviour patterns, ... major changes of deep-seated attitudes and behaviour patterns ..." (1996: 11 in Soudien, 2004: 95). Integration is enabled most effectively by "positive interaction" (Soudien, 2004: 95).

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<sup>5</sup> One of the main weaknesses of the Student Climate Survey (and the report "Same River, Different Boats" on which the present report is based) is its failure to record systematically students' educational and class backgrounds, years of study at UCT and, crucially, current enrolment by academic programme/discipline, and analyse the reported student experiences and perceptions in those terms. The lattermost attribute is especially important since many remedial interventions will need to be designed and implemented at the departmental level.

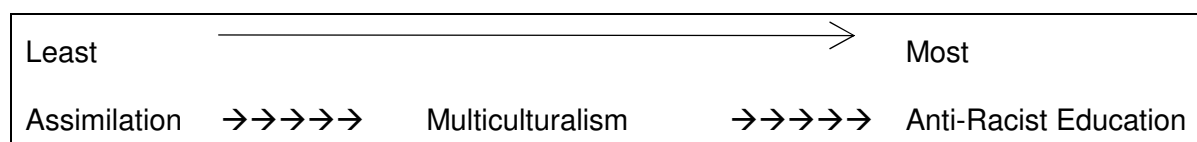
In accordance with key literature on integration, Crain Soudien differentiates between three different approaches to integration by their respective degrees of accommodation and integration (Figure 1).

The *assimilationist* approach operates from the perspective of cultural superiority and inferiority. Marginalised groups are expected to give up their own identities and cultures in favour of “the values, traditions and customs of the dominant group [that] frame the social and cultural context of the school”. The assimilationist approach has dire consequences for subordinate groups: give up your cultural identity and acknowledge the superiority of the other culture or remain permanently excluded (Soudien, 2004: 95-96). This approach is similar to the *conservative approach* described by Steyn and van Zyl (2001: 3).

The *multiculturalist* approach seeks to accommodate the different cultures brought into the school environment by acknowledging and celebrating all cultures as “equally valid” and “respected” (Soudien, 2004: 96). This approach has also been called “liberal multiculturalism” (Steyn and van Zyl, 2001: 4). American right-wing critics argue that multiculturalism “undermine[s] the inclusivist nature of the great American culture and [seeks] to infuse into it inferior standards” (Soudien, 2004: 96).

Left-wing critics of multiculturalism argue that it “fails to engage with the complex ways in which individuals and groups develop attitudes to one another”. A truly *anti-racist programme* of integration needs to confront “the othering implicit and embedded in dominant culture” and thus to uncover the way cultures are hierarchically ordered and cultural stereotypes are produced and reproduced in the educational process (Soudien, 2004: 96). The anti-racist approach is very similar to Steyn and van Zyl’s notion of a “critical multiculturalism” which goes beyond an acknowledgment of equality in theory to empowerment in practice.

**Figure 1: Approaches to Accommodation and Integration**



*Based on: Soudien, 2004: 95-96*

The findings of the SCS suggest that the University’s current approach to cultural integration is *de facto* at best ‘liberal multiculturalist’, at worst ‘assimilationist’. African students at UCT continue to feel strongly that “the institution has not transformed sufficiently”: “UCT is still White in the sense that the social life, the entertainment they provide for students, is mostly composed for White students”. African students find there is “a lack of pride in living in Africa, being South African”. UCT is not enough engaging with its location on the African continent, nor is it addressing the social challenges facing South Africa, including disease, poverty, and unemployment. In fact, by “outsourcing its cleaning, security and gardening services”, UCT had contributed to the wage gap between the richest employees and poorest workers on campus. The perceived “lack of an African identity” of the institution is exacerbated by the ostentatious “Whiteness” of the dominant culture, norms, colonial names and symbols; the disproportionate number of White students and staff, and so forth. To feel at home at UCT, African students have to do the most changing and integrating.

As a long-term strategy, the institutional leadership would have to forge a consensus with the dominant constituencies at their respective levels of operation on an appropriate approach to integration. Apart from ‘racial’ integration (as noted above) there is a range of other conceptual lenses and theoretical approaches to diversity and integration which can

be employed to analyse the state of the University and each of its constituent parts and utilised to work out a contextually appropriate improvement plan. In particular, class, gender, culture, ability, faith, and sexual orientation have been noted as such approaches. In either case, the question for a university that has committed itself to a human rights-based approach to transformation is how to eliminate those aspects of the institutional climate that are perceived by students as disempowering or even oppressive, and simultaneously enhance other aspects which have a fundamentally critical-emancipatory quality with respect to students' cultural identity and personal aspirations and students' academic freedom and human rights. In the long run, organisational change can be achieved by incorporating reform and adaptation into standard organisational procedures at all levels (sanctioned with resource-based incentives and disincentives). For the medium and short term, the Advisory Group has elaborated a number of concrete recommendations.

### **SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM ACTION STEPS**

The Advisory Group recommends a number of short term interventions which could be implemented in the next six months. The choice of interventions has been informed by the following considerations:

- Minimal resources required or strong likelihood of accessing resources
- Impact on changing the institutional climate
- Importance of the area
- Past commitments to addressing the area
- Synergy with staff climate survey
- Initiative already underway
- Link with the HEQC improvement plan

The Group further recommends that once agreement is reached about the short-term interventions and after consultation with the SRC and the SLG, a project plan should be drawn up with clear accountabilities and time frames. The TMAG should facilitate an integrated and coordinated approach to the implementation of the project plan. Progress reports should be provided in the Quarterly Reviews.

#### **Adjunct Teaching Staff (especially Tutors)**

- Development policies for the appropriate recruitment, development and recognition for tutors, temporary teaching staff, and short-term contract staff. The policies should include guidelines related to the equity profiles of adjunct staff and proposals for possible linkages with employment equity plans;
- Minimum standards for training and preparing tutors should be set. Current examples of good practice should be used to guide this process;
- A comprehensive profile of tutors by race, gender, language group should be compiled to inform planning

#### **Teaching and Learning Minimum Requirements**

- The Deans need to provide information on how they intend tightening up on the implementation of the agreed benchmarks encapsulated in the Teaching and Learning Charter.

#### **Student Feedback and Governance**

- The Quality Assurance Working Group should be tasked with developing proposals for establishing a "virtuous circle" of comment and response in relation to student evaluations of teaching and learning

- The Registrar's office should convene a meeting of servicing officers and SRC representatives to discuss ways of strengthening student input in the agendas and deliberations of senate committees

### **Creating Channels for Dealing with Grievances and Social Justice Issues**

- An Ombudsperson needs to be appointed to handle grievances related to all forms of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, gender, class, age, and disability
- There is a need to develop grievance procedures for staff and students with clear lines of responsibility and accountability for all stages outlined in the procedures.

### **Residences**

- There is a need to speed up the process of reviewing the Residence Allocation Policy. A communication strategy needs to be developed around the review process, current residence profiles and future plans.

### **Engaging with Diversity**

- We need to undertake a review of all social justice policies. These reviews should examine the nature of the policies themselves as well as how they are being implemented and monitored and assess their impact.
- We need to identify symbols which can be changed or introduced with little cost. This would send signals about transformation that could contribute to making students from previously disadvantaged communities feel more at home. Examples of things that could be done include singing the national anthem in graduation ceremonies, painting the inside or outside of several buildings in African designs, and printing letterheads and complement slips in Afrikaans, Xhosa and English
- We should proceed with organising the seminar series on institutional culture starting with a panel discussion with Prof Soudien, A/Prof. Jane Bennet and Prof. Higgins
- We need to initiate a process of building an understanding of how different sections of the UCT student community experience and confront various aspects of UCT life. The process should be designed and managed in a way that "could open up ways of seeing that take us beyond the stereotypical ways in which difference is understood...and where we can confront processes of social and individual meaning-making – culture – in our lives and recognize how those processes continually produce new forms of oppression and emancipation, and how each of us is implicated in these processes" (Soudien, 2004: 92).
- A critical objective of such a process would be to enable staff and students to become aware of the implications of different paradigms for engaging with diversity which inform how we construct and constitute UCT culture and practices within UCT. These paradigms have been outlined above and are: assimilation, multiculturalism and anti-racist/democratic paradigm (Soudien, 2004: 95-96). In essence we would seek to establish through a series of conversations with different student groupings what kinds of practices make black students feel that that they are "being expected to give up their own identities and cultures; what kinds of practices are influenced by a multicultural paradigm which suggest that all cultures are equally valid but which disregard power relationships; and what kinds of practices would need to change to become transformative.
- The Advisory Group would identify structures (staff and students) to consult with about the climate survey results and then set up a series of conversations to generate ideas about how practices could change to make black, women and disabled students feel more at home. We would start by making presentations to the SLG and the SRC/ Student Assembly on the issues highlighted in the survey and this proposal. After the consultative sessions a comprehensive change

strategy would be developed. This process could be facilitated by Thierry Luescher under the guidance of the Climate Survey Advisory Group.

- Diversity “training” for staff and students should be provided

### ***POSSIBLE MEDIUM-TERM ACTION STEPS***

- A comprehensive, comparative review across all academic development interventions would mobilise accumulated experience and expertise for institution-wide benefit, could support the development of models for best practice, and could audit sustainability needs and resource imperatives.
- A comprehensive review of how students are serviced by the administration at UCT to identify areas that may need to be improved
- Explore opportunities for practical skills training i.e integration of theory and practice/workplace learning e.g. through projects in third and fourth year as re IT
- Each faculty and PASS department should initiate its own contextually appropriate focus on aspects of diversity
- Revisit notions of gradueness in a way that would address the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes students need to be able to engage with diversity issues appropriately
- A plan for dealing with the unequal facilities and infrastructure across the residences needs to be developed
- Proposals for more effective ways of communicating with staff and students about policies and procedures need to be developed.



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The appendices to this report can be requested from the Department of Institutional Planning.