Critical Reflections on Rhodes, 2006-2011

19 June 2011

Introduction

This paper, written for the Rhodes University 2011 imbizo is, in the first instance, a critical reflection in general on Rhodes between 2006 and 2011. Beyond this, the paper is a review of developments between the University imbizo of July 2006 and the June 2011 imbizo. Its purpose is to share with participants in the imbizo and the wider Rhodes community, from the vantage point of the Vice-Chancellor, historical developments during the past five years in order to ground an open and critical conversation on current realities and how we may wish to proceed in coming years. There could, of course, be other narratives on the past five years and particular inflections on aspects of developments and realities and these are to be encouraged.

An outstanding graduate observed on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Rhodes University that we need 'a critical appreciation of where we come from, (and) a dialogical and analytic engagement with where we are now.'[1] These are wise words, befitting a graduate of a University whose slogan is 'Where Leaders Learn', and whose motto is 'Truth, Virtue and Strength'. Regrettably, in my view, that engagement in 2004 did not go far or deep enough and was in certain respects a lost historic opportunity. Be that as it may, this imbizo is a further opportunity for 'a dialogical and analytic engagement with where we are now.' We would do well to use this opportunity to engage on our current realities in a spirit of openness, honesty, critique and self-criticism, and in a manner that avoids rhetoric and posturing, and supposedly compelling but actually glib 'solutions.' Equally, we must also avoid a masochistic self-flagellation that decries all and much that is admirable and positive about Rhodes University. Ultimately, we need to together chart the way forward, by boldly identifying our weaknesses and shortcomings, setting out an agenda and priorities, imaginatively making choices and decisions, and creatively devising interventions and effectively implementing them.

Before proceeding with the critical reflections it is necessary to frame these with reference to certain wider issues.

1. Framing issues

Values and purposes

To begin with, we must keep in mind fundamental values and institutional purposes. In so far as the former is concerned, the 1996 South African *Constitution* set out the character of the society that is envisaged, proclaiming the values of 'human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms,' and 'non-racialism and non-sexism.'[2] The *Bill of Rights* unambiguously proclaimed that no institution or individual 'may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.'[3] We are enjoined to 'respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.'[4] The 1997 *White Paper* on higher education expresses the core principles that universities are meant to embody: 'equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy (and) public accountability.'[5]

The core purposes of universities are three-fold. The first is to *produce knowledge*, so that we can advance understanding of our natural and social worlds and enrich our accumulated scientific and cultural heritage. This means that we 'test the inherited knowledge of earlier generations,' we dismantle the mumbo jumbo that masquerades for knowledge, we 'reinvigorate' knowledge and we share our findings with others. We undertake research into the most arcane and abstract issues and the 'most theoretical and intractable uncertainties of knowledge.' At the same time we also strive to apply our discoveries for the benefit of humankind. We 'operate on both the short and the long horizon.' On the one hand, we grapple with urgent and 'contemporary problems' and seek solutions to these. On the other hand, we 'forage' into issues and undertake enquiries 'that may not appear immediately relevant to others, but have the proven potential to yield great future benefit.'

As a university our second purpose is to *disseminate knowledge* and to cultivate minds. Our goal is to ensure that our students can think imaginatively, 'effectively and critically;' that they 'achieve depth in some field of knowledge;' that they can critique and construct alternatives, that they can communicate cogently, orally and in writing, and that they have a 'critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain knowledge and understanding of the universe, of society, and of ourselves.' At the same time, we also seek that our students should have 'a broad knowledge of other cultures and other times;' should be 'able to make decisions based on reference to the wider world and to the historical forces that have shaped it,' and that they should have 'some understanding of and experience in thinking systematically about moral and ethical problems.'[6]

Our final purpose as a university is to undertake *community engagement*. On the one hand this involves our students' voluntary participation in community projects undertaken thorough our Community Engagement office. On the other hand, it involves service-learning, in which through academic courses our students and academics take part 'in activities where both the community' and *we* benefit, 'and where the goals are to provide a *service* to the community and, equally, to enhance our *learning* through rendering this service.'

Institutional change

It is necessary to make a number of points about institutional change in a university. The term 'institutional' encompasses ideas, values, goals, norms, laws, policies, regulations, rules, structures, organisation, mechanisms, instruments, processes, procedures, actions, practices, conventions, habits and behaviour. In so far as change in a university is concerned, this directs attention to myriad *aims*, *issues* and *objects* (teaching and learning, research, curriculum, equity, culture, governance, financing, etc.) in different *arenas* and at different *levels* of the university. A university is a differentiated and loosely coupled structure rather than one that as possesses a 'unitary character.'[7] This opens the way for a more rigorous, multi-dimensional and nuanced analysis of change and for being potentially better equipped to undertake change.

Change can encompass 'improvement', 'reform', 'reconstruction', 'development' and 'transformation'. All the terms are associated in some way with the idea of 'change', but are not 'devoid of political and ideological content or context,'[8] or, of course, contestation. For example, it is not self-evident that what is sometimes defined as 'transformation' is also necessarily 'development'; or that the reform of a university, which may be a necessary element of its transformation, will necessarily result in its transformation. It depends, of course, on many other issues and conditions. 'Reform' generally refers to substantial changes in current policy, practice or organisation. Such changes may significantly recast past discourse, policy, practice and organization, and also have considerable impact on other areas of policy, practice or organization. They, however, remain circumscribed within the prevailing dominant social relations and culture

of a university and are not intended to displace prevailing relations as much as to reproduce these in new ways and forms.

'Transformation', in contrast usually has the intent of the *dissolution* of existing social relations, cultures, policies and practices, and of *recreating* and consolidating all of these anew. For good reasons, the processes of dissolution and recreation may vary in pace, be uneven and may not uniformly and necessarily result in an immediate and complete rupture or sweeping and total displacement of old structures, policies and practices.

Any adequate theorisation and undertaking of institutional change must consider such change from the perspective of the relatively permanent and strongly embedded features of a university and its more fluid, dynamic and shorter-term features.[9] The distinction usefully alerts us to be sensitive to continuities and discontinuities in conditions. Change occurs 'within the framework of possibilities and constraints' of a complex institution,[10] and 'must take into account the contradictions, possibilities and constraints' of existing conditions.[11] Change or the lack of change in a university cannot, however, be explained only in terms of given conditions and circumstances. Change is also 'the product of purposeful orientations developed within a field of opportunities and constraints' and of 'cognitive and political praxis.'[12] The goals and policies adopted, choices, decisions and trade-offs made, and strategies and instruments chosen and implemented by different social agents and actors acting in co-operation and/or conflict within a university – human agency as opposed to social structure – will necessarily affect the pace, nature and outcomes of institutional change. In so far as institutional change is concerned, it is clear goals, predicated on values, as well as institutional conditions that should determine the scope, nature, trajectory and pace of change.

We have to steer clear of two dangers. One is an overriding concern to 'not rock the boat' in so far as the inherited and current institutional structure and culture is concerned. In this case, the status quo will remain essentially intact, and there will be little change or an extremely slow pace of change. This will be unacceptable to important constituencies. The other danger is an attempt to immediately and rapidly realize far-reaching institutional changes in a way that creates great flux and debilitates academic operations and is not sustainable. Universities are precious but fragile institutions.

Not too long ago, many universities were steeped in the practices and rationalisation of racism, inequality and authoritarianism. To the extent that discourses of equality, equity, and transformation have been embraced this is to be welcomed. Yet, we must be vigilant that bold declarations about equity and transformation are not accompanied by only the most modest changes A deliberate, bold, and resolute, and yet sober path has to be navigated, with continuities and discontinuities as appropriate to given and changing institutional conditions.

The undertaking of change includes inspiring, conceptualising, managing, communicating and effectively implementing change. Institutional change is a demanding undertaking, whose complexity and enormity may not always be fully understood at the beginning. It requires sober, careful, detailed and realistic planning, that gives attention to strategies, structures and instruments, available financial resources, sources of expert staff, time frames, and so on. While change is being undertaken in certain areas, various other areas of institutional activity have to continue to be steered, supported and maintained. In short, institutional change and institutional maintenance have to be managed simultaneously (not consecutively). If not managed effectively and efficiently, parts and areas of the institution that are functioning relatively well could become dysfunctional and create new problems.

Paradoxes

At the same time, it is necessary to recognise the transformation and development agenda in higher education is suffused with paradoxes, in so far as we may seek to pursue *simultaneously* a number of values and goals that may be in tension with one another. For example, an exclusive concentration on and privileging of fundamental research will be at the detriment of applied and strategic research and have particular consequences; the reverse will also be true. To take another example, an exclusive concentration on supporting only exceptionally productive and established researchers will be at the expense of support for emerging researchers and have certain consequences. Conversely, exclusively or predominantly supporting emerging researchers will result in other consequences.

It has been pointed out that when confronted with an intractable tension between dearly held goals and values various 'simplifying manoeuvres' are possible. One simplifying manoeuvre is to refuse to accept the existence of a dilemma. A second is to elevate one value or goal above all others making this the value in terms of which all choices and policies are to be made. A third simplifying manoeuvre is to rank values and goals in advance so that if there is a conflict between them one will take precedence. In the latter two cases, the effect is to privilege one value or goal above another.[13]

An alternate path it to accept that for good reasons, values, goals and strategies that may be in tension have to be pursued simultaneously and to recognise that the pursuit of particular goals and strategies *simultaneously* gives rise to difficult dilemmas and unenviable choices and decisions, and could necessitate trade-offs, especially in a context of scarce financial resources. Paradoxes have to be creatively addressed and policies and strategies devised that can satisfy multiple imperatives, *balance* competing goals and enable the pursuit of equally desirable goals. To the extent that trade-offs are inevitable, they must be made consciously and transparently and their implications for values and goals (short-, medium- and long-term) must be confronted.

The making of choices and decisions, including conscious trade-offs, are opportunities to forge through participatory and democratic processes an institutional democratic consensus on the fundamental values, purposes, orientation and goals of a university. However, consensus on values and goals is no guarantee of success. That is to say, while the goals may not be at issue, the policies, strategies, instruments, pace and timeframes for achieving goals can be sources of conflict and even resistance. Democratic consensus is also not likely to be a once-off activity, but one that has to be renewed regularly.[14]

2. The 2006 imbizo and post-imbizo developments

The July 2006 imbizo was attended by some 60 people drawn from all constituencies and sought to serve similar purposes as the current one, with the exception that it was also an opportunity for the new Vice-Chancellor to hear the views of, and engage with, key constituencies on a range of key issues.

Discussion centred on seven key themes:

- Values, purposes and identity: Rhodes' vision and mission
- Shape and size of Rhodes
- Sustaining and enhancing excellence! Where leaders learn?
- Recruitment and access and support and success
- Community engagement
- Institutional environment and culture: A people-centred institution/A home for all
- Institutional planning, policy and decision-making structures and processes

In the sections that follow, I chart developments in each of these seven areas since 2006.

i. Rhodes' vision and mission

Following the 2006 imbizo, little explicit and concerted attention has been given to vision and mission and the institutional identity of Rhodes. Instead, it was agreed that attention should rather be given to the size and shape of Rhodes and related issues, and that matters of vision and mission could be addressed therein.

At the 2006 imbizo there were critiques of various aspects of the Rhodes vision and mission statement – the meaning of an 'African identity' and what precisely was meant by 'sound moral values.' Some questioned the need for a vision and mission statement at all, and posed whether a clear statement that set out the social purposes of Rhodes University, its specific goals, and its values and commitments should not suffice.

As far as identity was concerned, in its submission to the 2005 Institutional Audit of the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education Rhodes indicated that it considered itself to be a 'liberal arts' institution. The validity of this claim has been questioned, as has been the precise meaning of 'liberal arts.' Some consider Rhodes to be a 'research intensive' institution. Phrases such as 'liberal arts', 'research intensive' and the like do not always easily capture identity, nor do justice to the precise character of a particular university. A valuable discussion document was produced Prof. Boughey in 2010 to try and help clarify matters of identity.

Under the rubric of values and identity it is extremely important to note Rhodes' public acknowledgement of shame in September 2008, which was a singular milestone in the overall programme of the transformation, development, modernisation and remaking of Rhodes.

In our public statement, issued with the support of both the University Senate and Council, we paid tribute to the pioneers who 107 years ago created Rhodes; to those who, under difficult and financially trying conditions, steered its subsequent development; to those who oversaw its maturation from a University College under the auspices of the University of South Africa to a fully-fledged University in 1951, and to the subsequent generations that energetically toiled to produce the Rhodes University of today's enviable reputation.

We noted that constitutional democracy in 1994 ushered in new imperatives, obligations and responsibilities, as well as new challenges and opportunities for Rhodes. This necessitated us to reflect openly and critically on our past so that we could better serve our society in accordance with what it means to be a university. We said that while we took pride in our university, there were many aspects of our past which were inexcusable and shameful and in which we could take no pride.

Before 1959, nothing in law precluded Rhodes from admitting black students or employing black academics and administrators. Instead, Rhodes practised racial segregation on its own volition. In 1933, practice became official policy, when the University Council *resolved* to bar black students from admission to Rhodes University. A resolution of Senate in 1947 paved the way for the admission of black post-graduate students in exceptional circumstances but black undergraduates were to be still excluded. Preparing to become a fully-fledged University, in 1949 Rhodes voiced its opposition to any legal prohibition on the admission of black students. In practice, however, Rhodes did not admit black undergraduate students, and between 1947 and 1959 only three black

postgraduate students were permitted to enrol out of some 15 applicants. This meant that prior to the introduction of apartheid in higher education in 1959, Rhodes was *not* an 'open university', in the sense that the universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand and Natal were to varying extents.

In 1953 the apartheid government introduced 'bantu education', provoking widespread opposition from black communities, many religious groups and mission schools. Bantu education was to have a devastating impact on generations of black students. Yet, incomprehensibly, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary in 1954, Rhodes University awarded an honorary doctorate to the Minister of Education, JH Viljoen, an eager proponent of bantu education and university apartheid. No law required Rhodes to confer this award. It was freely made. In 1962 an honorary doctorate was also conferred on the State President C.R. Swart. As Minister of Justice after 1948 he had been responsible for the harsh repression of opposition political organisations and activists. The award was made soon after the killing and wounding of protesters against pass laws at Sharpeville in 1960; the declaration of a state of emergency; the imprisonment of thousands of anti-apartheid activists; the fleeing into exile of hundreds of other activists and the banning of the ANC and PAC. At a moment when democratic opposition was being brutally crushed, Rhodes inexcusably bestowed its highest honour on a champion of apartheid and white supremacy. The University's Chancellor, Sir Basil Schonland, resigned over this award, albeit without publicly revealing his reasons for doing so at the time.

In 1967 the annual congress of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was held at Rhodes. NUSAS represented students from white and black universities. One of the delegates at this congress was Stephen Bantu Biko. A few days before this congress, Rhodes University resolved not to permit black delegates to stay on campus in residence; nor would they be allowed to attend social functions on campus. The Rhodes authorities in enforcing racial segregation displayed, not for the first time, a disturbing tendency to acquiesce all too easily in the apartheid system. The infamous Mafeje affair of 1968 at UCT had its equivalent at Rhodes. In that year, the Rhodes University Council refused to appoint the Rev. Basil Moore to a lectureship in the theology department, after the Senate had recommended his appointment on two occasions. The refusal was politically motivated - Moore had been the first president of the anti-apartheid University Christian Movement. Some students and staff organised a sit-in to protest the decision of Council but the University got the Sheriff of the Supreme Court to serve a court order on them to vacate the building. Thirteen students were rusticated and a Politics lecturer, David Tucker, was dismissed from his post. In 1972, when black service staff established a Black Workers Union to challenge wages that were below the poverty datum line the University refused to recognise it. There were insensitive references in official publications of the University to older black people by only their first names and the omission of titles and surnames.

We courageously noted all this, also reminding ourselves that some Rhodes students and staff did engage in protest against apartheid. For this, some endured banning, detention and imprisonment. We also observed that during apartheid Rhodes was among the first universities to open its residences to all students. We observed that 'the tradition of dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living,' and that if we recognised the shameful past practices, unequivocally repudiated them, and dedicated ourselves to ensuring that they never occurred again, then they do not need to weigh upon us forever.

Our open and public *acknowledgement of* shameful and regrettable institutional actions on our part during the apartheid period, and our unreserved *apology* to all those who were wronged, harmed and hurt by our past failings and shameful actions was undertaken to bring uncomfortable truths into the open, and draw a line on a particular past. We did so as an act of 'the struggle of memory against forgetting,' as an expression of our 'engagement with where we

are now' and of our determination to continue shaping a new future. The critique of past injustices freed us to conceive how we could avoid repeating such tragedies. It demonstrated our desire to promote reconciliation and healing within ourselves and our society, to embrace new values and ways of being and acting, and to reinvent, remake and renew our University.

In doing so, we did not negate the many splendid achievements of Rhodes University. Instead, we drew inspiration and took guidance from our motto, 'Truth, Virtue and Strength'. We dedicated ourselves to resolutely pursue the *Truth* that derives from knowledge, understanding, critique and reason. We committed ourselves to steadfastly continue on the path of practicing and cultivating the *Virtues* of human dignity, equality, non-sexism and non-racialism, critical citizenship and all the human rights and freedoms that our Constitution proclaims. We pledged to possess the *Strength* of courage and boldness to protect, promote and assert the core values and purposes of a university, including advancing the public good, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability. We pledged also to institute other activities to signal our unequivocal determination to settle with our past and continue with our remaking and renewal as a small but outstanding African university.

This declaration on the part of Rhodes is of great importance. Having made it, it is incumbent that we constantly remind ourselves of our many pledges, that we continuously reaffirm these pledges, that these pledges frame and guide our actions and, above all, that we vigorously pursue and give effect to our pledges. The public declaration of 2008 also signalled the commitment to an institutional culture in which honest and bold critique is an accepted concomitant of institutional loyalty.

ii. Size and shape

Much of the immediate post-2006 imbizo period was spent on the critical issue of size and shape. There are two key elements to size and shape: *enrolment* planning and *academic* (teaching and learning programmes, research and community engagement) planning, both of which have implications for *staff* (academic and support) planning, *infrastructure* planning and *financial* planning.

Enrolment planning encompasses issues such as the size of the overall student body of the University; the rate of annual growth; the mix between undergraduate and postgraduate students; the mix between students in Humanities, Science, Commerce, Pharmacy, Education and Law; the mix between local and international students; the equity (class, race and gender) profile of the University; the geographical origins of local students; is there an envisaged maximum size, and so forth. The overall size, social composition (black-white, international), and academic (numbers by qualifications levels and disciplines/fields) of the student body has implications for staffing, academic and other infrastructure and the block grant public subsidy and National Student Financial Aid Scheme allocation that is received by Rhodes University.

Academic planning addresses issues of the current academic programmes (disciplines, fields, qualifications, extended studies) of the University; the mix between undergraduate and postgraduate programmes; the nature of academic programmes (formative, professional, disciplinary, inter- and multi-disciplinary); the breadth of programme offerings and possible course combinations; the desirability and feasibility of new academic programmes; academic pass, throughput, success and graduation rates; the choices or balance, with respect to knowledge production, between different kinds of scholarship (discovery, integration, etc.) and the nature of research (fundamental, applied, strategic, developmental), research outputs (publications and postgraduates), research productivity, and the like. Again, these issues have

implications for staffing, academic and other infrastructure and the earmarked public grant that is received by Rhodes University.

Staff planning issues include the size of the University's academic and support staff bodies; the rate of annual growth of the academic and support staff bodies; the academic: student ratio; the mix between local and international staff; the equity (race, gender, special needs) profile of the academic and support staff bodies, and developing a new generation of academics and transforming the social composition of the academic staff body.

Infrastructure planning has to do with the available infrastructure (buildings, lecture halls, seminar and tutorial rooms, laboratories, libraries, computer labs, offices, equipment and furniture etc.) to support academic programmes, for student accommodation and subsistence and sports/cultural activities, for the housing for academics, and for the effective provision of administrative and other support services; the backlogs with respect to infrastructure for academic programmes, student accommodation, sports/cultural activities, housing for academics and administrative and other support services; the implications of future enrolments and academic programmes for different kinds of infrastructure, and the capability and capacity of Makana Municipality to provide the necessary services to support larger enrolments and new infrastructure. One of the critical aspects of infrastructure increasingly, of course, is information and communication technology services (hardware, software, maintenance and the like). At Rhodes, as at other universities maintenance of existing infrastructure also looms as an increasingly large issue.

Finally financial planning must effectively address issues of the available finances and possible new sources of funds to maintain current academic programmes and to initiate new academic (teaching and research) programmes; remunerate staff appropriately; ensure infrastructure backlogs are addressed, and additional infrastructure related to growth and development is provided; the current and possible future mix of sources of funding - state subsidy (including teaching input funds, teaching outputs funds, research (postgraduate outputs and publication) related funds, institutional size funds, student composition funds, teaching development grants, research development grants, academic development funds, infrastructure and efficiency funds), student tuition fee income, third stream income (including short courses, research contracts, endowments and gifts); the effective and efficient use of available finances to address the social purposes of the University, implement agreed upon strategies and realise defined goals.

Following the 2006 imbizo, a VC's Circular to Deans on 10 September 2006 indicated our need to give attention to:

- What intellectual and academic values and what vision did an academic department/faculty wish to embody
- What did a department/faculty wish to hold constant – perhaps current pass, throughput and graduation rates; current teacher: student ratios; quality of graduates, etc.
- How might we innovate in teaching and learning in current academic programmes and through this produce more graduates and contribute to addressing social and economic development challenges
- How might we innovate in knowledge dissemination and production through *new academic programmes* and through this also contribute to addressing social and economic development challenges.

Following initial responses and discussions, in a further VC's Circular to Deans on 30 April 2007, it was asked:

- What new teaching courses/programmes did each Faculty wish to introduce/support, and did Senate and Council wish to approve for further consideration with respect to academic and financial feasibility?
- Were there any teaching courses/teaching programmes that any Department or Faculty wished to terminate for any reason?
- What new research programmes did each Faculty wish to introduce/support, and did Senate and Council wish to approve for further consideration with respect to academic and financial feasibility?
- What new community engagement initiatives did each Faculty wish to introduce/support, and did Senate and Council wish to approve for further consideration with respect to academic, community and institutional merit and financial feasibility?
- What current donor-funded activities needed to become part of university-funded activities, over what time-frames, and in what proportions?

In the case of all of the above, Dean and departments were requested to consider and indicate the implications:

- For additional academic staff
- For additional technical and administrative staff
- For additional support staff
- For teaching and research infrastructure, facilities and equipment
- For overall academic infrastructure, facilities and equipment (including the library)
- For student residences
- For other infrastructure, facilities and equipment (including possibly accommodation for staff).

Numerous meetings were held on these issues which resulted in the finalisation of our 2008-2010 Enrolment Plan. Following various growth scenarios being considered, it was agreed that Rhodes should pursue a modest rate of growth. In the light of this the 2008-2010 enrolment plan negotiated with the then Department of Education (DoE) committed Rhodes to growing from just under 6 000 students in 2007 to 6 500 students. We indicated to the DoE and had approved the following:

- We would grow annually at between 2.5 and 3.0%, increasing to a maximum of about 6 500 students in 2010. The vast majority of these students would be full-time, and resident in Grahamstown.
- The University would pursue a trajectory of a higher proportion of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) enrolments. However, in the absence of suitable Science, Engineering and Technology applicants, we would not turn away good entering Humanities and Commerce students.
- The University would pursue a trajectory of having a greater proportion of postgraduate students, especially in areas of proven excellence and potential new programme areas which build on current academic strengths.
- We would reduce the proportion (if not the numbers) of international undergraduate students (and diversify the sources of these students), in order to create more space for black South African students.
- The University would strive to maintain an average success rate for all undergraduate plus postgraduate courses of 87%.
- Rhodes would also strive to maintain the ratio of graduates to head count enrolments at 33% in the period up to 2010.

In so far as the enrolment plan for 2011-2013 is concerned, with 7 192 students in 2010 (instead of the planned 6 500), Rhodes enrolment targets are 7 390 students in 2011, 7 576 in 2012 and

7 645 in 2013, an overall growth of 2.2% over 2011-2013. These enrolments mean that we will remain the smallest university in South Africa by far. Provision has been made for an intake of 1 500 first-time entering undergraduates during each of the next three years, meaning a very modest overall growth in undergraduate enrolments of just 0.1% - from 5 309 students in 2010 to 5 329 students in 2013. Much of the new enrolment growth in coming years is targeted at postgraduate level. Growth of 8.2% is planned to occur – an increase in postgraduate numbers from 1 840 in 2010 to 2 273 in 2013. If these targets are realized, postgraduate enrolments at Rhodes will increase from 26% in 2010 to 30% in 2013.

Women as a proportion of the total student body are projected to remain at 59% and international students at 20%. The extent to which the proportion of black students (currently 58%), and specifically black South African students (currently 41%), especially from the Eastern Cape, will increase will depend on the availability of state financial aid and the ability of the University to mobilise donor funds to support needy deserving students. In recent years Rhodes has devoted substantial amounts of its own core funds (that is, non-state and donor financial aid funds) to financial aid, but has now reached the limits of its own internal financial allocations.

Finally, the current proportions during 2011-2013 in terms of fields of study is intended to remain constant: at 26% natural sciences/pharmacy, 12% commerce, 6% education and 56% arts, humanities, social sciences and law.

As far as academic programmes following the 2006 imbizo are concerned, we considered numerous proposals, which were interrogated as to:

- Whether they built on, enhanced and consolidated areas of academic strength at Rhodes
- In the case of a proposal to introduce new academic disciplines/fields, whether we would be able to exercise leadership in the area or would be competing with another University, and with what likely success
- The feasibility of the programme in terms of student numbers, possible staff requirements, and likely income and expenditure
- Whether the proposals were congruent with the proposed enrolment trajectory of Rhodes.

We agreed to support either in-principle or fully a number of initiatives - for example, a Centre for the Study of Democracy in partnership with the University of Johannesburg; a Social Policy research and postgraduate programme for which we head-hunted an Oxford academic; an Integrated Development Masters programme; new Masters programmes in Fine Arts and Psychology, new Honours programmes in Science, and an African Child Forensics research and postgraduate programme in Law (which had to be cancelled).

Subsequently, we have supported proposals and initiatives related to:

- Building the academic programmes of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), including its PhD programme in Higher Education Studies
- The Biotechnology Bio-Research Unit (BIOBRU)
- The Confucius Centre, and undergraduates courses in Mandarin
- The development of Mellon Foundation-funded research and postgraduate focus areas in the Humanities: in *Southern African Literature*; *Critical Sexual and Reproductive Health Studies*; *Visual and Performing Arts of Africa*, and Media and Democracy Studies
- A pilot jazz heritage studies project
- A new postgraduate and research focus area in either Law or Commerce
- New Masters programmes in Creative Writing, Bioinformatics and Applied Computer Science
- A new Honours specialisation in Health Journalism in partnership with Discovery Health
- Various new initiatives in Journalism and Media Studies

- The digitisation of the International Library of African Music (ILAM) holdings
- The redirection of Cory Library towards an archive that principally focuses on the Eastern Cape
- Residencies that would bring outstanding scholars to Rhodes for extended periods
- New partnerships with select Indian and Chinese universities, while maintaining existing and expanding partnerships with European and North American universities.

Where necessary we have undertaken reviews of various academic entities - the old Academic Development Centre (now CHERTL); ILAM, Institute for the Study of English in Africa, Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project – in order to clarify their academic futures.

Finally, we have applied for and successfully won five Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation chairs - in Medicinal Chemistry, Marine Biology, Astrophysics and Mathematics Education (two chairs).

iii. Sustaining and enhancing excellence

Turning to this 2006 imbizo theme, we continue to be recognised as one of South Africa's outstanding universities, as confirmed by a recent Centre for Higher Education Transformation paper[15] that assessed South African universities in accordance with a number of key input and output criteria. We can be largely satisfied with respect to developments in research, learning and teaching and community engagement. Pass and graduation rates continue to be among the best in South Africa. Research outputs per capita academic are also among the best in the country. We continue to attract outstanding and committed academics, though we also struggle to recruit new black academics. Here, we can draw some hope from our Mellon and Kresge next generation programmes, which have provided us some black and women academics of great potential and will hopefully continue to do so.

In as much as we proclaim the slogan 'Where Leaders Learn,' we cannot with any honesty claim this to be a defining or distinctive feature of Rhodes, especially not with respect to education or curriculum. Certainly, there are many extra-curricular opportunities through which hundreds of students obtain experience in governance and organisational skills and the like; these are, however, no different from other universities. There are many historical and contemporary initiatives that we can draw on to forge an initiative that could further enhance the qualities of the students that we graduate. We have, however, been extremely tardy in developing any curriculum concept or initiative for all students that can give substantive effect to our slogan, and have made very little progress. Seed funding set aside in 2007 for such an initiative had to be reallocated. Still, a curriculum initiative is now on the agenda of the Teaching and Learning Committee. There could also be an opportunity related to leadership studies and leadership development of development following a recent conversation with Alan Gray/the Orbis Foundation.

On many occasions it has been emphasised that Rhodes academics need to become more visible in terms of contributing to the intellectual and cultural life of our society and to the development of a critical citizenry. As has been argued, beyond communicating with peer scientific communities, we have the responsibility to also 'convey the power and beauty of science to the hearts and minds' of a wider public.[16] We can present knowledge and research 'in all their richness and ambiguity…without any simplification counting as distortion, in language accessible' to the general public.[17] It has been most pleasing to see the response to the call – a number of academics and even students have begun to write regularly in daily and national newspapers and

magazines and we have partnered with the *Mail & Guardian* on special supplements to communicate to a wider audience the proceedings of certain intellectual events.

iv. *Recruitment and access and support and success*

We remain an institution of first choice for many students and can be highly satisfied with our recruitment in recent years, especially the expansion of access to black South Africans.

In total some 7 290 students make up the Rhodes 2011 student body. 1 402 were first time entering undergraduates – essentially first years – who were selected from almost 6 279 (4 986 local students and 1 293 international) students that applied to attend Rhodes in 2011. 1 in 4 (1 885 students, 26%) was a postgraduate student. 59% of students were women – the desirability of this proportion is an issue that we may wish to consider. 59% were black, and 41% were black South African. Whereas black South Africans constituted 31% (1 854) of total enrolments in 2006 (5 914), in 2011 they constitute 41% (2 957) of total enrolments. Black South Africans made up 31% of new entrants in 2006 and 37% of new entrants in 2011; black students in total made up 55% of new entrants in 2011. 1 in 5 of our students (21%) in 2011 is an international student, from 45 countries around the world. The concomitant national, linguistic and cultural diversity makes Rhodes an exciting and cosmopolitan place, and enriches its institutional culture and life.

Soon, we will be rolling out a potentially innovative programme related to partnering select rural schools in the Eastern Cape, with the intention of identifying and academically supporting talented students, and eventually enrolling them at Rhodes or supporting them to access other universities. Partnerships will be forged with institutions and organisations that support rural schools and students.

During 2010 we reviewed our Extended Studies Programme. Mindful of the challenges and the costs entailed, we have clarified and agreed that the programme is an expression of our commitment to enhancing access for students from rural poor and working class social backgrounds. The quality of a Rhodes education and experience and the preparation of graduates for our society and continent require a diverse student body.

With respect to support and success, we continue to maintain our status of possessing either the best or among the best pass rates and graduation rates among South African universities. Our pass rates have declined in recent years by a few per cent, an issue to which we must give attention. We have to address whether we are providing effective support to all our students, and especially black South African students who are from schools other than private and ex-model C schools. However, we have become a much more demographically representative student body and the trade-off in terms of the slight decline in pass rates is one that is acceptable.

Even though the study conducted some years ago by the DoE indicates that we have the lowest drop-out rate among South African universities, we are still to pinpoint the reasons for drop-outs. Furthermore, we have to take a careful look at the time to completion of our Master's and Doctoral students and interrogate whether we have the appropriate institutional arrangements in place to cater for the larger numbers of postgraduate students and simultaneously also enhance the quality and experiences of Master's and Doctoral students.

Seven out of the past ten years, the prestigious Flanagan scholarship that is awarded to a South African woman, and which allows her to undertake postgraduate study anywhere in the world, has gone to a Rhodes student. Rhodes continues to have one of the best track records for the winning of Rhodes scholarships. We have also begun to exercise our dominance over the

prestigious new Mandela Rhodes scholarships awarded for postgraduate study at South African universities. In 2009 4 out of the 28 Mandela Rhodes scholarships were awarded to Rhodes University students, the largest number awarded to a single university. Thus, although we made up only 0.8% of the total national student body, we won 14% of all Mandela Rhodes scholarships. All 4 chose to continue their postgraduate studies at Rhodes. In 2010 we had 3 of our own Mandela Rhodes scholars with us.

v. Community engagement

At the time of the 2006 imbizo, community engagement (as distinct from the Centre for Social Development) was very new at Rhodes and had been initiated for ambiguous reasons. Then imbizo was an opportunity for placing community engagement firmly on the Rhodes institutional agenda.

That the future of Rhodes is inextricably bound with the town of Grahamstown must be obvious, as must be our awareness of the economic and social structure and challenges of the town in which we are located and in which we loom large. Grahamstown has been profoundly shaped by the historical processes of development and under-development, and the associated patterns of inclusion and privilege and exclusion and disadvantage. In 2011 the apartheid legacy remains stark, and there is a considerable distance to be travelled before the historically disadvantaged and socially marginalized inhabitants of our town are assured the human, economic and social rights that our Constitution proclaims.

In the years since the 2006 imbizo, the purposes, goals and role of community engagement (CE), including service-learning, have been usefully clarified, and additional staff, funds and space have been devoted to CE. We considered whether we were not working on too diverse a front and dissipating our energies and compromising our effectiveness; whether we did not need to clearly define our working principles and goals, and ensure a much greater and more effective co-ordination of activities. We sought to focus on a few key partnerships. One was a schools partnership that involved Rhodes University, the historically disadvantaged schools, the 'Model C' and private schools, non-government organisations, the Department of Education, teacher unions and donors, and that had as its goals systematically building the capabilities of the historically disadvantaged schools so that they could realize the potential of their students, and graduate significantly larger numbers of students that could attend universities, including Rhodes. The other was a partnership with Makana Municipality in which we could draw on our knowledge and expertise to support the municipality in its efforts to enhance economic and social development and address the basic needs to people.

The schools partnership proved to be an uphill battle and after much effort in 2010 we pulled back from any further involvement. Similarly, although there has been regular contact with the Municipality, some partnerships – edutourism, waste water management – and generally good relations, there have been fitful interactions rather than a comprehensive engagement and a robust partnership.

Still, by and large CE has grown from strength to strength. We are very fortunate to have a new Director of the calibre of Di Hornby and can be confident that under her leadership CE will thrive into the future.

vi. Institutional environment and culture

We have held imbizos related to equity, gender and institutional culture to address the challenges of Rhodes becoming a home for all, and respecting Constitutional values and ideals, including respect for difference and diversity. We also agreed in 2010 to create the post of Director: Equity and Institutional Culture, and have appointed Adv. Tshidi Hashatse as the first Director. At the prompting of the Gender Action Forum, and following discussions within the university, we took a decision to remove the all-white and male portraits in the University Council chamber, to establish a working group to provide advice on visual representation at Rhodes, and to commission a tapestry from the Keiskammahoek project.

There is still much work to be done to improve the equity profile of academic and administrative staff bodies. In 2005, the equity profile at the level of academics and senior and middle-level support staff was as follows:

	2005														
TOTAL (RSA and FN)	I		A		C		W		TOTAL		NO IAC		% BLACK of this category		
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Instruction/Research Professional	5	2	19	17	3	5	179	87	206	111	27	24	13%	22%	16%
Executive/Admin/Management Professional	1	1	2	0	2	0	23	10	28	11	5	1	18%	9%	15%
Specialised/Support Professional	0	0	4	9	0	3	17	33	21	45	4	12	19%	27%	24%
Technical	4	0	8	0	9	1	25	11	46	12	21	1	46%	8%	38%
Non-Professional Administration	1	4	15	32	11	20	7	148	34	204	27	56	79%	27%	35%
Crafts/Trades	1	2	31	52	31	13	20	13	83	80	63	67	76%	84%	80%
Service	0	0	197	165	15	3	0	0	212	168	212	168	100%	100%	100%
TOTAL	12	9	276	275	71	45	271	302	630	631	359	329	57%	52%	55%

Currently, the equity profile is as follows:

	2010														
TOTAL (RSA and FN)	I		A		C		W		TOTAL		NO IAC		% BLACK of this category		
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Instruction/Research Professional	10	4	23	12	3	7	175	104	211	127	36	23	17%	18%	17%
Executive/Admin/Management Professional	1	1	6	2	3	0	23	14	33	17	10	3	30%	18%	26%
Specialised/Support Professional	0	0	2	8	2	3	11	30	15	41	4	11	27%	27%	27%
Technical	5	0	14	1	10	1	19	14	48	16	29	2	60%	13%	48%
Non-Professional Administration	1	4	30	72	33	46	40	140	104	262	64	122	62%	47%	51%
Crafts/Trades	0	0	14	1	1	1	2	0	17	2	15	2	88%	100%	89%
Service	0	0	202	221	23	8	2	2	227	231	225	229	99%	99%	99%
TOTAL	17	9	291	317	75	66	272	304	655	696	383	392	58%	56%	57%

It is abundantly clear that we need to continue to develop and implement initiatives and strategies to significantly improve the equity profile of academic and senior and middle-level support staff.

There are also various challenges in so far as institutional culture is concerned. Rhodes cannot as yet claim to truly be a home for all. There continue to be manifestations among students and staff of the lack of respect for difference and diversity, of prejudice and intolerance, and unacceptable conduct. Little progress has been made in formulating initiatives following the imbizo on institutional culture. With a new Director in place we can hopefully look forward to more concerted and sustained activities and efforts to address equity and institutional culture issues.

vii. Institutional planning, policy and decision-making structures and processes

Prior to the 2006 imbizo, a Senior Management Forum existed that met regularly and comprised of the VC, DVC, Registrar's and senior (Director-level) administrators. Deans were not part of the Senior Management Forum. Alongside, a Dean's Committee existed, whose minutes served at Senate. Post-imbizo a bi-monthly Senior Administration Meeting (SAM) was initiated, comprising the VC, DVC's, Registrar's, all Deans and almost all Director-level senior administrators. The SAM was a forum for discussing important academic and administrative matters, and for feeding these into the appropriate governance processes and structures of the University. Now, there is an Academic Leadership Forum (VC, DVCs, Deans and Registrars) that meets monthly and a Senior Administration Forum (VC, DVCs, Registrars and administrative Directors) that also meets monthly. The ALF and SAF meet jointly three times a year to table and discuss priorities and monitor their achievement. Very recently, a long-overdue Head of Departments Forum has been created, which will hopefully be a platform for the tabling of departmental issues and concerns and better and shorter lines of communication between HoDs and senior administrators.

In late 2007, an Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) was established, replacing the old Academic Planning and Staffing Committee. The IPC is constituted by a majority of academics and brings together enrolment, academic, staff, infrastructure and financial planning. An Institutional Planning Unit (IPU) was also created, with the post of Director Institutional Planning. The IPU services the IPC but has yet to begin to fully undertake all the functions for which it has been established. While there have been indications of the kind of work that the IPU needs to undertake as a resource for the IPC, a concrete agenda for the IPU needs to yet be tabled at and approved by the IPC.

During 2009, the Committee structure of governance was streamlined, and in some cases there has been a process of clarifying the mandates and functions of specific committees. The concern was raised whether Faculty Boards dedicate sufficient time to addressing core academic issues; now Faculty Boards have research, learning and teaching and community engagement as standing agenda items, complemented by issues such as equity and internationalisation.

None of the restructuring since 2006 has in any way affected the supremacy of the Faculty Boards and Senate or the Council of the University and its key committees, with respect to ultimate policy- and decision-making.

A process has been underway for some time to produce an Institutional Development Plan, which synthesises decisions that have thus far been taken, commitments that have been made to the Council on Higher Education in terms of Rhodes' Quality Improvement Plan, and decisions and agreements that have emerged out of enrolment, academics, staff and infrastructure planning processes, and various other processes and committees of the University. A process has also been underway to produce an overall Campus Development Plan that can provide a framework for and guide the effective and responsible use of available land and where we site new buildings and facilities.

Numerous policies have been developed (either newly introduced or updated) since 2006.[18]

3. Developments related to staff, infrastructure and finances

As noted, related to issues of enrolment and academic planning are matters of staffing, infrastructure and finances. During the past five years on the staff front we have:

- Sought to address and improve the equity profile of academic and support staff through various initiatives, though with only very modest success thus far
- Undertaken work on formulating a remuneration policy, including, moving to remunerate all staff, beginning with academic staff, on the 50th percentile, and addressing differentials between different categories of staff with a view to narrowing differentials
- Reviewed, further planned and implemented a programme for building the next generation of academics, and especially black and women academics
- Refined academic promotions criteria through a participatory and consultative process
- Sought to maintain a lid on expenditure on support posts relative to academic posts
- Given attention to job profiles and the grading of support staff posts
- As part of reviews of administrative divisions, examined their staff structures
- Expressed our commitment, in the interests of our staff and the town, to not outsource (transfer to external providers) any current internally undertaken operations and services
- Created the posts of DVC's Academic and Student Affairs and Research and Development by using the previous posts of DVC and Dean of Research
- Created the post of Registrar: Finance and Operations (using the existing Registrar: Finance post and shifting some of the responsibilities that fell under a DVC to this post)
- Created the post of Dean of Learning and Teaching (using the existing post of Director of Academic Development)
- Created the post of Director of Research to strengthen the Research Office in accordance with our goal of becoming more postgraduate- and research oriented
- Created the post of Director of Community Engagement (upgrading the previous post of Manager)
- Created the post of Director: Institutional Planning (using the existing post of Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance)
- Created the post of Director of the International Office (converting the previous part-time deanship)
- Created the post of Director of Communications and Marketing (converting the previous manger post) as a consequence of splitting Communications and Development into Development and Alumni Relations and Communications and Marketing
- Created the post of Director of Equity and Institutional Culture.

With respect to infrastructure, between 2006 and 2011 we have:

- Built a new library, renovated the previous library, and released academic space through the incorporation of some branch libraries into the main library
- Built seven new residences, an Oppidan dining hall and a new dining hall
- Refurbished and created Celeste a residence
- Built a new environmental learning resources centre building
- Agreed to construct a new teacher education building later this year
- Renovated the old Loerie building as tutorial space and offices for Highway Africa
- Renovated the old Tick Research facilities for Entomology
- Renovated the previous Dean of Student's residence for CE/CSD
- Invested in and acquired additional ICT bandwidth and speed with considerable future savings
- Acquired new equipment in various fields of Science
- Begun to replace the current telephony in order to institute considerable future savings
- Resurfaced the hockey pitch
- Purchased two properties on the corner of South and African streets in order to consolidate our land holdings
- Developed a mine closure plan and have an option to purchase from the municipality the land that surrounds and includes the quarry

- Established a task team on the accommodation needs of academics and support staff. Further work on this issue was undertaken by the previous Registrar: Finance and Operations. There have been no easy solutions in sight.
- Investigated a possible public-private partnership for student accommodation, which was found to be financially unattractive. We remain open to public-private partnerships that are mutually beneficial, and also of value to the town.
- Created a draft Campus Development Plan.

Some of the new infrastructure and equipment has been funded from Infrastructure and Efficiency Funding provided by DoHET: R 80 million for the library and two residences in 2007/8-2009/2010, and R 62.5 million in 2010/11-2011/2012 for a teacher education building, two more residences and a dining hall, and equipment for life sciences. Fundraising for the library brought in some R21 million from foundations, the business sector and alumni. Other infrastructure and equipment has been funded from funding received from the Department of Environmental Affairs, the NRF, other research and development agencies, internal funding and loans.

As far as finances are concerned, our total 2011 central University budget is R 448 million. Income from public subsidies (teaching input, teaching output, research outputs, institutional size, redress) is R 252 million; from tuition fees is R 171 million and other sources is R 24 million. Major expenditure items are salaries (R302 million, or 67.3 %), utilities (R16 million), student financial aid (R17.5 million) and library books, periodicals and electronic resources (R11 million). The Residence budget is R 126 million, with major expenditure here being Salaries (R45 million, 36%) food purchases (R 25 million) and utilities (R 16 million).The budget excludes earmarked state grants for infrastructure, financial aid and academic foundation activities, third stream income through research grants and contracts from state departments and agencies, foundations and business, and other grants and contributions from foundations, business and alumni. Income from all these sources annually totals over R150 million.

We are becoming increasingly reliant in our subsidy income on research outputs, and unless research outputs are maintained or enhanced this could become an area of vulnerability. In addition, third stream income is also becoming increasingly important. Overall, the state subsidy constitutes 41 % of total recurrent Council Directed and Council Managed income, tuition fees 41% and third stream income 18%.

Our investment reserves are extremely modest compared to other universities such as Pretoria, Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Wits and Johannesburg. Our endowed funds, which are for earmarked activities, are about R200 million and our free funds are just R100 million. We are giving attention to what our free funds should become and how we can increase them, and also what is a prudent rate of spending of our endowed funds.

We have
- Operated on the basis of a commitment to a zero-deficit budget
- Annually balanced income and expenditure
- Raised significant funding from research grants, earmarked infrastructure funds and donor funds, and have also expanded and diversified the sources of donor funds
- Sought to direct resources to academic and institutional priority issues an areas – enhancement of research, undergraduate student financial aid, staff remuneration and infrastructure backlogs
- Annually generated modest surpluses that have been allocated to an Infrastructure and Strategic Developments Fund so that we can meet potential matching contributions that we may need to make in terms of DoHET Infrastructure and Efficiency funding

- Created a VC's Budget Committee to ensure more effective oversight of expenditure, to approve any expenditure beyond the amount budgeted, and to make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of Council on the deployment of available funds in the Infrastructure and Strategic Developments Fund
- Instituted a process to plan on a three-year basis and generate three-year budgets
- Been investigating the extent to which surpluses can be generated by the Residential Operations budget and can be used to subsidise the Central Operations budget, as a means of off-setting any reduced public subsidies that could be a consequence of limiting enrolments.

Recently, to give impetus to our plans and support strategic new academic initiatives the University's Council and Board of Governors agreed to create the *Sandisa Imbewu* ('We are growing/multiplying our seeds') Fund. R 12.0 million has been pledged over the next five years as seed funding for new initiatives. The Fund is intended to help consolidate and enhance current areas of academic excellence at Rhodes; facilitate ventures into new academic and research areas, especially at the postgraduate level; support Rhodes to exploit new opportunities that can develop research and knowledge production, and further enhance the quality of graduates produced.

4. Challenges

I wish to now turn to a number of challenges that we must address as a University.

Transformation and modernisation

Critically reflecting on the past five years it is increasingly clear that the challenges at Rhodes are related not only to *transformation* but also *modernisation*.

Certain transformation challenges are generally well-understood: *social equity* - becoming demographically representative of the South African population, especially at the levels of academic and senior and middle-level support staff - and *institutional culture* – creating an enabling environment which is free from prejudice and intolerance in which difference and diversity - whether class, racial, gender, national, linguistic, religious or sexual orientation - are appreciated and all feel respected and affirmed. Yet, these well-known transformation issues do not exhaust the challenges of transformation at Rhodes.

Less understood and seemingly of little interest is the challenge that arises from our historical 'legacies of intellectual colonisation and racialisation,' and which are threats to the flowering of ideas, discourse, discovery and scholarship, and also to academic freedom.[19] Andre du Toit very importantly links institutional culture to academic freedom. He notes 'that the enemy' in the forms of colonial and racial discourses 'has been within the gates all the time', and endangers 'empowering intellectual discourse communities'. 'Ongoing transformation of the institutional culture' is therefore a necessary condition of academic freedom (du Toit, 2000:103) Any serious agenda of inclusion at Rhodes entails the duty of using 'the powers conferred by academic freedom' to substantively decolonize, deracialise, demasculanise and degender our inherited 'intellectual spaces.'[20] It means creating the space for the flowering of other epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies, issues and questions other than those that have dominated, perhaps even suffocated, intellectual and scholarly thought and writing.

Mahmood Mamdani writes that 'the central question facing higher education in Africa today is what it means to teach the humanities and social sciences in the current historical context and, in

particular, in the post-colonial African context…and in a location where the dominant intellectual paradigms are products not of Africa's own experience but of a particular Western experience.'[21] A group of Stellenbosch academics write in relation to the Western Cape that 'its universities, it artists and its centres of higher learning could play a major intellectual and cultural role in uncrippling the region's imagination and creativity, providing the Cape with critical vocabularies and concepts to transcend insularity, provincialism and nostalgia for a shameful and costly past'. They suggest that 'a first step in this direction would be to take the study of Africa more seriously than has been the case so far. Part of this process requires…thinking with the rest of South Africa and as an integral part of this country as well.'[22] It is doubtful that we are adequately engaging with these and other critical issues and it is the Humanities and Social Sciences at Rhodes that must lead us in this regard.

Notwithstanding our slogan 'Where leaders Learn' and the motto, 'Truth, Virtue and Strength' it is doubtful that we are producing graduates who have the capacity 'for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions', and have 'the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgement.'[23] It is also improbable that our graduates possess 'the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have.'[24] It is also debatable whether we are cultivating in our graduates the understanding that we are 'as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern' – which necessitates knowledge and understanding of different cultures and 'of differences of gender, race, and sexuality.'[25] Whether, and to what extent, we wish to ensure that the development of graduates at Rhodes is simultaneously an exercise in the cultivation of humanity is an issue that we must confront and settle.

As an aspect of *institutional culture*, there is a strong laissez faire culture at Rhodes. This laissez faire culture is predicated on certain dubious assumptions and seemingly equates a laissez faire approach with safeguarding academic freedom and organisational autonomy. It is evidenced in a holding fast to doubtful conventional wisdoms and a seeming aversion to planning and prioritisation, quality assurance and, ultimately, quality promotion. The laissez faire approach is seemingly content to wait for problems to manifest *before* willing to address all too evident weaknesses and shortcomings. Ultimately, the laissez faire culture is an aversion also to *any* real democratic and peer accountability.

It is debatable whether there is as yet a full grasp among Rhodes staff of its vulnerabilities arising from its size and shape, the intensely competitive higher education environment, its extremely modest investment reserves, and other factors. In this context and for other good reasons planning is indispensable. Planning is not in competition with autonomy, academic freedom, democracy and quality. The *purposes* of planning are to ensure that a complex institution like Rhodes makes critical choices and decisions with respect to teaching-learning, knowledge production, community engagement, timeously, inclusively, transparently and effectively, that the University but proactively and consciously shapes its future and possesses a compass of the trajectory of its academic and overall institutional development, and that it will not entirely or even largely be shaped by historical patterns and contemporary currents and pressures.

An Institutional Development Plan (IDP) which collates, consolidates and expresses our choices, decisions and goals and strategies with respect to academic programmes, enrolments, staffing, infrastructure and finances over the next decade (two five-year terms) is long overdue. The IDP should serve as a compass that guides developments, prioritisation, decision-making and implementation at Rhodes while leaving room for pursuing new imperatives and exploiting

possible new opportunities. It is also an attempt to ensure that Rhodes effectively addresses and pursues new social and educational imperatives, identified goals and strategies and also remains financially sustainable with respect to its enrolments, academic programmes and operations, staffing and infrastructure.

Planning must, of course, guarantee departments and academics substantial freedom with regard to teaching and research matters, and also avoid generating an institutional culture of dull, plodding conformity that stifles imagination, creativity and innovation. There must be space for academic and research programmes with different purposes, methodologies, pedagogies and modes of delivery, and that respond in distinct ways to our varied and changing intellectual, social, and economic challenges and needs.

As yet, although we have a very capable Data Management Unit (DMU), we still do not have an effective institutional research capability, for rigorously monitoring, reviewing and analysing a whole range of issues, especially of a critical academic nature. Fed by the DMU, the kind of research and analysis that Prof. Terry is currently undertaking with respect to postgraduate time to completion and graduation rates is critical for policy- and decision-making. Similarly, there is a limited institutional capability to effectively analyse our changing social context and to monitor, evaluate and interpret dynamics, trajectories and trends that have implications for institutional development. A well-developed and diffused capability to read the nature of polices and policy signals, and to fathom the trajectories of policies is vital if Rhodes is not to be purely determined by context, but is to also pro-actively engage and modify its context.

I have suggested that the challenge at Rhodes is not only one of transformation but also *modernisation*. This is starkly evident in certain areas of institutional life, which are characterised by the lack of systems, documented protocols and effective and efficient procedures, the lack of innovation, the lack of proactive engagement and responsiveness, and inflexibility. The lack of *modernisation* in certain areas means inadequate information to effectively inform policies and decisions, to effectively monitor critical areas and issues, inefficiencies and waste of time and resources, an amateurish approach to issues and the absence of nimble support services. All of these, of course, give rise to unnecessary bottlenecks and frustration for academics and staff more generally.

Already, the relatively flat senior administration structure at Rhodes, as compared to other universities, creates tremendous demands and pressure on particular senior administrators, who are invariably also drawn into operational matters (relative to strategic issues) to a much greater extent than at other universities. There is little that can be done about this, given pressures on budgets and the need to prioritize resources for academic staff and initiatives. However, workloads and the extent of involvement in operational matters are unnecessarily compounded by outmoded and cumbersome approaches.

Modernisation is long overdue in a number of areas. While a start has been made with regard to certain systems and processes arising from critical questioning by Dr Rayner, attention will need to be given to a number of other issues and areas. The ultimate goals are higher levels of effective and professional support for academics so that they are able to concentrate primarily on academic issues, more responsive and timely feedback for monitoring and review in relation to key academic and administrative goals.

Enrolment Planning

The 2011-2013 enrolment plan and the considerations that informed it signal a number of issues:

- The need to consolidate the considerable undergraduate growth of 2007-2009, when some 800 new undergraduates entered Rhodes
- That there are no plans to introduce any new undergraduate programmes
- The need to give effect to Rhodes' overall institutional development strategy of increasing further its current postgraduate numbers
- The need to investigate key long-term institutional growth issues, including those related to municipal infrastructure issues.

We have to continuously address our capability to meet and to remain within our enrolment targets. We did not do so during 2008-2010; indeed we were almost 692 students over our 2010 enrolment target. This had consequences for infrastructure, staffing and academic: student ratios and also cost us teaching inputs subsidy income.

Whatever our agreed enrolment targets, we need to ensure that we adhere to our targets. The Deans, given their responsibility for decisions on admissions (guided by our new Admissions Policy), are critical to us remaining within our targets. Either we adhere to targets – and these could give rise to difficult dilemmas and choices - or we set higher (and more realistic?) targets in order to not unnecessarily lose teaching inputs subsidy.

Academic Planning

Our key challenges include:

- Maintaining our status of possessing the best undergraduate pass rates and graduations rates among South African universities
- Ensuring that we provide effective support to all our students, and especially black South African students who are from historically disadvantaged public schools Deciding on the appropriate balance between face-to-face teaching-learning and other forms of teaching-learning
- The need to give attention to the appropriate balance between face-to-face teaching-learning and other forms of teaching-learning that harness the potential of new information and communication technologies
- Finalisation, informed by the recent review, of an appropriate model for providing extended studies programmes for students that do not meet our usual entrance requirements but display talent and potential
- Identifying potential new postgraduate and research niche areas and programmes, and ensuring that there is effective planning, fund-raising and implementation
- Providing further support to the Humanities, Law and Commerce faculties to enable them to increase their contributions to postgraduate and research outputs
- Developing appropriate institutional arrangements to enhance the quantity, the quality, the academic and social experience and the equity profile of our postgraduates, and especially South African postgraduates
- Continuing to pursue further chairs in proven or potential new areas of academic excellence.

There have been opportunities for new postgraduate and research initiatives in a number of disciplines/fields in which we have proven strengths – for example, water education and fisheries. These, however, have not always been adequately or timeously pursued, although we are now doing so. The danger, of course, is that other universities could initiate programmes in areas in which we should be enhancing and consolidating our strengths.

It must be recognised that once we have decided on our enrolment plan and it has been approved by DoHET, our enrolment plan shapes our academic planning. For example, if we plan to grow by only a very small number of undergraduates (as is the case for the 2011-2013 period), it must be understood that there is no or little scope to introduce any new undergraduate programmes during this period unless there are cutbacks in existing undergraduate programmes.

Staff planning

Key challenges here include:

- Improving the equity profile of academic and senior and middle-level support staff
- Retaining black staff through attending to certain aspects of institutional culture
- Continuing to build the next generation of academics, especially black and women academics
- Improving teacher: student ratios overall and in specific areas
- Reconsidering academic staff norms in the context of a trajectory of becoming more postgraduate and research-oriented
- Effectively supporting new academics
- Effectively supporting new staff recruits in settling into Rhodes and in Grahamstown
- Systematically moving to remunerate all staff on the 50th percentile
- Finalising a remuneration policy.

Infrastructure planning

Timeous decision-making on infrastructure priorities is vital for informing Rhodes' applications for DoHET Infrastructure and Efficiency funding, and to direct the fundraising efforts of the Development Office. An infrastructure priority list will necessarily be matter of debate and even contestation. It is a matter of regret, however, that there is contestation around whether the process of assembling an infrastructure agenda has been inclusive, when there have been ample opportunities during the past five years for infrastructure needs to be tabled.

We have usefully distinguished between different kinds of infrastructure: backbone (water, energy and the like), academic, student accommodation, social and cultural; and maintenance. We have give attention to infrastructure *backlogs* in relation to current academic operations, and *priorities* in relation to our 2011-2013 enrolment and academic plans, and likely future enrolment and academic plans.

We have agreed that the infrastructure priority list is a dynamic one that will be revisited continuously and that decisions will also take into account strategic development funding and financial considerations. We have, hopefully, also clarified that the development of new infrastructure and renovations and refurbishment is not a zero-sum situation, given the existence of different possible pools of funding. It is not the case that commitment to a large expensive new facility means that smaller projects cannot be undertaken.

Later this year, we will need to apply for additional Infrastructure and Efficiency Funding for 2012/13-2013/14. In our application and in our development fundraising and investments from internal funds we will be guided by specified criteria, strategic considerations and our current agreed priorities. These priorities are:

- A new life sciences building
- Relocating the Business School to the postgraduate village as part of the further development of the village as a professional and continuing education hub

- Postgraduate residence/s
- A postgraduate commons (using ground zero of the Library).

It is critically important that we utilise our current infrastructure optimally, as the building space audit/review that is being conducted by DoHET and HESA could have adverse consequences for Rhodes if it is determined that we possess more than sufficient building space. My impression is that we are not making effective and efficient use of our buildings, especially in the 'middle campus' area, and that having the courage to take a few *decisions* could set us on the path to freeing up space that could be more effectively employed, especially for academic purposes.

It was earlier noted that there have been no easy solutions in sight with regard to the local accommodation needs of academics and support staff. This issue (including that of decent schools for the children of new recruits), however, remains an issue and we should revisit it afresh.

Finance planning

Given government's multi-term expenditure framework, it should be possible to calculate public subsidies with a measure of certainty and to also project tuition fee income and other income, as well as expenditure, with some certainty, and on this basis to develop three-year budgets.

Financial planning on a single year basis neither gives an indication of future existing commitments (Law Clinic, commitments to donors regarding sponsored chairs, programmes, next generation programme, etc.), nor makes space for financial investments in necessary or desirable, programmes, activities and initiatives. We must be able to rest assured that the financial commitments that stem from decisions taken at IPC and which mature in future years are diligently factored into financial planning and budgets for future years.

Overall institutional development planning

For various reasons, developing and finalising an IDP has proved arduous. The IDP has to be informed by and also underpinned by Faculty- and Division-level plans. Despite requests, there have not always been the necessary inputs from senior administrators.

With respect to the IDP, the identification of goals on the part of Faculties, Divisions and Offices is a start but not enough. There has to be also a specification of the institutional arrangements, concrete strategies, funding and time frames for the realisation of the goals. Informed by the IDP, the Campus Development Plan needs to be also finalised as a guide to the considered overall physical development and maintenance of the Rhodes University campus.

We are all too aware that there is a significant looming environmental challenge. The University must serve as an exemplar and catalyst for innovations to reduce carbon emissions and institute environmentally-friendly practices. A Green Fund which supports the University to institute environmentally-friendly short-, medium- and long-term measures, and initiatives and activities, through which all the constituencies and stakeholders of Rhodes can contribute to the Green Fund, will hopefully receive enthusiastic and widespread support.

Institutional planning and implementation

Critically reflecting on the past five years it is clear that there are various shortcomings which have adverse implications for the achievement of goals related to knowledge production and the

production of high quality graduates, for inclusive participation, and for effectiveness and efficiency. These shortcomings include:

- Non- or non-timeous or inadequate engagement or/and responses on the part of structures and Offices with critical issues which compromises inclusive processes of policy- and decision-making, delays decision-making and implementation with various negative consequences
- The inordinately lengthy time period for ideas to become concept documents and full proposals, with the result that there are possible missed opportunities
- Tardy and/or *ineffectual implementation* of programmes, projects and initiatives despite available funding. Where funding has been made available by donors, the consequences are possible reputational damage among donors, delays in potential further funding from donors, and compromising of particular goals and strategies
- Insufficient attention to the *planning of implementation*, evidenced in inadequate clear specification of roles and responsibilities, lack of adherence to time frames and the like
- The absence of or ineffectual *monitoring of implementation*

The reasons for these shortcomings need to be identified as do the measures that need to be taken to overcome them.

Conclusion

Culture and traditions are important. But they can also become ossified in unfortunate ways, imprison our thinking, induce blind spots, and generate practices that are alienating, discomforting and exclusionary. We need, in the words of Dunbar Moodie, traditions that 'we carry with us as sheet anchors, providing ballast but not direction, keeping us into the wind but not precisely defining our course', that are more open and let us grow.[26] The values that are the bedrock of our institutional (including academic) culture must be clearly distinguished from historical cultural traditions and practices, which can be impediments to a more open, vibrant, democratic and inclusive intellectual and institutional culture.

Prof. Barney Pityana, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of South Africa, has noted that

> Never have our institutions had (the) freedom to imagine as well as to determine our futures and in such variegated forms. This has to be seen as an opportunity…where our institutions…are not curtailed by historical inevitabilities but are invited to assume new, more powerful identities shaped by existing and potential strengths within the institution, as well as by the contexts within which each must operate.[27]

In 2008 we pledged to settle with our past and remake and renew Rhodes as a small but outstanding African university. We committed ourselves to resolutely pursue knowledge, understanding, critique and reason; to steadfastly continue to promote human dignity, equality, non-sexism and non-racialism, critical citizenship and all the human rights and freedoms that our Constitution proclaimed, and to courageously and boldly to protect and assert the core values and purposes of a university, including advancing the public good, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability.

It seems to me this pledge usefully frames and illuminates our tasks and also provides a sound base for tackling our challenges.

Vice-Chancellor
Dr Saleem Badat

[1] Mati, S. (2005?)
[2] Republic of South Africa (1996), Section 1
[3] Ibid., Sections 9.3 and 9.4
[4] Ibid., Section 7.2
[5] Department of Education (1997) *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, sections 1.17-1.25
[6] The Task Force on Higher Education and Society (2000) *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*. Washington: The World Bank
[7] Melucci, A. (1989), page 18
[8] Chisholm, L. (2004), page 12
[9] Melucci, A. (1989), page 49
[10] Keane and Mier, (1989), page 4
[11] Wolpe, H. (1991), page 1
[12] Melucci, A. (1989), page 25; Eyerman and Jamison (199), page 62
[13] Morrow, W. (1997)
[14] The words of C Wright Mills (1959) are especially appropriate here:

> Freedom is not merely the chance to do as one pleases; neither is it merely the opportunity to choose between set alternatives. Freedom is, first of all, the chance to formulate the available choices, to argue over them - and then, the opportunity to choose.
> Beyond this, the problem of freedom is …how decisions about the future of human affairs are to be made and who is to make them. Organisationally, it is the problem of a just machinery of decision. Morally, it is the problem of political responsibility. Intellectually, it is the problem of what are now the possible futures of human affairs (1959:174).

Mills wonderfully captures especially significant challenges. In a nutshell, how is a university to 'formulate the available choices' with respect to the advancement of social equity and redress, equity and quality, and how is it 'to argue over them', and innovate the 'just machinery' that provides the 'opportunity to choose' and to make decisions.
[15] Centre for Higher education Transformation (2010) 'Institutional Clusters in South Africa.' Higher Education Summit, April
[16] Gould,S.J.(2006)http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/gould/excerpts/index.html#popsci; Accessed 15 September 2006; 18.05
[17] Ibid, page 2006
[18]

New Policies/Frameworks	Date	Revised Policies/Frameworks	Date
Criteria for Evaluating Teaching Portfolios	Nov 09	Community Engagement Policy	2010…
Employment of Temporary Support Staff Policy	2010	Equity Policy	2010…
Eradicating Unfair Discrimination & Harassment Policy	Mar 09	Honorary Titles Framework	Nov 09
Ill Health Incapacity & Occupational Health Policy	Mar 08	Institutional HIV & Aids Policy	Dec 08
Institutional Planning & Review Framework*	May 08	Institutional Planning & Review Framework	April 09
Job Evaluation Policy for Support Staff	June 07	Personal Promotions Policy & Procedures	Nov 09
Marketing & Advertising Policy for Student Societies & Clubs	June 09	Plagiarism Policy	June 08
Naming & Renaming of Buildings & Facilities Policy	Sept 09	Recruitment & Selection Policy for Academic Staff	
New Programme Application Framework	Aug 08	Recruitment & Selection Policy for Hall & House Wardens	2010
Parental Benefits & Leave Policy	Dec 08	Recruitment & Selection Policy for Sub-wardens	2010…
Patents Policy	09	Recruitment & Selection Policy for Support Staff	June 07
Personal Promotions Policy & Procedures*	April 07	Short Courses Policy	May 10
Recognition of Prior Learning Policy	Mar 07	Staff Development Policy	2010…

Recruitment & Selection Policy for Casual Staff	Jan 07		
Recruitment & Selection Policy for Hall & House Wardens*	June 08		
Recruitment & Selection Policy for Subwardens*	April 07		
Research & Scholarship Entities Framework	July 09		
Staff Disability Policy	2010…		
Student Admissions Policy	2010…		
Support Staff Leave Policy	2010…		

* indicates the policy was introduced *and* revised during the period 2006-2010.

[19] Du Toit, A. (2000) 'From Autonomy to Accountability: Academic Freedom under Threat in South Africa. *Social Dynamics*, 26, p.76-133

[20] Bentley, K, Habib, A and Morrow, S. (2006) 'Academic freedom, Institutional Autonomy, and the Corporatised University in Contemporary South Africa'. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education

[21] Mamdani, M. (2011) 'Africa's post-colonial scourge. Mail & Guardian Getting Ahead, 27 May - 2 June

[22] 'Scandal of beauty: The Cape must embrace it rich mix.' Cape Times, 7 June 2011

[23] Nussbaum, 2006:5)

[24] (ibid, 2006:6-7).

[25] (Nussbaum, 2006:6).

[26] Moodie, T.D. (2005) One Student at Rhodes in the Early Apartheid Years: A Memoir, in *African Sociological Review*, 9, 1, page Moodie, 141

[27] Pityana, B. (2006) 'Public higher education in South Africa: its current restructured status'. Pretoria: Higher Education South Africa