The Limits of Access, Success and Social Justice in Post-1994 South African Higher Education: Building the Learning and Teaching Capabilities of Universities

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Introduction

In *The Idea of a University*, Cardinal John Henry Newman takes the view of a university

> That it is a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*. This implies that its object is…the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students (Newman, 1907:ix).

Cardinal Newman surely overstates the knowledge dissemination purpose of a university, as the production of knowledge is an equally accepted purpose of a university. Still, he is quite correct to draw attention to the vital centrality of 'the diffusion and extension of knowledge' in any university, and, by implication, of learning and teaching. It should be noted that it is quite possible to consider an institution that only undertakes higher teaching and learning and scholarship related to such learning and teaching as a university. Put differently, an institution does not have to produce knowledge that involves the scholarship of discovery to qualify as a university.

All too often, teaching and learning, which are fundamentally important activities of universities, are neglected and overshadowed by the supposedly more glamorous endeavour of research. It may be that teaching and learning are frequently overlooked because they are regarded as innate abilities or commonsense activities. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci, Wilfred Carr points out that

> …the distinctive feature of common sense is not that its beliefs and assumptions *are* true but that it is a style of thinking in which the truth of these beliefs and assumptions is regarded as self-evident and taken for granted. What is commonsensical is *ipso facto* unquestionable and does not need to be justified (Carr, 1995:53-54).[1]

In this paper, I argue that it is critical that South African universities give considerably more attention to teaching and learning in the light of the major shortcomings associated with university success rates, especially in relation to black students, and concerns related to the quality of graduates that are produced. I begin with some reflections on teaching and learning and then sketch the inheritance in 1994 and the policy goals and the strategies that were proposed to promote access, success and quality, and equity and social justice in higher education. Thereafter, I show that progress has been mixed during the past 19 years. I examine the diagnoses and proposals of the 2012 Department of Higher Education *Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training* as well as those of the National Planning Commission and its 2012 *National Development Plan 2030* with respect to access and success, and finally delineate the key challenges and tasks in the domain of learning and teaching that confront universities and the state if social justice is to be advanced in and through higher education.

Teaching and learning

One of the core purposes of higher education is to form and cultivate the cognitive character of students. The goal is to produce, through engagement between dedicated academics and students around humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific inheritances, highly educated graduates that ideally "can think effectively and critically"; have "achieved depth in some field of knowledge", and have a "critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain knowledge and understanding of the universe, of society, and of ourselves".[2] Graduates must be able to test "the inherited knowledge of earlier generations" and interrogate and dismantle the mumbo jumbo that masquerades for knowledge.[3] They should have "a broad knowledge of other cultures and other times"; be "able to make decisions based on reference to the wider world and to the historical forces that have shaped

it"; have "some understanding of and experience in thinking systematically about moral and ethical problems", and be able to "communicate with cogency".[4]

At the same time, the purpose of higher education is also intimately connected to the idea of democratic citizenship, and to the "cultivation of humanity" (Nussbaum, 2006:5). Nussbaum suggests that "three capacities, above all, are essential to the cultivation of humanity" (ibid.,:5). "First is the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions….Training this capacity requires developing the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgement" (ibid.,:5). The "cultivation of humanity" also requires students to see themselves "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". (ibid.,:5). Third, it is, however, more than "factual knowledge" that is required. Also necessary is "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" (Nussbaum, 2006:6-7).

Comprehending teaching and learning and the production of graduates in this way helps to establish an agenda for teaching and learning in higher education. Universities have the responsibility to ensure that:
- There are academic programmes and qualifications that are imaginatively, thoughtfully, and rigorously conceptualized and designed
- The purposes, aims and objects of academic programmes are clearly and explicitly articulated as are the attributes and qualities that seek to be developed among graduates – such as the disciplinary and other knowledge, expertise, competencies, skills and attitudes essential for individual and professional development, for contributing to environmentally sustainable economic and social development, and for building a democratic society that advances constitutional imperatives and goals
- There are curricula and pedagogical and assessment practices in congruence with the purposes and aims of academic programmes
- There is an institutional environment and academic culture that supports high quality provision and learning and teaching
- There are appropriately qualified academics with the knowledge, expertise and capabilities to undertake high quality teaching and learning
- There is appropriate institutional support and developmental opportunities for academics to gain knowledge and expertise with respect to curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and supervision, and learning and teaching more generally so as to effectively facilitate learning
- There is effective and accountable leadership that promotes high quality learning and teaching
- There is assurance, monitoring, critical review and ongoing enhancement of the quality of academic programmes and of teaching and learning.

Of course, in as much as there are responsibilities on the part of universities and academics, there are also responsibilities attached to the state and students. For one, the state has to facilitate high quality learning and teaching by providing adequate resources (such buildings, libraries, facilities, equipment and materials) that are critical to high quality provision, so that universities can maintain and progressively enhance the range and quality of academic programmes, as appropriate to their different missions and goals. For another, the state also has to respect academic freedom and institutional autonomy with respect to the academic admission and exclusion of students, the content of academic programmes and courses, and curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and certification. Moreover, the state has to provide adequate financial aid to all students who are admitted to higher education and who qualify for such support. For their part, students have to

appreciate fully that higher education entails a profound commitment to learning; be familiar with the academic requirements related to academic programmes; strive to meet these faithfully and diligently, and conduct themselves respectfully and with honesty and integrity. They must also help to maintain and promote a learning environment which is free from fear, harm, discrimination, harassment, intolerance, prejudice and intimidation, including respect for the rights of others to freely express themselves.[5]

Academic teaching and learning programmes have to take into account at least three issues.

1. One is the kinds and configuration of knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes that graduates require to function in rapidly changing societies, on the African continent and globally. Academic programmes must enable students to graduate as knowledgeable professionals who can think theoretically and imaginatively; gather and analyse information with rigour; critique and construct alternatives, and communicate effectively orally and in writing. However, South Africa and Africa requires graduates who are not just capable professionals, but also sensitive intellectuals and critical citizens. As Higher Education South Africa (HESA) has put it, the task is "the arduous formation of a critical, creative and compassionate citizenry" (2006:7). The task, however, is not simply to disseminate knowledge to students but to also induct students into the making of knowledge; it has been suggested that even when we think we are just disseminating knowledge we are actually also inducting students into ways of making knowledge (Boughey, 2008).

2. A second issue is the increasingly diverse social and educational backgrounds and experiences of students, as a necessary consequence of the imperatives of social equity, redress and social justice. Students must be afforded not simply equity of access, but also equity of opportunity and success; this requires effective teaching and learning programmes and academic development programmes, including mentoring. As "our students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, this means they know different things and in different ways to 'traditional' student cohorts. We have to engage with these students not as deficient but as different. This calls for thinking deeply about teaching and learning." (ibid.)

3. A third issue is the curricula, pedagogies and modes of assessment that are necessary, and the teaching and learning approaches more generally that are required. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) called for "heightened responsiveness within higher education to societal interests and needs" that arose from "social, cultural, political and economic changes" (NCHE, 1996: 4).[6] It suggested that such responsiveness would have implications for "knowledge production and dissemination", including "the content, form and delivery of the curriculum", and had potential for advancing "development, equity, quality, accountability and efficiency" (NCHE: 1996: 5). HESA has argued that universities and academics

> cannot rest on their laurels…and simply teach the same curricula…year after year with minor changes and presume that this is sufficient. If the demands made on students by a fast-changing world are greater, so too are the demands on lecturers and researchers. We have constantly to unpack the assumed constants in our respective fields…(and) interrogate what we…have learned to take for granted (HESA, 2006:7).

Curriculum is critical to higher education transformation and any social justice agenda. A theory of a socially responsive curriculum will "necessarily have recourse to multiple objects and explanatory mechanisms in order adequately to model the complex reality of higher education" (Moll, 2005:2). While economic needs may be one object,

theory must recognise that this object acts in an open system in which university practices are co-determined by the effects of other, noneconomic imperatives too, such as those arising in a research problematic, the institutional culture of a university or learner psychology. We cannot ignore the different strata of the curriculum responsiveness problem as it faces any university at this time in South African history (ibid.,:2).

A responsive curriculum has to address simultaneously "economic, cultural, disciplinary and learning-related" issues. 'Economic responsiveness' entails the curriculum being "responsive *to* the prevailing labour market *by* incorporating the necessary high level qualifications, knowledge and skills demanded by a modern, diversified economy"; 'cultural responsiveness' means that the curriculum "is responsive *to* the cultural diversity of students and society *by* incorporating multiple cultural reference points that acknowledge diversity and constitute various alternative learning pathways for students" (Moll, 2005: 4, 5). 'Disciplinary responsiveness' refers to responsiveness of the curriculum "*to* the nature of its underlying knowledge discipline *by* ensuring a close coupling between the way in which knowledge is produced and the way students are educated and trained in the discipline area" (ibid.,:7). The curriculum "is responsive *to* the learning needs of students *by* teaching them in terms that are accessible to them and assessing them in ways that they understand" (Moll, 2005: 8). The "various realities" that curriculum responds to "articulate with each other and constitute affordances and constraints for each other" (ibid.,:8). Moreover, in practice, addressing simultaneously economic, cultural, disciplinary and learning-related issues means that the curriculum can "lead to tensions between various imperatives associated with it" and "to multifaceted practices that combine various accounts of the concept" (ibid.,:2).

Earlier we noted Nussbaum's idea of higher education as the 'cultivation of humanity" and, as part of this, the need to build an appreciation of difference and diversity and see this as having great educative value, especially in socially divided societies. Delpit writes that:

> We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment and it is not easy. It is painful as well, because it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are and being willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze. We must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness (Delpit, 1988: 297; cited in Moll, 2005:11).

For learning of this kind to occur, it necessarily entails curriculum change; but is also requires changes in "the institutional culture" as well as "individual change. It entails the transformation of individuals in relation to the institutional and cultural context, or, in a word, it entails *learning*" (ibid., 11; emphasis in original).

There are other good reasons why teaching and learning as a core university activity cannot be neglected.
- First, the reality is that universities in Africa, notwithstanding their aspirations, are largely or principally undergraduate teaching institutions. For the vast majority of students, the undergraduate degree or diploma is the terminal qualification and only a small percentage of these students proceed to postgraduate studies.
- Second, even at postgraduate level, many postgraduate programmes involve some degree of formal or structured teaching and learning.
- Third, as the 'race', class, gender, ethnic, national, linguistic, cultural and religious composition of the student bodies of universities change, and necessarily so given social equity and social justice imperatives, profound new teaching and learning challenges arise for academics and universities.

- Fourth, teaching and learning based on common sense notions unwittingly compromises important goals and serve to alienate significant portions of the student body.[7]
- Fifth, while "academic language is no-one's mother tongue," the achievement of academic literacy is more readily attainable for some students than for other students. This requires giving attention to how students are supported to become academically literate.[8]
- Sixth, the academy's 'ways of knowing' are based on particular conventions and practices; these are more foreign to some students than to others. Greater student diversity entails the need to re-think the privileging of certain 'ways of knowing'.
- Seventh, all South African universities experience major challenges related to the 'under-preparedness' of students for higher learning. This necessitates giving attention to teaching and learning. There is, however, "the danger of labeling, and thus pathologising, the students as underprepared", avoiding any "focus on the 'underpreparedness'" of universities and academics.[9] Under-preparedness on the part of students, however, occurs "within an epistemic context that is in some way or another opaque or inaccessible to" them. It "is not some abstracted psychological condition" that students possess, "but is a relation between a familiar cultural context, which (they have) internalised, and the unfamiliar cultural and institutional context (a university environment), which (they have) not yet internalised. *All* students experience disadvantage when they enter into university learning practices, but some struggle more with it as a consequence of their specific learning histories" (Moll, 2005:11; emphasis in original).[10]
- Eighth, many universities experience challenges related to drop-out, pass, throughput and graduation rates, which result in wastage of talent and scarce financial resources; again, this requires attention to be paid to teaching and learning.
- Ninth, the reality is that an academic qualification (usually a doctorate or masters degree, sometimes an honours degree) is in itself no guarantee that an academic possesses the necessary expertise in higher education teaching and learning.
- Finally, especially at universities that refer to themselves as 'research universities', the process of disseminating knowledge should simultaneously be a process of inducting students into ways of making knowledge. In this case, it is vital that there is a shared consciousness and practice among academics in this regard.

It should be clear that the misguided naturalisation and associated neglect of teaching and learning is untenable and that this domain requires more serious attention. Given the range of challenges and tasks, the approach to teaching and learning that is required is not a mere focus on the improvement of 'skills' or 'tips for better teaching', as much as rigorous theorisation and deep reflection on contextual realities.[11] Such a theorised approach to teaching and learning, which also seeks to advance social justice, however, is not possible without scholarship and research on teaching and learning; otherwise we fall prey once again to the commonsense notions of teaching and learning. In any event, scholarship and research are constituent of the identity of academics, and core to any critical reflexivity on educational approaches and practices; and it is also scholarship that distinguishes universities from other post-school educational institutions.[12]

Higher education holds the promise of contributing to social justice, economic and social development and democratic citizenship. Yet, this promise often remains unrealised and higher education instead becomes a powerful mechanism of social exclusion and injustice. As I show below, on the eve of the 20th anniversary of South Africa's democracy, there have been some significant successes with respect to access, success and social justice in higher education. Yet, major shortcomings and challenges remain, including a schooling system that does not adequately prepare students for university studies, high student dropout rates, generally poor pass, graduation and completion rates, especially among African and Coloured students, and uneven quality of learning and teaching and therefore of the quality graduates. This is a consequence in part of giving

inadequate attention to teaching and learning, and to creating meaningful opportunities for intellectual, social and citizenship development and for success. It is also the result of existing institutional and academic cultures, and the neglect of important epistemological and ontological issues associated with learning and teaching, curriculum development and pedagogical practice.

The inheritance in 1994 and new policy goals

In 1993, on the eve of the transition to democracy, the gross participation rate in higher education was about 17%[1]. However, participation rates were highly skewed by 'race': they were approximately 9% for Africans, 13% for Coloured, 40% for Indians and 70% for whites (CHE, 2004:62). While black South Africans (Indians, Coloureds and Africans) constituted 89% of the population, in 1993 black students only constituted 52% of the student body of 473 000. African students, although comprising 77% of the population, made up only 40% of enrolments. On the other hand white students, 11% of the population, constituted 48% of enrolments. 43% of students were women. These statistics, taken together with the patterns of enrolments by fields of study, qualifications levels, and mode of study, highlight the relative exclusion of black and women South Africans in higher education. Yet, it should be clear that the deracialisation of higher education began before 1994. This was part of the strategy of repressive reformism, through which the apartheid state sought to crush political opposition and resistance to white minority rule, while attempting to create a black middle class that it was hoped could be co-opted and galvanised behind a reformist project.

The post-1994 higher education goals were articulated in the 1996 South African *Constitution* and the foundational *Education White Paper 3* of 1997. The *Constitution* set out the character of the society that was 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" (Republic of South Africa, 1996: Section 1). The *Bill of Rights* unambiguously proclaimed that individuals and "the state may not 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" (Sections 9.3 and 9.4). The state was enjoined to "respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights in the Bill of Rights" (Section 7.2). The *Constitution* echoed the ANC government's politics of equal recognition, as manifested in the *Freedom Charter* statements that "South Africa belongs to all", and that "All national groups shall have equal rights". With the advent of democracy, this politics of equal recognition was translated into the guarantee of equality in all spheres of society.

Education *White Paper 3* noted that "there is an inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students along lines of race, gender, class and geography" (DoE, 1997:1.4), and that there were "gross discrepancies in the participation rates of students from different population groups" (ibid.) It argued that "a major focus of any expansion and equity strategy must be on increasing the participation and success rates of black students in general, and of African, Coloured and women students in particular, especially in programmes and levels in which they are underrepresented" (DoE, 1997:2.24). The vision was of a "non-racial and non-sexist system of higher education that will promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities" (DoE, 1997:1.14). The intention was "to provide a full spectrum of advanced educational opportunities for an expanding range of the population irrespective of race, gender, age, creed or class or other forms of discrimination" (DoE, 1997: 1.27). Higher education was to contribute "to South Africa achieving 'political democratisation, economic reconstruction and development, and redistributive social policies aimed at equity" (DoE, 1997:1.7).

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[1] The total enrolments in higher education as a proportion of the 20-24 age group

Equity and redress, and more generally social justice, were considered to be imperatives. As *White Paper 3* noted:

> The principle of equity requires fair opportunities both to enter higher education programmes and to succeed in them. (It) implies, on the one hand, a critical identification of existing inequalities which are the product of policies, structures and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination or disadvantage, and on the other a programme of transformation with a view to redress.(DoE, 1997: 1.18).

It was also noted that "such transformation involves not only abolishing all existing forms of unjust differentiation, but also measures of empowerment, including financial support to bring about equal opportunity for individuals…(ibid.,: 1.18). At the same time it was emphasised that "ensuring equity of access must be complemented by a concern for equity of outcomes. Increased access must not lead to a 'revolving door' syndrome for students, with high failure and drop-out rates" (DoE, 1997:2.29).

In policy terms, this set out the argument that formal and substantive equality are not possible without active political commitment to positively discriminate in favour of those who have been disadvantaged. A politics of equal recognition could not be blind to the effects of the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Nor could it blithely proceed from a notion that the advent of democracy was in itself a sufficient condition for the erasure of the structural and institutional conditions, policies and practices that had for decades grounded and sustained inequalities in all domains of social life. It was precisely this reality that gave salience to the idea of redress and made it a fundamental and necessary dimension of education transformation and social transformation in general. The *Constitution* stated that "to promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken" (Section 9.2).

There was understanding that "in order to improve equity of outcomes, the higher education system is required to respond comprehensively to the articulation gap between learners' school attainment and the intellectual demands of higher education programmes" (DoE:2.32). It was suggested that "systematic changes in higher education programmes (pedagogy, curriculum and the structure of degrees and diplomas)" could be needed (ibid., 2.32). There was also a historical awareness that an

> enabling environment must be created throughout the system to uproot deep-seated racist and sexist ideologies and practices that… create barriers to successful participation in learning and campus life. Only a multi-faceted approach can provide a sound foundation of knowledge, concepts, academic, social and personal skills…(DoE, 1997:2.32).

The *White Paper* expressed the commitment to increasing "the relative proportion of public funding used to support academically able but disadvantaged students" (DoE, 1997: 2.26). Concomitantly, it was recognised that "academic development structures and programmes are needed at all higher education institutions" to facilitate effective learning and teaching (ibid.:2.33).The *White Paper* proclaimed that "the Ministry will ensure that the new funding formula for higher education responds to such needs for academic development programmes including, where necessary, extended curricula. Such programmes will be given due weight and status as integral elements of a higher education system committed to redress and to improving the quality of learning and teaching" (DoE, 1997:2.34). A call was also made on institutions to "mobilise greater private resources as well as to reallocate their operating grants internally" (ibid.:2.26, 2.27).

Access, success, equity and quality post-1994

There has been uneven progress in advancing equity, redress and quality in higher education. On the one hand, a significant achievement has been more equitable access and the deracialisation of the student body since 1994. By 2010, black students comprised 80% (714 597) of the total student body of 892 943; African students made up 66.7% (595 963) of students, and white students 19.9% (CHE, 2012: 1).There has also been commendable progress in terms of gender equity. By 2010, women constituted 57.4% (512 570) of the total student body (CHE, 2012:1). Still, African and Coloured South Africans continued to be under-represented in higher education relative to their population size (CHE, 2012:2).

In accordance with the *Constitution*, the mechanism of quotas was not employed to achieve equity and redress. Nor were unilateral or prescriptive targets or goals set for institutions by the state. Instead, institutions were required "to develop their own race and gender equity goals and plans for achieving them, using indicative targets for distributing publicly subsidised places rather than firm quotas" (DoE, 1997:2.28). Further, in congruence with the *Higher Education Act*, and on the basis of the "principle of institutional autonomy", student admission was placed under the authority of higher education institutions. It was, however, emphasised that there was "no moral basis for using the principle of institutional autonomy as a pretext for resisting democratic change" and that institutional autonomy was "inextricably linked to the demands of public accountability" (ibid.:1.24). A number of mechanisms have been used to advance equity and redress in higher education enrolments. First, alternative admissions tests have been devised to complement the national final secondary schools examination to determine eligibility for access to institutions. Second, provision has been made for the recognition of prior learning to facilitate access for especially mature students. Third, mature age exemption has been used in the case where students do not fully meet the requirements to be eligible to seek admission higher education. Fourth, extend curriculum programmes (such as the four year extended studies programmes in Science, Humanities and Commerce at Rhodes University for students that show potential but do not meet the usual admission requirement) have also played a role. Fifthly, use has been made of the discretion that academic governing bodies have long had to admit students to postgraduate studies on special grounds.

The overall progress in equity in enrolments since 1994 must be tempered by certain realities. First, enrolments at many historically white institutions continue to reflect lower black representation than their demographic representation, and white students continue to be concentrated at the historically white institutions. Conversely, there has been little or no entry of white students into the historically black institutions, which means that they remain almost exclusively black. Social class is a factor at play here. Students from the capitalist and middle classes are concentrated at historically white institutions, while those of working class and rural poor origins are principally at historically black institutions. One reason for this is that under apartheid the higher education system was differentiated along lines of 'race' and ethnicity, resulting in the advantaging (educational, infrastructural, financial and geographical) of historically white institutions and the disadvantaging of historically black institutions. Despite initiatives to reshape the apartheid institutional landscape through mergers of institutions and other means, the historical patterns of advantage and disadvantage continue to condition the current capacities of historically black institutions to pursue excellence, provide high quality learning experiences and equity of opportunity and outcomes. In short, if equity of opportunity and outcomes were previously strongly affected by 'race', they are now also (or perhaps largely) conditioned by social class.

Second, the progress of black and women students masks inequities in their distribution across institutions, qualification levels and academic programmes. A larger proportion of African students are concentrated in distance education - 40.5% as compared to 33.3% for whites (CHE, 2012:7).

African and women students continue to be considerably under-represented at the postgraduate level and in science, engineering and technology programmes. Third, there has been little improvement in the participation rate of African and Coloured South Africans. By 2010, the participation rate of Africans increased from 9% in 1993 to 14%, and that of Coloureds from 13% to 15%. In contrast, the participation rate of Indian students increased from 40% in 1993 to 46% in 2010. The white student participation rate stood at 57% in 2010, down from 70% in 1993.[13] The overall participation rate in 2010 was 18% (CHE, 2012:3). In 2001 the *National Plan for Higher Education* estimated the gross participation to be 15% and set a target of 20% gross participation rate by 2011/2016 (MoE, 2001). Clearly, there has been a marginal improvement in the overall gross participation rate and severe inequities continue to exist in the participation rates of African and Coloured students relative to white and Indian students. Indeed, "given that the participation is expressed as gross rates and includes appreciable numbers of mature students…well under 12% of the (African) and coloured 20-24 age groups are participating in higher education. It must be a cause of concern, for political, social and economic reasons, if the sector is not able to accommodate a higher and more equitable proportion" of those social groups that have been historically disadvantaged and under-represented in higher education (Scott, et al, 2007:11).

Judging by throughput and drop-out rates, undergraduate success rates, and graduation rates, a substantial improvement in equity of opportunity and outcomes for black students remains to be achieved. Contact undergraduate success rates should be 80% "if reasonable graduation rates are to be achieved" (DoE, 2006). Instead they vary widely across institutions with an average of 74% at the undergraduate level and 71% at postgraduate level. The white student success rate in 2010 was 82% at the undergraduate level and 80% at postgraduate level; that of African students was 71% and 66% respectively (CHE, 2012:11, 12). In 2010, the graduation rate of African students was 16%, and that of white students was 22%, with an average of 17%, which is low (CHE, 2012:9). In terms of throughput and drop-out rates for a three-year degree at contact institutions, of those students beginning study in 2005, 16% of African students had graduated in the minimum three years and 41% had graduated after six years, with 59% having dropped out. In the case of white students the comparative figures were 44% of students had graduated in the minimum three years and 65% had graduated after six years, with 35% having dropped out (CHE, 2012:51). The figures for three-year diplomas at contact institutions were worse: after six years 63% of African students had dropped out and 45% of white students (CHE, 2012:50).

As a result of the ongoing deficiencies associated with schooling for students of working class and rural poor social origins, considerable numbers of students are under-prepared with respect to the knowledge and academic skills that are required for optimal participation and performance in higher education. Moreover, many students are handicapped in that the language-medium of higher education institutions is not their mother-tongue and often represents a second, and even third, language. Therefore, considerations related to the effective support of under-prepared students to ensure equity of opportunity and outcomes have loomed large at many institutions. Typically, academic development programmes have been created to address the under-preparedness of students and facilitate the development of the content knowledge and the academic skills and literacy and numeracy required for academic success. Over the years, the approaches of institutions to these development programmes have undergone changes. As Boughey notes, "the Academic Development movement in South African higher education has gone through a number of theoretical and ideological shifts which have contributed to the complexity of the forms in which student support initiatives now manifest themselves at an institutional level" (Boughey, 2005:1). She identifies three phases, "broadly termed 'Academic Support', 'Academic Development' and 'Institutional Development', which "are not distinct from each other and are indicative more of dominant discursive formulations than actual periods of time" (ibid.:1).

The 'academic support' approach was characterised by "a deficit assumption about the students they served in the context of an assurance about the 'rightness' of the practices which characterized the institutions to which they had been admitted" (Boughey, 2005:2). Support was an 'add-on' to the exiting academic programme, which remained unreconstructed. The 'academic development' model, especially in its more fully developed form, "had a much more embracing understanding of the notion of support constructing it as occurring *through* the development of curriculum and appropriate teaching methodologies and, thus, through work in the mainstream" (ibid.:33). As opposed to the 'add-on' support model, this was an 'infusion' model of the development of students alongside the reconstruction of curriculum and learning and teaching strategies and techniques. The current 'institutional development' model seeks to embed the enhancement of student learning "across the curriculum" and to locate initiatives "within a wider understanding of what it means to address student needs framed within the context of a concern for overall *quality*" (Boughey, 2005:36). Strategies here have included credit or non-credit bearing "foundation modules or courses" that complement existing modules/courses, 'extended programmes' in which the academic programme is lengthened by up to a year to make space for additional foundation' modules/courses, and 'augmented courses' in which additional tuition is provided and more time is devoted to a course or the course is taken over a longer period (ibid.:37-38). Of course, academic development programmes, whatever their form and content, require people with expertise and finances for their success and student success.

Overall, the motive forces of increased enrolment of black and women students have been the outlawing of discrimination and active national and institutional measures to promote social equity and redress (formulated and implemented to varying degrees at individual institutions). Measured in terms of participation rates, and given the intersection of race, class, gender and geography and schooling in South Africa, it is clear that a significant advance in social equity and redress for those of working class and rural poor social origins remains to be achieved. Especial attention is needed to improve the participation rates of African and Coloured students. On the one hand, this is dependent on improving conditions in schooling. On the other hand, it highlights the need for greater state funding so that deserving indigent African and Coloured students can be supported to access higher education. The representation of black and women students at specific institutions and qualification levels and in particular academic programmes also requires attention, and carefully designed interventions are needed to ensure improvements in representation.

The Green Paper and National Development Plan

Two recent documents, the Department of Higher Education and Training's 2012 *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training* and the National Planning Commission's *National Development Plan 2030* engage with the challenges and propose solutions.

The Green Paper acknowledges that 'despite the many advances and gains made since 1994', higher education is 'inadequate in quantity… and, in many but not all instances, quality', and that it continues "to produce and reproduce gender, class, racial and other inequalities with regard to access to educational opportunities and success" (DHET, 2012: x). It notes that "universities are in general characterised by low success rates…." (DHET, 2012: 11). It is acknowledged that "university funding (has) not kept pace with enrolment growth"; and that despite "attempts to bring about greater equity between historically black universities and those which were more advantaged in the past" a shortage of resource shortages affected the ability of the historically black universities to "properly fulfilling their prime function – providing good undergraduate degrees to poor, rural students" (DHET, 2012: 42). The Green Paper wishes to "contribute to …expanding access to education and training opportunities and increasing equity, as well as achieving high levels of excellence" (ibid., 2012:x).

The National Planning Commission notes that "despite the significant increases in enrolment a number of challenges remain" (NPC, 2011:16). For one, "throughput rates have not improved as fast as enrolment rates"; in 2009, whereas the benchmark graduation rate for a three-year undergraduate degree was 25%, the actual rate achieved was only 16%. For another, under-prepared students have meant universities needing to establish academic development programmes and being sometimes "ill-equipped' to do so" (ibid., 2011:16). As a consequence, universities have not been "able to produce the number and quality of graduates demanded by the country" (ibid., 2011:16). Since "race remains a major determinant of graduation rates", this has "major implications for social mobility and…for overcoming the inequalities of apartheid" (ibid., 2011:16). It was critical for universities to "develop capacity to provide quality undergraduate teaching" (NDP, 2011: 318). The NPC recognizes that "the university sector is under considerable strain. Enrolments have almost doubled in 18 years yet the funding has not kept up, resulting in slow growth in the number of university lecturers, inadequate student accommodation, creaking university infrastructure and equipment shortages" (NDP, 2011: 317).

The Green Paper proposes university headcount enrolments of 1 500 000 by 2030[2] (about 950 000 in 2012) and a participation rate of 23% (currently 16%) predicated on the "priorities (of) access and equity, as well as high-level excellence" and developing "formerly black and poor institutions as part of building a quality post-school education" (DHET, 2012:5, 7). It states that the "improvement of throughput rates must be the top strategic priority of university education", which "will allow us to increase the number of graduates disproportional to the increase in the relatively modest projected expansion of university enrolments" (DHET, 2012: 41). The NPC adds the important rider that "for the increase in the number of graduates to be meaningful, the quality of education needs to improve" (NDP, 2011: 317). It calls for improving both "the quality of teaching and learning" and "the qualifications of higher education academic staff" – from "the current 34 percent" with doctorates "to over 75 percent by 2030" (NDP, 2011: 319).

The NPC appreciates the need to "expand university infrastructure" and that backlogs have "a major impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Student accommodation in universities needs urgent attention" (ibid., 2011:319). It correctly, emphasizes the need for "uniform standards for infrastructure and equipment to support learning, promote equity and ensure that learners doing similar programmes in different institutions receive a comparable education", as well as the need for special programmes for "underprepared learners to help them cope with the demands of higher education", and the necessity for these programmes to be offered and funded at all institutions. The Green Paper expresses the commitment to "progressively introduce free education for the poor up to and including undergraduate level"; the NPC proposes providing "all students who qualify for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme with access to full funding through loans and bursaries to cover the costs of tuition, books, accommodation and other living expenses. Students who do not qualify should have access to bank loans, backed by state sureties". (DHET, 2012: 48; NDP, 2011: 325). It is, however, recognized that

> an important challenge…is finding the resources to address those students who do not qualify for NSFAS loans because their families' incomes exceed the threshold of R122 000 per annum but who do not earn enough to qualify for commercial loans. This group includes the children of many teachers and civil servants – precisely the groups from whose children future professionals and academics come from in most countries. The government must find ways to meet this challenge (DHET, 2012: 49).

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[2] The NPC proposes an enrolment of 1 620 000 students by 2030.

Finally, the NPC favours that "greater emphasis should be placed on incentivising graduate output" on the grounds of "the international trend towards greater emphasis on output-based funding" but is mindful that the state "would have to address the risk of discouraging universities from taking students from deprived backgrounds"(NDP, 2011: 325).

By and large there can be little quibble with the overall visions, intentions and approaches of both the Green Paper and NPC. They provide good and accurate description and analysis of the problems and shortcomings that beset higher education. There is good recognition of the need to hold firmly together the goals of 'access and equity' *and* 'high-level excellence', the importance of undergraduate *and* postgraduate study, and teaching-learning *and* research and innovation. To their credit, both the Green Paper and the NPC are not shy to stress the needs of the "working class and poor" and rural students. The Green Paper purposely "does not go into detail in specific areas, but sets the basis for building a coherent system as a whole" (DHET, 2012: 3). The NPC too is lacking in details. Like many other South African higher education policy documents, the Green Paper and the National Development Plan are expansive in vision but extremely short on details. A critical issue is how priorities will be formulated and what these will be – always a difficult issue as it entails choices between dearly held goals and presents social and political dilemmas. Simultaneous pursuing equity *and* quality, undergraduate *and* postgraduate study, and teaching-learning *and* research is not an easy matter. In summary, details are needed on how the DHET or/and the NPC propose to mediate key paradoxes, potentially competing goals and establish priorities.

Key challenges and tasks

It is clear that there are a number of issues that are in need of attention.

1. The overall challenge of universities is to ensure that the current, new and next generations of academics are intellectually and academically equipped for teaching and learning, research and community engagement and to contribute substantively to the transformation and development of our universities. This means that the preparation of academics must be more varied and extensive than one that is confined solely to research training, and must include exposure to and support in teaching and learning and various other issues and activities.

2. The extent to which all institutions possess academically supportive cultures that promote higher learning, cater for the varied learning needs of a diverse student body through well-conceptualised, designed and implemented academic programmes and academic development initiatives, and have mechanisms to effectively promote and assure quality are moot issues. This raises sharply the question of the academic capabilities of universities. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasise the continued under-developed institutional capacities of historically black institutions; providing access to rural poor and working class black students, the inadequate state support for equalising undergraduate provision compromises their ability to facilitate equity of opportunity and outcomes.

   Adequate public funding is necessary to enhance the capacities and academic capabilities of universities to increase the quantity and improve the quality of graduates. However, such funding is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition. There has to also be willingness on the part of universities and academics to address important issues related to learning and teaching, curriculum, and pedagogy.

   Universities have to give purposeful attention to the theorized development of teaching and learning and the preparation of academics. Unless this is done, we will fail to adequately prepare academics for the demands of academic work. We will also reproduce and even reinforce the

untenable neglect of teaching and learning. The challenges in regards to teaching and learning are serious and must not be underestimated. Academic work today is much more demanding than before. Excelling in and managing the teaching, research and community engagement functions of the university, academic life and institutional transformation and development challenges require knowledge, specialist expertise and experience. Increased student numbers, large classes and under-prepared students all place great demands on the teaching role of academics. Academics require expertise to develop academic programmes and curricula, fashion appropriate pedagogies, facilitate learning and assess students, who come from increasingly diverse social, cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds. Implicated in teaching and learning are also major epistemological and ontological issues. A key task, therefore, is to ensure that academics possess the teaching-learning capabilities that are essential to produce high quality graduates and enhance equity of opportunity and outcomes for students.

3. In South Africa high drop-out rates and poor undergraduate success and graduation rates mean that a substantial improvement in equity of opportunity and outcomes for especially black students remains to be achieved. A study has noted that

> the major racial disparities in completion rates in undergraduate programmes, together with the particularly high attrition rates of black students across the board, have the effect of negating much of the growth in black access that has been achieved. Taking account of the black participation rate, the overall attrition rate of over 50% and the below-average black completion rates, it can be concluded that the sector is catering successfully for under 5% of the black (and coloured) age-group (Scott, et al, 2007:19).

This, of course, "has central significance for development as well as social inclusion", and "equity of outcomes is the overarching challenge" (ibid.:19).

If higher education institutions "are to contribute to a more equitable South African society, then access and success must be improved for black (and particularly black working class) students who, by virtue of their previous experiences, have not been inducted into dominant ways of constructing knowledge" (Boughey, 2008). There is, however, a further and important conclusion: that the under-performance of black students "will not change spontaneously. Decisive action needs to be taken in key aspects of the educational process – and at key points of the educational 'pipeline' – to facilitate positive change in outcomes"[3] (Scott, et al, 2007:20). Moreover, "systemic responses are essential for improving the educational outcomes" (Scott et al, 2007:73). The

> necessary conditions for substantial improvement include: the reform of core curriculum frameworks; enhancing the status of teaching and building educational expertise…to enable the development and implementation of teaching approaches that will be effective in catering for student diversity; and clarifying and strengthening accountability for educational outcomes (ibid.,:73).

Earlier, we noted that the 'under-preparedness' of students is related to them not yet internalising the academic requirements of the university environment and that some students

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[3] "Such key points occur particularly at the interface between major phases of the system: between general education and FET, for example, as well as between FET and higher education, and, increasingly significantly, between undergraduate and postgraduate studies….(C)ontinuity in the system as a whole is necessary for improving graduate outcomes, without which meeting national developmental needs will continue to be an elusive goal" (Scott et al. 2007:20).

are more affected because of "their specific learning histories" (Moll, 2005:11). Thus, 'under-preparedness' is not an inherent psychological condition but is *constituted* in an "epistemic context" ibid.,:11). This means that a key task of the university

> is to help students change and develop their learning practices to enable them to internalise the new epistemic culture. However, within the limits of this constitutive relationship, it is also incumbent upon the university to transform its practices in order that they articulate with the entry-level knowledge practices of its students (Moll, 2005:11)..

There is, however, little and sorely inadequate critical scrutiny of and engagement with teaching and learning issues in academic departments, faculties, institutions and nationally. There is also little appreciation that the "educational process in higher education – including curriculum frameworks, the assumptions on which these are based, course design, and approaches to delivery and assessment" - is neither immutable nor a technical or neutral issue; that it is, instead, "historically constructed" and "constitutes a significant variable affecting performance and determining who gains access and who succeeds" (ibid., 2007:73). Indeed, there is frequently opposition to critical engagement on "the educational process as a variable, at least partly because changing embedded structures and practices is seen as eroding standards" (ibid.).

4. A discourse of the erosion of 'standards' is also frequently linked to the idea that the increased participation of historically disadvantaged social groups in higher education and the pursuit of equity and redress must necessarily compromise excellence and quality and result in the diminution of the quality of provision, qualifications and graduates. While these are risks, such outcomes are not pre-ordained. There could be tension between seeking to pursue equity and redress and quality simultaneously, but there is no inevitable conflict. The imperatives of social equity and redress do not mean any inevitable reduction of quality and the compromise of standard. In any event 'quality' and 'standards' are not timeless and invariant, and it is unwise and inappropriate to conceive of quality as being attached to a single, a-historical and universal model of higher education provision and practices. Quality and standards are historically specific and must be related to the objectives of institutions and academic progarmmes and to educational and social purposes.

    The achievement of social equity with quality and quality with social equity may be challenging, but are not impossible goals. Still, there is no denying that the pursuit of social equity and redress and quality *simultaneously* can give rise to tensions, difficult political and social dilemmas and unenviable choices and decisions, which can necessitate trade-offs between values, goals and strategies, especially in a context of scarce financial resources. An exclusive concentration on social equity and redress can privilege these at the expense of quality and compromise the production of high quality graduates. Conversely, an exclusive focus on quality can mean that social equity and redress are delayed or retarded, with consequences for social justice. An alternate path is to accept that for good social reasons, goals and strategies that may be in tension have to be pursued simultaneously, and that paradoxes have to be creatively addressed and strategies devised that can satisfy multiple imperatives, *balance* competing goals, and enable the pursuit of equally desirable goals.

    It should be clear that without quality, the prospect of meaningful social equity is compromised. This would also not meaningfully contribute to eroding the domination of knowledge production or high-level occupations by particular social groups. Moreover, without quality institutions do not produce graduates that contribute effectively to economic and social development and to the public good; there may be private benefits for individuals, but no or little public benefits for society. On the other hand, , 'quality' pursued in a manner that is oblivious to the imperatives of

equity and redress precludes social advancement through equity of opportunity in higher education, and reproduces rather than erodes and transforms the inherited class, 'race' and gender character of the apartheid occupation and social structure and also effectively compromises democracy.

5. It is necessary to distinguish between *equity of access* and *equity of opportunity* and *outcomes* for historically disadvantaged and marginalized social groups. While access may be secured through various mechanisms, equity of opportunity and outcomes depend crucially on supportive institutional environments and cultures, curriculum innovation, effective learning and teaching strategies and techniques, appropriate induction and support, and academic development programmes and mentoring, all of which require far more than a set of generic teaching skills and necessitate sustained and careful engagement.[14] These are all vital if students are to succeed and graduate with the relevant knowledge, competencies, skills and attributes that are required for any occupation and profession, be life-long learners and function as critical, culturally enriched and tolerant citizens. There is knowledge, expertise and experience at some universities and, more generally, on enhancing the learning and teaching capabilities of academics and universities. This needs to be harnessed, expanded and put to work for the benefit of all universities. Higher Education South Africa (HESA) has noted that there "may be a case for a national approach to professionalisation of university teaching to empower academics" and that the benefits could be " highly qualified academics, properly prepared to teach effectively in the contemporary South African context", "a research centre of excellence for teaching and learning", the provision of "support for academic development units at institutions; and promoting learning through drawing on "advances in information and communication technologies". (HESA, 2006:28-29). Until recently, a major constraint was the absence of state funding for academic development initiatives. Now there is welcome earmarked funding, but it is unfortunately inadequate to effectively support programmes for under-prepared students and will need to be increased.

6. The challenge of opportunity must be viewed as "part of a wider project of democratising access to knowledge" and the production of knowledge (Morrow, 1993:3) This means that beyond providing students formal access, it is also vital to ensure "epistemological access" (ibid.,:3). This 'epistemological access' "is central not only to issues such as throughput and graduation rates but also to the very institution of the university itself and to the role it can play" in development and democracy in African societies (Boughey, 2008).

    As a consequence of colonialism and patriarchy, knowledge production in Africa has been predominantly the preserve of specific social groups – often largely men (and in South Africa, white men). The democratisation of knowledge requires inducting hitherto marginalised and excluded social groups into the production and dissemination of knowledge. While "formal access is a *necessary* condition for epistemological access (in respect of the kinds of knowledge distributed by universities) it is…far from being a *sufficient* condition" (Morrow, 1993:3; emphasis in original). The implication for teaching is that "a reduction of the role of teaching to that of simply 'conveying knowledge'…fails…to acknowledge the need to develop a citizenry which can be critical of knowledge which has been produced and which can contribute to processes of knowledge production itself" (Boughey, 2008).

7. The pursuit and achievement of social equity and redress has great value for diversity within universities, as well as for quality. Diversity and difference, whether social, geographic, national, cultural or linguistic in nature, are powerful well-springs of institutional vitality and personal, intellectual and institutional development. Diversity in higher education, as former Harvard president Neil Rudenstine argues, is a necessary condition for "human learning,

understanding and wisdom", and a powerful means of "creating the intellectual energy and robustness that lead to greater knowledge" (cited in Moore, 2005:8). Further, "diversity enriches the educational experience", in that students "learn from those whose experiences, beliefs and perspectives are different from" their own, "and these lessons can be taught best in a richly diverse intellectual and social environment" (Moore, 2005:9). Diversity also facilitates democratic citizenship and is vital to forging greater social cohesion in deeply fractured societies. Conversely, the quality of education is diminished by an absence of diversity and "educational opportunities are drastically limited without diversity, and that compromises an institution's ability to maintain its own missions and goals" (ibid.: 2; 9).

8. The advancement of equity and redress entails various measures. One of the measures that has been deployed is affirmative action. Yet, can affirmative action "overcome all forms of structured advantage" given that it tends to be "confined to the elimination of race and gender-based inequalities" and neglects "those inequalities based on class or socio-economic position" (Sikhosana, 1993:1).[15] Sikhosana argues that affirmative action is a "very limited and reformist form of redress" as it does "not look beyond race or ethnicity and gender", is "based on efforts to move target groups into the predominantly white male mainstream without questioning that mainstream system itself", and will "widen class inequalities" (1993:22; 18-19). This is to be contrasted with strategies that bring about institutional transformation. Mamdani also poses this challenge, when he asks

> whether a strategy designed to address the grievances of a racially oppressed minority could be adequate to dismantling the apparatus of domination which strangled a racially oppressed majority. In other words, no matter how open the access to minority white institutions, in the name of "Affirmative Action", will this not simply alter the racial composition of that minority with little consequence for the oppressed majority except to legitimize their exclusion as based on merit this time round? In the final analysis, will not embracing the language and vision of "Affirmative Action" obscure the very task that must be central to democratisation in a "new" South Africa, that of *institutional transformation*? (cited in Sikhosana, 1993:16; emphasis added).

A critical issue is whether affirmative action is viewed as a *sufficient* condition to advance equity and redress or as simply one *necessary* measure among many others, including in teaching and learning, designed to achieve fundamental *institutional transformation*.

9. Intellectual discourse, teaching and learning and curriculum and texts in African universities were strongly shaped by racism, patriarchy and colonialism and resulted in historical "legacies of intellectual colonisation and racialisation" (Du Toit, 2000:103). There is evidence that discourses associated with and dominant under apartheid continue to shape knowledge production and, potentially, also the preparation of new graduates and new academics (Herman, 2008). Given this, and the imperative of social inclusion and justice in and through higher education, teaching and learning has to engage with the challenges of intellectually and academically decolonizing, de-racialising, de-masculanising and de-gendering the inherited "intellectual spaces" of South Africa's universities, and contribute to re-orienting universities to serve new constitutional, economic and social development needs (Bentley et al. 2006: 23). This means robust questioning of the roots, objects and content of disciplines and disciplinary traditions in universities, the epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies and concerns, issues and questions that have been dominant, and have perhaps constrained, and even suffocated, intellectual and scholarly thought and writing, and creating the space for other approaches, knowledge's and concerns.

10. Institutional cultures, especially at historically white institutions, could compromise equity of opportunity and outcomes. Various features of historically white universities - their historical origins; privileges associated with social class; lingering racist and sexist conduct; English as the language of tuition and administration; the predominance of white and male academics and senior administrators; the lack of black and women academics and role-models[4], and lack of respect for and appreciation of diversity and difference - could in different ways and to differing degrees reproduce institutional cultures that are experienced by black, women, and working class and rural poor students as discomforting, alienating, exclusionary and disempowering, with negative consequences for equity of opportunity and outcomes. Even if equity of opportunity and outcome are not unduly compromised, the overall educational and social experience of students may be diminished.

The systematic and progressive transformation of institutional cultures, in congruence with constitutional ideals and values, remains an important and urgent task. The challenges are to uproot historical cultural traditions and practices that impede the development of more open, vibrant, democratic and inclusive intellectual and institutional cultures, to respect, affirm and embrace the rich diversity of the people that today constitute and must increasingly constitute historically white universities, and to purposefully create and institutionalize cultures that embrace difference and diversity.

11. The challenge of substantial improvements in teaching and learning also raises the systemic (and controversial) issue of differentiation and diversity in the South African higher education system. The 1997 *White Paper* stated that "an important task in planning and managing a single national co-ordinated system is to ensure diversity in its organisational form and in the institutional landscape, and offset pressures for homogenization" and "to diversify the system in terms of the mix of institutional missions and programmes that will be required to meet national and regional needs in social, cultural and economic development" (DoE, 1997:2.37, 1.27). In 2000, the Council on Higher Education endorsed institutional "differentiation and diversity" (CHE, 2000:32). Three kinds of institutions were advocated, differentiated in terms of their "orientation and focus"; one was to be an institution whose mission was to be "quality undergraduate programmes, limited postgraduate programmes up to a taught Masters level and research related to curriculum, learning and teaching with a view to application" (CHE, 2000:36-7). The CHE argued that South Africa's well-being was "crucially dependent on the quality of the first degrees and diplomas of graduates", and proposed

> institutions that are dedicated to predominantly undergraduate teaching. Such institutions should constitute the foundation of the higher education system and also the great majority of institutions in South Africa. They should be well-resourced to undertake their vital responsibility of providing undergraduate programmes of high quality to the great majority of learners in the system and producing graduates with the knowledge, competencies and skills needed for economic and social development. (CHE, 2000:36).

In 2006, HESA proposed "that aspects of the CHE's Size and Shape Report (2000) be revisited" and suggested the possibility of universities "in which the focus is on offering high quality undergraduate programmes" (HESA, 2006:27). The 2012 DHET Green Paper makes reference to

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[4] Black academics constituted only 44.1% of the total permanent academic staff of 16 684 in 2010; they comprised less than 20% of the academic staff at some historically white universities. Women academics comprised 44.1 % of academics in 2010 (CHE, 2012:41). Women tend to be concentrated at the lower levels of the academic hierarchy.

the historically black universities "properly fulfilling their prime function – providing good undergraduate degrees to poor, rural students" (DHET, 2012: 42). However, while differentiation is national policy the precise missions of universities in so far as qualification levels are concerned remains to be settled.

In 2000, the CHE also proposed "that provision should be made for the introduction of a four-year first bachelor's degree" because of "the phenomenon of high attrition and problems in throughput and graduation rates" and "changing educational and socio-economic needs" (CHE, 2000:43). Six years later, HESA suggested "that a four-year degree structure be re-considered in order to provide room for curricula incorporating academic development as a fundamental component" (HESA, 2006:27). A report by the CHE on the four-year degree is to be released shortly.

12. Finally, public funding of higher education is inadequate in the face of the legacy of past inequities and the new demands on and expectations of universities with respect to teaching and learning. At least three areas of higher education require additional funding: in terms of the current funding framework, the block grant component of funding to universities; the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in order to provide equity of access, opportunity and outcomes for talented students from indigent and lower middle class families; and academic development initiatives to enhance equity of opportunity and outcomes, and curriculum innovation, renewal and transformation to enhance the capabilities of institutions to meet the graduate needs of the economy and society. The infrastructure funding that has been provided to universities since 2008 for academic buildings, student accommodation and scientific equipment has been critical for enhancing the capacities of universities in the face of large backlogs and growing enrolments and has to continue.

Conclusion

It is accepted that it takes an extended period of induction, practice, mentoring and support to develop as a researcher. It is necessary to recognize that teaching is a critical *scholarly* endeavour, and that among the different kinds of scholarship, as Boyer has argued, there is the scholarship of teaching (Boyer, 1990). To become an effective higher education teacher also requires an extensive period of induction and practice. Just as there is no simple transition from the consumption of research to the production of research and especially new knowledge, there is, similarly, no simple shift from acquiring a postgraduate qualification and producing research to disseminating knowledge through teaching and learning.

In the same way as theory, methodology and methods are explicitly taught as part of the grounding of a researcher, it is also necessary to ground academics in the theories of knowledge and of teaching and learning, curriculum and pedagogy; and in engaging with a diverse student body, with large classes, the nature and assessment of student learning, and the induction of students into disciplines and knowledge production.[16] In order to enhance teaching, effectively develop curricula and to contribute to discussions on the curriculum more generally, it is necessary that academics are exposed to the idea of curriculum as a historical and 'social construction', and to the social dynamics that shape the curriculum - advances in disciplinary and other knowledge; changing conceptions of knowledge; changing student bodies; demands of external constituencies such as business, state, civil society; institutional and organizational culture; assumptions about what counts as knowledge, what is worthy of dissemination, and how knowledge should be selected, sequenced and presented, and the impact of the differentiation and reconstitution of knowledge on the form and content of courses.

One issue bears emphasizing. Any programme on developing teaching and learning capabilities has to include *building competence for research on teaching and learning*. The scholarship of teaching and learning is now a well-established field. The ability to contribute to this kind of scholarship - the production of knowledge on pedagogy, the curriculum, assessment and student learning - is dependent on research capabilities. These research capabilities are also required in order to critically evaluate the initiatives intended to develop teaching and learning. In as much as there must be the cultivation of outstanding research and the scholarship of discovery, integration and application, there has to also be the fostering of outstanding teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.[17] This would be an invaluable contribution to enhancing the teaching and learning capabilities of academics and the institutional capacities of universities.

Notes

[1] Carr, W. (1995) *For Education: Towards Critical Educational Inquiry*. Bristol: Open University Press, pages 53 – 54; Hoare, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds.) (1971) *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers. My thanks to Dr. Jo-Anne Vorster and Dr. Lynne Quinn for this reference

[2] The Task Force on Higher Education and Society (2000) *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*. Washington: The World Bank, page 84

[3] Boulton, G. and Lucas, C. (2008) *What are Universities For?* Leuven: League of European Research Universities, September, page 3

[4] The Task Force on Higher Education and Society, page 84

[5] See the final draft 2012 'Teaching and Learning Charter' developed by HESA

[6] This section draws on Moll (2005:10)

[7] My thanks to Prof. Sioux Mckenna for this and the next point

[8] Prof. Mckenna makes the point that "it's more a case of discipline specific literacy practices being more aligned to some (middle class) students' home and school literacy practices than to others. Race, gender and language do not correlate evenly to higher education success internationally (and it is of course our nation's history and ongoing social structures that account for why race and language correlate here). Even intelligence is not a consistently good correlate. But socio-economic status correlates to higher education success in all studies that take this into account. It's an indictment on our system that we systematically privilege the privileged" (personal communication, 2013).

[9] My thanks to Dr. Sue Southwood for this important point

[10] This draws on the work of Slonimsky LF, (1994) Beyond a Descriptive Reading of Educational Disadvantage. Unpublished Masters Research Report, Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.

[11] My thanks to Prof. Mckenna for emphasising this issue

[12] My thanks to Prof. Mckenna for raising the important issues in this paragraph

[13] Prof. Mckenna notes that perhaps if "those white students who 'migrated' to the wealthier end of the private HE spectrum… the difference would not be quite so marked".

[14] My thanks to Prof. Mckenna for the latter point

[15] Others committed to social justice have also raised concerns about affirmative action primarily benefiting a growing black capitalist class and middle class and reinforcing class inequalities, the efficacy of the use of race and gender as proxies of advantage and disadvantage and the possibility of race categories becoming ossified rather than eroded (Alexander, 2007).

[16] According to the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), this would include in-depth knowledge of what might be termed the 'content domain' of teaching and learning in higher education. This knowledge also includes work on what might be termed the 'philosophy' of higher education, theories of learning (and of teaching), theories of knowledge itself and, critically, social theories. Thus, the work of CHERTL at Rhodes University in developing professional higher education educators draws on the work of researchers and theorists as diverse as Barnett (1997, 2003, 2005) Ramsden (1992), Biggs (1999), Vygotsky (1978, 1986), Gee (1990) and Bourdieu (2002). It also draws on theory which relates knowledge to the curriculum (Bernstein, 1990, 1999, 2000). The content domain of teaching and learning in higher

education also includes 'practice knowledge' drawn from theories on curriculum (e.g. Grundy, 1987; Spadey, 1994), assessment (Boud, 2004, 2007) and academic literacy (Lillis, 2001)

[17] Boyer, E. (1990)

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The Council on Higher Education's 2004 report, *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, identified several ongoing concerns with the effectiveness and outcomes of university teaching and learning. These included issues such as widening access to higher education, achieving equity in enrolments and graduations, ensuring the quality of qualifications, and system efficiency. There were concerns about how the teaching and learning models would accommodate the expanding number and growing diversity of students entering the higher education system, and in particular how to promote access and success for students coming from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. The development of curricula that address the knowledge base, skills and competencies of students was considered critical, as was the concern to develop teaching and learning models that address the goals of the National Plan for Higher Education (CHE, 2004b).

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3. The National Plan proposes that the participation rate in higher education should be increased from 15% to 20% in the long-term, i.e. ten to fifteen years, to address both the imperative for equity, as well as changing human resource and labour needs.
3.1 In the short to medium-term, however, it would not be possible to increase the participation rate because of inadequate throughputs from the school system. The main focus over the next five years will therefore be on improving the efficiency of the higher education system through increasing graduate outputs. The National Plan therefore establishes graduation rate benchmarks that institutions would have to meet.

3.2 The National Plan recognises that efficiency improvements are dependent on addressing the underlying factors that contribute to low graduation rates. The National Plan therefore proposes that academic development programmes should be funded as an integral component of a new funding formula and that the role and efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme needs to be reviewed.

4. The National Plan proposes to shift the balance in enrolments over the next five to ten years between the humanities, business and commerce and science, engineering and technology from the current ratio of 49%: 26%: 25% to 40%: 30%: 30% respectively.

4.3 The National Plan proposes that irrespective of the balance in enrolments, the key issue is to ensure that all graduates are equipped with the skills and competencies necessary to function in modern society, in particular, computer literacy, information management, communication and analytical skills.
5. Although the demographic composition of the student body is changing and is beginning to reflect the composition of the population, equity of access still remains a problem, as black and women students are under-represented in business, commerce, science, engineering and technology programmes, as well as in postgraduate programmes in general.

5.1 Equity of access has also not been complemented by equity of outcomes, with black students accounting for a larger proportion of drop-out and failure rates than white students.
5.2 Institutions will be therefore expected to establish equity targets with the emphasis on the programmes in which black and women students are under-represented and to develop strategies to ensure equity of outcomes.

1.2 The National Plan is based on the policy framework and the goals, values and principles that underpin that framework, outlined in the White Paper. These are intended to develop a higher education system that will:
• "promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities;
• meet, through well-planned and co-ordinated teaching, learning and research programmes, national development needs, including the high-skilled employment needs presented by a growing economy operating in a global environment;
• support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights through educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order;
• contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, and in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality" (White Paper: 1.14).

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL PLAN
The National Plan addresses five key policy goals and strategic objectives, which in the Ministry's
view, are central to achieving the overall goal of the transformation of the higher education system.
The goals and strategic objectives are:
• To provide increased access to higher education to all irrespective of race, gender, age, creed, class or disability and to produce graduates with the skills and competencies necessary to meet the human resource needs of the country.
• To promote equity of access and to redress past inequalities through ensuring that the staff and student profiles in higher education progressively reflect the demographic realities of South African society.
• To ensure diversity in the organisational form and institutional landscape of the higher education system through mission and programme differentiation, thus enabling the addressing of regional and national needs in social and economic development.
• To build high-level research capacity to address the research and knowledge need of South Africa.
• To build new institutional and organisational forms and new institutional identities through regional collaboration between institutions.
These goals and strategic objectives, including the desired outcomes and the strategies that would be used to attain them are discussed in detail in each of the sections that follow. In addition, the key
activities that flow from these strategies and the timeframes for completing them are outlined in the
concluding section of the National Plan.

GOAL ONE: "To provide a full spectrum of advanced educational opportunities for an expanding range of the population irrespective of race, gender, age, creed or class or other forms of discrimination" (White Paper: 1.27)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: To produce graduates with the skills and competencies to meet the human resource needs of the country
PRIORITIES:
• **To increase the participation rate in higher education to meet the demand for high-level skills through a balanced production of graduates in different fields of study taking into account labour market trends.**
• **To increase the number of graduates through improving the efficiency of the higher education system.**
• **To link improvements in efficiency to improvements in quality.**
• **To broaden the social base of higher education by increasing access to higher education of workers and professionals in pursuit of multi-skilling and re-skilling, and of adult learners who were denied access in the past.**
• **To produce graduates with the skills and competencies required to participate in the modern world in the 21st century.**

2.2 OUTCOME 1: INCREASED PARTICIPATION RATE

The Ministry therefore agrees with the recommendation of the Council on Higher Education that: "To ensure an adequate supply of high-level human resources for social and economic development, an increased participation rate of 20% of the age group 20-24 in public higher education should be the target over the next 10-15 years" (CHE: 65-66)

2.3 OUTCOME 2: INCREASED GRADUATE OUTPUTS

The Ministry believes that the long-term goal of increasing the overall participation rate must be complemented by strategies to increase graduate outputs in the short to medium-term in order to ensure that the current demand for high-level managerial and professional skills is satisfied. This requires that over the next five to ten years the priority must be to improve the efficiency of graduate outputs from the system.

2.7 OUTCOME 6: ENHANCED COGNITIVE SKILLS OF GRADUATES

It is crucial to equip all graduates with the skills and qualities required for participation as citizens in a democratic society and as workers and professionals in the economy. This should not be seen in
a simplistic vocational sense as there is increasing evidence to suggest that narrowly technical skills
are becoming less important than knowledge management and organisation skills. What evidence there is suggests that employers, in addition to technical skills, want graduates who can "demonstrate a strong array of analytical skills and a solid grounding in writing, communication, and presentation skills" (quoted in the Task Force report on Higher Education and Society 2000: 85). The skills that all graduates will require in the 21st century have been aptly summarised by Michael Gibbons as computer literacy, knowledge reconfiguration skills, information management,
problem-solving in the context of application, team building, networking, negotiation/mediation competencies and social sensitivity (Gibbons: 1998).

SECTION 3: ACHIEVING EQUITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
GOAL TWO: To "promote equity of access and fair chances for success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities" (White Paper: 1.14)
STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVES:

• To ensure that the student and staff profiles progressively reflect the demographic realities of South African society
• To ensure that the race and gender profiles of graduates reflect the profile of student enrolments
PRIORITIES:
• To increase the participation, success and graduation rates of black students in general and African and Coloured students in particular.

3.2 OUTCOME 7: INCREASED EQUITY IN ACCESS AND SUCCESS RATES

SECTION 4: ACHIEVING DIVERSITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
GOAL THREE "To diversify the system in terms of the mix of institutional missions and programmes that will be required to meet national and regional needs in social, cultural and economic development " (White Paper 1997: 1.27).
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: To ensure diversity in the organisational form and institutional landscape of the higher education system through mission and programme differentiation.